

THESIS

BY THEIR OWN STANDARDS:

A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR THE QUESTION OF MORAL AGENCY IN ANIMALS

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ABSTRACT

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Much of the history of ethology, philosophy, and psychology has been a sort of tug-of-war between those claiming that animals have certain capacities and others claiming that such science is unverifiable and amounts to anthropomorphizing. While resistance to such positive claims has certainly fallen off over the past few decades, the idea that animals can be moral is one of the last bastions of human uniqueness to which many tenaciously hold. Yet in the light of newer research involving emotion and cognition, such claims against morality in animals become harder to defend. However, even those who do claim that animals can possibly act morally *still* hold back from making the stronger claim that animals can be held responsible for their behavior. I view such attitudes against morality (or moral agency) in animals and against anthropomorphizing in this case as incorrect for the same reason: combined, they assume that 1) if animals are truly moral, they must be moral in the same ways we are, and 2) if they are moral, then they must be viewed in the same way we view humans and therefore treated as such. In short, both claims involve anthropocentrism and worries of anthropomorphism. This work will be dedicated to showing that this point of view is conceptually flawed and suggesting a new avenue to pursue this line of thought, one that keeps in mind both animal uniqueness-- by invoking the subjective lived experiences of the animals themselves, coupled with what they have reason to know—and, surprisingly, human uniqueness.

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Chapter I: Introduction, the Important Questions, Considerations, and Immediate Issues

1.1 Introduction

Can animals behave morally in any meaningful way? Those with experience working closely with animals, upon my posing the question to them in person, are quick to answer unequivocally in the affirmative. They list a great many actions they have personally seen animals take, such as cattle doing all they can to protect their newborn calves from the ranchers that quickly separate the two, going so far as to run towards and ram moving pickup trucks to rescue their young. To these individuals, the issue is quite simple and they quickly become nonplussed or even indignant when told that many philosophers and scientists disagree with them. Some even went so far as including a few choice words for those philosophers who in their view, talk big, but have no actual experience with animals themselves and are unqualified to make any assumptions to the opposite effect.¹ Yet the philosophers and scientists persist, arguing forcefully that animals lack any of the requisite capacities to behave morally and that many are giving them far too much credit within their actions and assuming more capacities than necessary to explain action, among other numerous crimes against moral theory. Rather than an indictment of simple or perhaps unexamined views, though, these two groups are meant to highlight a serious divide between empirical actions and philosophical or scientific theory. What is the reason for this discrepancy between the two groups, and what are the grounds upon which their answers are given? Is there any way to make clearer sense of it by dipping into both fields, both philosophical arguments and the results of field

¹A sentiment that I have seen backed up in quite a bit of the literature where, when faced with the reality of animals and how animals actually operate, some philosophical arguments concerning animals fell to pieces quite quickly and served as great embarrassments for those making the claims.

work? These questions and more are those that I will set out to answer as succinctly as possible within this work.

Given the, at least comparatively, short amount of time in which serious consideration of animals as more than just living creatures with whom we can do as we wish has been in vogue, it is unsurprising that a topic such as the possibility of moral behavior within animals has yet to be given extensive or truly philosophical treatment. Certainly, in recent years, with Frans de Waal, Marc Bekoff, Jessica Pierce, Dale Peterson, Mark Rowlands and many others, there has been an upswing in the amount of discussion concerning the possibility, yet many are still quite resistant to the push, claiming rather emphatically that much of what makes morality, well, *morality*, is unique and reachable only to humans. While there are certainly many who argue against this train of thought, one problem is that many of the attempts to argue for morality in animals merely point to specific behavior showcased regularly by animals and say ‘See! This is moral behavior!’ without looking at the background assumptions and true nature of what they are claiming. Rather, they merely see something that can be interpreted as a morally good thing and latch onto it, which, while useful in describing animal behavior or raising many questions, does not necessarily lend itself to a powerful or convincing argument. On the other side, one of the only books in the (semi) affirmative written from a fully philosophical viewpoint is Mark Rowlands’ simply titled *Can Animals be Moral?*, yet as will be made clear later, there are numerous faults and false claims about animals that greatly weaken his arguments. As such, there are many gaps in argumentation on all sides and as I have found, those who are interested in philosophy are often misinformed or naïve about animals themselves, and those that work within ethology and other fields are often misinformed or incorrect when it comes to philosophy. The two fields often talk past one another

or misinterpret/misrepresent many of the foundational claims, and as a result, the literature becomes quite frustrating and overwrought.

This work, therefore, will be an attempt, as far as is possible in this woefully limited amount of space, to find a middle ground and common space between philosophy and science, and as a result, begin to bridge the gap between the two fields as best as possible. This first chapter will deal with the nature of the issue, why it is important, and the problems in science that immediately make themselves known before one can even start to make any sort of argument either way. In the following sections, I will attempt to show that these problems, when viewed from another light, are not as problematic as they appear to be, and that when looked at from another point of view altogether—one that takes Jacob von Uexküll's arguments from the early twentieth century into account—we can see a clearer path forward. The argument itself will be presented shortly at the end of this chapter, and then given a much more robust and complete treatment within the third chapter so that both the scientific and philosophical issues can be discussed in terms of what I have laid out. The second chapter will turn scientific issues aside and instead focus on the most common objections against animals being moral from a philosophical point of view, with special attention put on the two most common moral categories that animals fall under, both of which are lesser categories than that of moral agent, the one in which I place some animals. Finding fault with either category in relation to the animals I claim as moral agents, and pointing out the multitude of flaws in both the arguments for the categories and the reasons for consigning the animals in question to them, I will spend the third chapter making my own argument for classifying animals as moral agents, one that is built upon science and moral theory itself and, most importantly, to bring back the argument made within the first chapter, the subjective nature of animal activity. Having made a hopefully satisfactory argument, I will end this work with an examination of the

possible ramifications of the argument, but conclude that many of the niggling issues we worry about do not come to fruition if my argument is accepted, although other arguments will inevitably face them.

1.2. The Problem, and why it is important

The question that I will be spending the rest of this work puzzling out is not one that appears, at first glance, to be of immediate concern. After all, given the well-documented laborious nature of and difficulty inherent in having to convince any group of scientists and philosophers of any positive claim about the existence of any capacity within animals, there are still some small but significant groups out there opposed to even some of the more basic capacities in animals such as emotion or cognition. Even though the evidence is readily apparent to many scientists and such capacities are now taken as foregone conclusions, there are many who wish to be more careful with such claims and attempt to explain the evidence without the need for such ascriptions of ability. To those who do not find such ascriptions necessary or in fact dangerous, talking about the issue of morality, which requires a combination of *all* of the capacities animals can have, is far too much to accept and is the epitome of question begging. I will not speak of them or to them within this work, because it will be all but impossible to convince them. However, there is a much larger contingent that do believe in such capacities in animals, but are not comfortable stating that animals can be moral in any significant sense, stating either that morality happens *to* them, or that they do not understand the implications of any actions to a significant enough degree to qualify as truly moral. It is this contingent that I wish to address.

The issue, stated most clearly then, can be broken into four parts: 1) If animals have capacity *x* and *y*, then are they also capable of being moral?, 2) If animals can act morally, then in what sense, if any, are they responsible for their actions?, 3) If they are indeed responsible for their

actions in a significant way, what does this say about morality within humans? and 4) What are the implications of ascribing moral agency (which I will do) to animals, or most importantly, how would it change our actions towards them, if it does at all? When all of these are taken in conjunction with one another, the importance of such forays into morality in animals is readily apparent. Even if it does not have the same effect as, say, showing that animals can feel pain and indeed care about what happens to them, there are still more than a few important ripples that would come about from jumping into this issue. For one, it can give us a great deal of insight into our own nature as human beings, including whether or not our own capacities are unique or found in other animals. Much has been said about the evolution of important capacities in other areas, but morality is a novel and interesting case, and wherever one lies on the spectrum of possible answers says a great deal about their own view about the place of humanity in the world, views which I will examine in detail throughout. Secondly, an examination of animal behavior in light of morality allows us to understand animals on their own terms in many ways—what do they understand, how do they process what happens around them, are they making important decisions in the only ways that they can, are they much more complex than we give them credit for? While perhaps such findings will not be groundbreaking or revolutionary, I believe that we can find an exciting way forward in experimentation and observation if we keep these ideas in mind, allowing us to see more than perhaps other narrower tests or viewpoints would. Lastly, as some authors have troublingly intimated, do we have any responsibility to stop animals from eating each other, or to punish them for doing so if we assume that they are moral? This is only one possible implication of the conclusions of such arguments concerning morality, but it is a clear one. Depending on what we assume, our attitudes towards animals and their actions and relations to one another would vary drastically

Due to these considerations and others, I find that the problem is both interesting, incredibly vexing, and of great importance. It is by no means simple, given how much must be proven first before true arguments can begin, and one has to dabble in ethics, metaethics, philosophy of language, the nature and importance of rationality, ethology, biology, evolutionary psychology, human psychology, philosophy of mind, emotion, cognition, and a great many more fields in order to keep abreast of all possibilities, problems, and counterarguments. Given the limited amount of space available, I will only be able to focus on a scant few of these fields, and even then, the comparatively simpler ones that do not require as much introduction, but will hopefully come away with a firm enough foundation that when held up to scrutiny and these other fields, it can still hold strong and be built upon rather than scrapped altogether.

1.3. What is meant by ‘moral behavior’

To be clear from the beginning, when I state that animals can behave morally, I do not mean that when they do so, that they are capable of doing so, or even need to do so, in the same exact way as humans. This difference is not inimical to their capacities, for reasons that will be made clear rather soon, but the difference is important to note if we are to understand what exactly I mean by moral behavior when applied specifically to animals. To give a short and tentative definition now, I offer this: *Moral behavior is an action or series of actions taken with an intended outcome in mind, (and showcases knowledge of how their actions will affect the situation) whether it be positive or negative, such that it is often distinct from—or even directly in conflict with-- instinctual behavior and, more often than not, incapable of being explicated in purely rote or behavioral terms.* To make this clearer, let’s break it down into sections, starting with the first clause by explaining what it means for an animal to take an action knowing full well what the outcome will be.

This seems self-explanatory, but there are some implications within the statement that need to be brought into light. Barring a consequentialist reading where we are merely concerned with the effects that an action has as opposed to the intention, when applied to animals, I believe that moral behavior requires some knowledge of how the action they take will affect others around them. This does not require some deeply engrained generalized moral principles that all others should act in this manner or that all actions of this sort will always be morally good, but rather, it would require the recognition that they would be helping another individual as best they can, acting intentionally to harm another individual, or risking their lives in order to bring about a better outcome for another individual. When a bird calls out in order to distract a predator and allow their young or others to escape, this is done with full knowledge of the outcome. Otherwise, why would it be done at all unless we are willing to allow for suicidal birds or repeated and reliable lapses in judgment? When a dog runs into traffic to help another dog that has been struck by a car, they must know the effect that cars have upon their bodies, yet they still go forth. When chimpanzees, rhesus monkeys, and gorillas treat the weak or wounded among them differently and go against their typical behavior or allow them to get away with breaking rules that otherwise nobody would think of crossing, they showcase a great deal of knowledge of both the perspective of others and understand that it is the right thing to do. When a gorilla finds an injured bird, straightens the bird's wings, climbs a tree, and throws the bird into the air, there is no possible way to claim that this is learned or random behavior. Animals do not act blindly within the world around them, and often, when they come across a novel situation, they are unsure at first, but upon recognition of what is going on around them, they adjust their attitude accordingly, and will often actually spread this new attitude around.²

These and many more examples will be made clearer in the proceeding chapters, but the overview will do for now: There are some actions taken by animals that have either positive or negative outcomes, and the animals in question appear to understand both sides and know that without their actions, the outcomes will be negative. There is a flip-side to this, with some animals showing complete disregard for the lives of others. In one memorable story, Frans de Waal tells of one chimpanzee picking up a nearby monkey and beating another chimpanzee with it, and then proceeds to tell a story of some primates slowly eating another *living* primate, despite its cries of pain and horror, which they are usually remarkably well-attuned to. but instances of this are less-often reported than those events that cheer us up or are much more enjoyable to share.³

The second major aspect of the definition is that the actions taken with this understanding are often distinct from, or in direct conflict with, instinctual behavior. This must be made immediately clear, as there is some behavior present in animals that requires no deeper understanding, nor does it take the form of anything that could truly harm or help another individual. To those that do not fully understand the animal in question, some behavior quirks might come out of left field and strike an individual as unique, but I prefer to focus on the stories and observations provided by those that are experts in their field, as if something catches their attention, there is reason to look deeper into the genesis of such action. Granted, to paint *all*

²See pp 50-51 of de Waal's *Good Natured*, in which he gives the example of a macaque with a neural disorder. Members of the group were confused at first, but soon all changed their behavior and did as best they could to treat it as an equal member of their group, even such that the alpha male relaxed his standards and expectations considerably. Or see pp 59-60, where he describes a situation where a young ring-tailed lemur received a shock from an electric fence. The grandmother stepped in to help, and upon recovering to a degree, the young lemur attempted to climb on the mother's back, who attempted to shake him off, only to be chastised heavily by the grandmother for her treatment of her son. As de Waal puts it, "What intrigues me most is that she seemed to teach her daughter how she *ought* to behave, precisely the kind of social pressure viewed in moral terms if seen in humans." (60)

³I find it quite interesting that we have become cynical with human behavior and are prone to reporting the worst among us, yet hesitate to report anything but happy news with animals. Perhaps the innocence we find in these animals is an antidote in our personal lives while we assume the worst about ourselves a species.

animal behavior as instinctual and everything else as possibly moral without any mixture of the two involved is to falsely dichotomize behavior (although it does not stop people from assuming the former premise as a given),⁴ but the distinction between the two is important to note.

One thing held closely to, above all other biological principles, is that life seeks to extend life as much as possible, whether individually or of the species. Many instinctual actions and behaviors arise from this imperative, so when an animal (or even a human being) goes against this, we take note. Not every action, granted, has to go to such extraordinary lengths inasmuch as it would possibly end in the harm or death of the actor, but these actions catch us off guard, such as when animals risk their lives for one another, such as the dog from above or a chimpanzee, a species which cannot swim and is often deathly afraid of water, jumping into a moat in an enclosure to save one of its own kind, or when the bird from above draws predators towards itself to save others, knowing full well what could and more than likely *will* happen. Other actions, though, are far less extreme, but just as important. Recall the example of the chimpanzees that change their behavior to suit the needs of a mentally infirm member of their group. These actions go against their typical hierarchy, play scenarios, expectations, and much more. Once again, many examples of this will be examined in the second and third chapters, but they are important to keep in mind due to the types of actions they are, as they call out for alternative explanations.

The last part of the definition supplied above ties directly into the second part. Having already explained what goes *against* instinct, it must be noted that there are other actions that cannot be explained by what we typically view within certain animals. Granted, labelling a

⁴That being said though, why is it that instinctual behavior within animals does not qualify for moral consideration? Notice that I used the qualifier ‘often’ when stating that moral behavior goes against instincts within animals. At the same time, however, how often do human beings, when performing something widely viewed as heroic, state that they weren’t even thinking when acting, that they merely acted on impulse and have no true idea what they were doing or thinking during those moments? This discrepancy will be looked into in more detail in the third chapter and becomes an important part of the overall argument. At this juncture, however, I merely wish to make clear the types of behavior I have in mind.

behavior as *typical* or *atypical* with true certainty is a difficult business, as there are so many different varieties of actions that an animal can take, but what I have in mind here is that with certain behaviors, we must assume a deeper understanding than just a passive experience with the world around them or a small collection of rote behaviors that can vacillate according to the situation. When some actions involve having to take another's perspective, imagine their situation, and apply a solution or change in behavior that directly addresses the needs in question, simple definitions fail altogether, as trying to explain them without implying any advanced capacity becomes so complex that it makes any such proposed explanation undermine itself. In such cases the supposedly simpler explanation is even more questionable than the assumption of capacities, and many times the explanation actually goes against a great many findings to the opposite, which it must then account for, causing a never-ending and wholly unsatisfying explanatory loop. This possibility, of course, does not apply to all animals, but neither do all animals behave morally in a meaningful way.

Just as important as what is in the definition is what is *not* in the definition, and these omissions are telling in and of themselves. The first omission is that nowhere do I state that animals need to bring moral principles to bear. They do not take a Kantian approach and extrapolate their reactions to every other animal, nor do they take any sort of moral absolutes to any situation they face within the world. They do not specifically learn morality by themselves, nor do they reflect on every single action from an impersonal standpoint and believe that they should have done differently or better. This possible lack of a conscience, guilt, or perspective taking in some areas after the fact might indict animals in that they are not possible of moral behavior in their absence—and I will discuss this in depth in the second and third chapter—but what I wish to highlight here is that these differences do not make too much of a difference. As

Darwin is famous for saying, the difference is in *degree* and not kind. My own addition to the sentiment is that the difference is in use for the animal as opposed to useful in all of morality. Once again, an example is necessary.

To play my own hand a bit in regards to a discussion I will turn to in the third chapter, I do not believe that morality in animals requires that they feel guilty for the animals they eat, or change their behavior in any largely meaningful way after they have killed for food for the first time. Some individuals go as far as to try and impose their own standards on their animals and force carnivores into a vegetarian diet in a telling series of actions that completely miss the point. Humans may be remarkably adept at changing their lives around through self-directed action, and at times, taking thoughts to extremes, but the problem is that they disregard any other action along that spectrum as morally wrong. We cannot and should not expect animals to follow the same line of thinking, especially given the fact that much of the disgust surrounding eating meat has to do with how animals are raised and slaughtered. As such, it is an ethical stance in response to an unethical situation. This is not the only factor involved, but it is a major driving force. Additionally, the sheer number of options available to us allows us for much more freedom than animals are given in the wild. At the same time, however, it can be shown that in eating, animals do not cause any excess suffering, nor do they kill more than necessary. By all reports, lions actively leave their prey animals alone when they are not hungry, sharing the same watering holes with gazelles on many occasions.⁵ Such moral principles—or impositions, even—are not needed in animal life as they already have self-regulatory systems built in. We may decry the idea that *any* animal needs to die, but that is stretching the principle a bit too far in this case.

⁵For further discussion of this, see Masson pp72-73

Thus, even without guilt or a robust conscience, animals seem to be *ahead* of us in their treatment of others and other prickly moral questions such as waste and excess.

One important point that must be addressed is the fact that while not *every* capacity that humans possess is required in morality, there are at least some minimum capacities that must be present, lest we fall into a trap and declare that every action that has a positive outcome is performed by a moral agent. As there is both an emotional and cognitive aspect to morality, those animals that are empirically shown to have both to a sufficient degree are those that will be discussed here. As our closest relatives, such discussion is often confined to primates, but some discussion has extended to canids and whales, and some studies have shown altruistic behavior in rats, mice, and birds, among others that we typically see as ‘lesser’ animals. However, given that most discussion of morality involves primates and canids, I must point out that these are the types of animals that I have in mind when I discuss moral behavior, although I would hope at a later date to include more animals in this listing as we come to understand them more.⁶ For example, in corvids, we have strong evidence for cognitive capacities, but the emotional side is not studied nearly as much. However, there is a dearth of evidence in primates that shows a theory of mind⁷, perspective taking, spindle neurons⁸, advanced planning, strong emotional action/reaction, an understanding of how their actions will affect future outcomes, and much

⁶See ‘Empathy and Pro-Social Behavior in Rats’ (Bartal, Decety, Mason), ‘Cetaceans Have Complex Brains for Complex Cognition’ (Marino), among many more, to see how many of the same responses and physiological makeup of animals are directly comparable to ours, but such studies are still called into question over implications or veracity.

⁷Many members of the primate family, along with elephants, clearly demonstrate knowledge that a mirror image represents their own body, and many in the primate family are very keen at knowing *what* another primate has seen, how it will respond to that knowledge, and depending on the seers’ position in the hierarchical structure, how they will respond to it in the presence of others. With this information, they are fully capable of misdirection or using this knowledge to their own advantage.

⁸Spindle neurons were once believed to be unique to humans, then they were found in primates, and now their existence has been verified in cetaceans and elephants, with such creatures possessing *more* of them than humans.

more, while canids showcase many such capacities as well, even if they are not as pronounced.⁹ Others, such as elephants, dolphins, and whales all have powerful cases for being moral agents as well. Lastly, some animals may showcase what might be seen as moral behavior, but there isn't enough known about other capacities within them to make a definitive claim. As such, there is still a threshold that animals must meet, albeit not such a stringent one as assumed for humans.

On this note, it is important to highlight, briefly now, then in detail in the second chapter, the three distinctions and bits of terminology that are often used in such discussions. Those who delve into the topic of animal moral behavior fall into one of three categories, each of which revolves around just how responsible an animal is for their actions and how many of the capacities 'required' for moral action the animal in question appear to showcase. The first category is that of moral patient, in which it is thought that animals are capable of bringing about good or bad consequences through their actions, but such actions have no true thought or intention behind them. For example, under this category, a dog may seriously harm a child, but they cannot help themselves or know any better. In short, they are neither moral or responsible for their actions. The second category is that of moral subjects, which states that animals can sometimes understand and act upon moral emotions or even have good/bad intentions behind their actions, but do not understand alternatives and are incapable of understanding the various nuances within morality that can change the factors within a certain situation quite a bit. For example, a chimpanzee may go out of its way to help another, but when the circumstances that

As they are associated with empathy and the capacity for prosocial behaviors, many have been forced to reevaluate how such animals interact and how much they understand of both other minds and about how to work within a society. More importantly for this discussion, society often brings moral principles and the capacity for moral action with it, even across species.

⁹Many argue that dogs are either bred for or taught positive attributes or 'morality' but many examples show domestic dogs going against their typical training or natures if the outcome is positive, and many others deal with dogs, foxes, coyotes, and wolves in the wild, without human interaction, that show many of the same behaviors, which weakens such counterarguments.

led to the other being in the situation warranting the help in the first place are examined, it might be found that the other chimpanzee does not deserve the help. For a human analogue, imagine an individual who looks scared and desperately in need of help, but in actuality, the individual merely needs help escaping from law enforcement. Thus, some animals are moral and act on moral principles, but they cannot be held responsible for such actions due to their comparatively limited understanding.

The last category is that of moral agent, which is thought to be the realm unique to humans, although some authors have tried, with limited success, to include animals in such a category. If animals were to be put within this category, they are seen as both moral *and* responsible for their actions, for reasons that need little introduction or explication given our understanding of what a human moral agent is. The definition that I give above can land animals within the category of moral subject or moral agent, but for reasons that I will make clear later, I place animals within the category of moral agents. Thus, I can add one more part to the definition: *Moral behavior is an action or series of actions taken with an intended outcome in mind, (and showcases knowledge of how their actions will affect the situation) whether it be positive or negative, such that it is often distinct from—or even directly in conflict with--instinctual behavior and, more often than not, incapable of being explicated in purely rote or behavioral terms, such that the animals in question can be held responsible for their actions.* Therefore, every time that I state that certain animals can behave or act morally, I mean it in the fullest sense of the term in that they are moral agents, an argument for which will take up the bulk of my third chapter.

When speaking of moral behavior, we must not only keep in mind what I have listed above, but we must also remember the arguments of Jacob von Uexküll, arguments which I

hinted at in section 1.1. His important discussions concerning animals have shaped much of the arguments that I will put into place, and it is best to characterize his main tenet as this: In all research concerning or discussion of animals, we must always consider take into account the subjective experience--or in his native German, the *umwelt*--of the animal we are studying. This is not always fully cognizable given the gulf between how our minds work as opposed to how the animal mind works, but understanding how an animal lives and experiences the world around it goes quite a long way towards shaping how we approach the animal in experimentation and how we interpret what we see or the results we have obtained. In other words, his idea is the precursor to and literal aspect of Nagel's famous question of what it is like to be a bat, and rather than writing off the possibility, he makes multiple forays into the question, even going so far as to attempt to describe the *umwelt* of a tick. As will be made clear in many ways, such looks into the life of an animal are quite rare and overlooked, given our maddening propensity to project our own experiences onto everything around us and thus being rendered blind to what we might have noticed otherwise. Thus, I will attempt to bring this idea as best as possible into my argumentation, making it a central point and examining just how taking the *umwelt* of an animal into consideration when moral theory is in question can change the entire outcome of the journey.

For one last comment on what exactly I mean by moral behavior within animals, I find that the notion of upward progress within evolution, akin to a ladder, lends itself to an interesting consequence within discussions of morality. Given that we tend to see some animals as one either a higher or lower rung of the ladder compared to other animals—*all* are lower than humans in this picture, mind you—we see moral categorization as an all or nothing proposition. If animals are seen as moral patients, they have no hope of ever attaining a higher rung of the

ladder, as they are grouped with the mentally infirm humans that showcase no hope of progressing to a higher mental state. If they are moral subjects, then while they cannot hope to be moral agents, it is argued that this at least necessitates a different perspective on *all* animal actions. The same goes for moral agents, and it appears as if once a notion takes hold in animals within morality, it is hard to separate claims about one animal from claims about *all* animals, which is jumping the gun far too quickly for comfort. What we must keep in mind is that if animals evolve along a continuum, not all animals will possess these requisite capacities. As I stated before, only *some* animals fit within the definition I have laid out, and I am quite comfortable stating that some animals can be moral subjects and that some are merely moral patients, at least insofar as we are capable of stating anything positively about them at the present time. Much can change in the future, but for the moment, we must keep this in mind as look at the individual animal or species, not the entire animal kingdom in one fell swoop.

1.4. The ‘Problem’ of Observation

Having explained the issue at hand and what I mean by the phrase moral behavior in this specific context, we can turn to the most prominent group of arguments against animals showcasing moral behavior, at least from a scientific point of view, whereas the philosophical issues will be dealt with in the next chapter. The issue can be phrased as such: Without any direct communication with animals, all we have to base our arguments on is a countless number of actions without any knowledge of the input or reasoning behind said action. Thus, all we can do is slowly eliminate *some* explanations, but we cannot state with any certainty that our interpretation is the correct one. This is not a specifically animal-related problem; we run into it within human observation as well. After all, it is a well-established fact within human psychology that if we were to find a group of individuals who all witnessed the same event, their

descriptions of such would vary wildly and finding the correct one proves difficult. Numerous underlying factors mitigate how we view the world and what happens around us, to the point that when descriptions of what happened are too close together, we begin to believe that somebody is lying or covering up the truth. Even those who witnessed the event themselves can still be swayed by differing perspectives.¹⁰ This inevitably bleeds over into how we interpret the actions of animals, as there is very little initial agreement on what any particular anecdote, video, or observation actually means or shows.

To highlight the issue, it must be noted that, if we trace the beginning of animal cognition back to Alfred Köhler in the first decade of the twentieth century, then we have a good *one-hundred-year* history of studies and arguments, with science often *still* divided over findings or what the findings mean, with holes being poked in assumptions or alternate explanations being offered as an attempt to guard against assuming more than what is deemed necessary. Frans De Waal points out that such alternate readings are often given by those philosophers or other scientists who have no experience whatsoever with the animals in question, thus assuming incorrectly how the animal actually operates within the world and failing to understand the various nuances in their behaviors or signals and therefore reaching the wrong conclusions. He rightly shows quite a bit of indignation at the audacity of such people¹¹, yet the point still remains as such: when all we can rely on is observation and our own interpretation, we are left to fill in the blanks with our own predispositions. If we believe animals showcase cognition, we fill the blanks with an explanation to back it up. If we don't, we come up with other explanations, akin to the behaviorist explanations of the first part of the twentieth century. This is not to say

¹⁰Recall the case of Arthur Machen and his 'Bowmen' article during WWI, where even though he was not there and it was fictionalized, it was run as a true account, and his attempts to state that it was false fell on the deaf ears of those who believed every word and used it as evidence of the fact that God was on the side of the British.

¹¹Exhorting them to, before making any grand assumption about what animals cannot do, to *know thy animal*.

that experimenters *all* suffer from confirmation bias, nor would I claim that the majority of those who have dedicated their lives to the field suffer from such, but it does show just how difficult it is to make a positive claim when we only have empirical observation and no way to communicate with animals on their own terms.

However, the fact that it is difficult does not entail that it is not possible to make such ascriptions. To this effect, and many others, thousands upon thousands of pages could be and have been spent combing through every bit of evidence, every anecdote, every observation, every ethical theory, and debate after debate can arise about various interpretations of behavior, but there does come a point where it becomes far too much and instead of working in favor of clarity, does precisely the opposite, the deliberate obfuscation threatening to overshadow just how much animals are capable of in favor of keeping them relegated to the realm of lesser beings. In some cases, the obfuscation may not be deliberate, but Frans de Waal gives a telling story in which the individual in question was all but forced into admitting that he saw certain cognitive capacities in a chimpanzee, but refused, point blank, to actually admit it, adamant as he was that such findings could not be possible. He tells of one of Alfred Kohler's students, Emil Menzel, who was invited to speak at a conference by a professor who was adamantly against cognitive interpretations of animal behavior. At this conference, Menzel showed a video that showcased what he believed to be cognitive behavior in chimpanzees, but in describing the events, he was careful to explain what was happening in purely scientific and neutral language that did nothing but describe exactly what was happening, keeping his personal interpretation out of the picture entirely. Upon finishing, the professor who had invited him was quick to take Menzel to task for attributing any sort of cognition or intentionality to animals. Menzel was quick to point out that he hadn't said anything of the sort, so the irate professor must have seen

such things himself and attributed the genesis of such thoughts incorrectly to Menzel. The professor was quick to leave while the rest of the room burst into applause. As this example shows, there is a line between science and predisposition that not even science itself can cure. The murky middle ground and happy medium between the two seems to be lost in the scuffle, and animals are typically given the short end of the stick when we are forced to choose between two extremes.

The two extremes, however, do not represent the true picture. While some have burdened us with the symbol of a ladder, there are some who would prefer to lay the ladder on its side and have it represent the fact that there is *one* spectrum/continuum that one is part of rather than being immediately and irrevocably relegated to a lower rung without recourse to climb higher. In the typical image, while humans are always set at the highest rung in the upright ladder, the ladder on its side reminds us that we are all part of the same continuum, moving forwards, not upwards. To me, the ladder paints humanity as the highest achievement in evolution, the apex of everything that is possible, that which all animals should strive and climb towards, but this is misguided in a multitude of ways and informs far too many conclusions we reach about animals.¹² Knocking the ladder over, however, reminds of us of many rather important facts that we would do well to remember: 1) Humanity did not grow out of a vacuum and inherit traits that are therefore unavailable to every other animal, 2) If we are on a continuum, we have to hold *ourselves* to the same standards that we hold to animals in experimentation, 3) We are the ones who set the definitions and place ourselves at the top, then claim that animals do not conform to those specifications that we lay out, and 4) With the continuum in mind, we can look closer into

¹²Interestingly enough, we worry when animals seem to be just as good as-- if not better than-- we are in some areas of cognition, the senses, or physicality, but how many animals care about those things which we hold up as the defining features of humanity? It's like telling your dog that he is a good boy, and then having a nearby individual angrily articulate that he himself is a *better* boy.

the actual experiences of an animal not as a lesser version of our own lives, but rather as them having only that which they need to survive and experience the world, necessities that instantiate themselves in various and multifaceted ways of which we have little, if any, reason to assume that they have to be like us. It would serve us well to take a look at these four statements specifically with morality in mind, as the topic will inform and be informed by every other argument made or considered within this work. As they are of varying degrees of importance to my main argument, I will examine them out of order, starting with the second, then the first, and then combining the third and fourth to examine them and begin the true argument I wish to put forth in the end of the chapter.

The most interesting—and vexatious—aspect of any argument involving animals is that we are often of two minds when comparing results of an experiment, or even worse, of two minds when considering what constitutes proof of concept, when it comes to animals and humans. Put into simpler terms, we are willing to accept far less rigorous standards and markers for humans than we are animals, and rather than look at various ways in which experiments might not be tailored or even possible for animals, we are quick to state the findings as conclusive and cut animals off from a certain capacity. These biases and propensities have been well documented in other works, with the results of some experiments brought into question by more even-minded scientists who point out that given the *Umwelten* of an animal, the experiment is impossible for them to perform, and when the parameters, or even the construction of the experiment are changed, they pass with flying colors!¹³ When comparing human children and primates for example, even something as simple as the presence of a comforting human—as required in experiments involving children-- changes the outcome as the primates are given no understanding or sympathetic equivalent who cares about their performance and will give subtle

nonverbal cues that children are quick to pick up-- to the point that when the human presence is taken out of the equation, the primates at times end up performing *better* than the human children in cognitive experimentation. While I cannot speak of just how this would change how morality is viewed, it is easy to extrapolate given that when in the presence of authority, our attitudes change drastically. As such, if we examine how well-behaved children of each species are, giving the human child an adult presence while the primate nothing, we cannot go onward to claim that the human child is much better behaved and therefore proto-moral while the primate doesn't even come close. Yet this is the feeling that I get in many readings, even if those are not the direct reasons as to why claims against animal morality were made, the spirit of such argumentation is there.

The main point in this claim, however, is that if we hold humans to the *exact* same standards as we hold animals, we would find ourselves floundering against the same exact issues that we face in ascribing animals certain capacities. The best illustration is given by Menzel, who once said, concerning deception in humans and animals, "By the way, does anyone have any experimental evidence for deceit in any human president, king, or dictator? All I have ever seen here is anecdotes."¹⁴ Much of human behavior, as made apparent by the quote, is based on nothing more than reports of certain events and then we ourselves putting our own spin or interpretation on it. The same goes for animals, although there is one nebulous difference: We give the benefit of the doubt to humans yet try to find *any* possible alternative explanation for animals as we possibly can to explain such behaviors without resorting to actually ascribing the animal any special cognitive, emotional, or moral ability. I can understand perhaps a little bit of a

¹³See pp 143-6 of *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* for examples of how the difference in experimentation effects results.

¹⁴de Waal, *Good Natured*, p 77

disconnect, but this massive gulf between the two is made all the more unsettling because it isn't based on scientific principles at all, but rather seems to have gelled into existence because of human predispositions, sympathies, and biases. The only *true* differences between the two are that humans can talk and thus express their feelings, thoughts, and intentions clearly and thus be evaluated much easier for deception, and we have direct access to what humans are capable of, being humans ourselves. Yet how many different explanations are there for human behavior? There is the 'everything is egotistic' motivator, the idea that morality is just a lie to cover up our own deplorable instincts, the idea that we do not have access to *other* minds and cannot therefore know that our own interpretations are even close to valid or plausible, the fact that our own interpretations are based on our own biases, or perhaps there was no deception at all and the story was spun a certain way to make the dictator appear in a certain light that the media wishes, and many more, but the underlying factor is that even in observing human behavior, there are multiple ways in which one certain event can be changed within our own minds, as highlighted previously by the Arthur Machen case. We may recognize these and attempt to make sense of certain behavior, but that never actually stops us from assuming certain behaviors.

How much different is this with animals, however? Assume that an expert in his given field and on the animal he is observing makes a claim that an animal is showcasing deceptive behavior. The response he receives is the diametric opposite of that within the human case. The ethologist may assume the capacity, but those around him are predisposed towards assuming the absence of the capacity and trying to make sense of it with various other interpretations, some of them bordering on the absurd, and many of them going against good science or the trail of evidence behind them. In this case, the various interpretations are taken as valid, while the capacity is never assumed. In the human case, the capacity is assumed without question while the

motivation is all that is studied, other interpretations being written off without hesitation as far-fetched or unsustainable in the presence of other evidence. Deception is only one small part of claims that are made concerning animals, and the bottom line is that such scientific rigor is prized on one side of the equation, yet scoffed at as unnecessary on the other side.¹⁵ There is, admittedly, *some* scientific sense to some of the arguments, but at what point does it merely become extraneous and pointless posturing that does not live up to fairness of method, equality, or parity?

This final issue of parity lends itself towards the first claim that I made. Many other authors make this clear, but it bears repeating: Unless we assume that human capacities grew out of a vacuum and that we have been miraculously blessed with certain abilities and understanding, then we have to believe that along the line from those animals deemed the ‘lower animals’ to the ‘higher animals’ and then us, we would find similar behaviors, capacities, and capabilities. Within morality, however, this raises certain questions akin to the chicken or egg problem. Did morality arise in conjunction with the *homo sapien* or were we merely the first ones to actually put it into concrete terms? Did we *construct* morality, or has it always been there for us to recognize it? Do animals follow what we term moral principles, without actually cognizing that they are doing so? Does this cognition matter, truly, to morality in general? Personally, I side with de Waal’s statement that “moral sentiments came first; moral principles, second”¹⁶ for a multitude of reasons, many of which will be examined in the second chapter. After all, if we assume the continuum, animals will have many of the same emotional reactions

¹⁵One idiom that we are quick to claim in any relationship is that ‘Actions speak louder than words’...unless animals are concerned, where words are absolutely necessary while actions are rendered mute.

¹⁶de Waal, *Good Natured*, p 87

and cognitive capacities, meaning that they will be able to act upon many of the same features of morality that we hold. In this case, all we do is give voice to what we are doing and the exact nature of it, while the animals merely act. I do not believe that being able to vocalize as we do puts us leaps and bounds above all others. In fact, an argument can be made, and will be made in the third chapter, that this ability to vocalize is actually *inimical* to moral action. After all, for every bit that words can help, they can also distort, control, and confuse everything surrounding morality to the point that the line between moral and ‘moral’ is blurred beyond recognition.

The main purpose behind bringing all of these arguments under scrutiny is not to dismiss them completely offhand, but to show that their application is much more limited than many critics of morality within animals assume. Not only that, but such arguments do not apply directly to arguments attempting to show that animals are moral in the same way that humans are, which is not my goal here. Rather, I wish to show that both humans and animals behave morally in significant ways, and the underlying principles may be the same, but the way in which these ends are achieved differ. This difference is not enough to eschew any hope of moral behavior in animals, but *is* important enough to warrant a different overall approach to argumentation, an approach which I will now turn towards laying out.

1.5. The Fallacy of Anthropocentric Anthropomorphism

All four of the claims I made above, however, coalesce into one major issue that I find with discussion of animals and morality, although the third and fourth claims combined are the two main driving forces behind this issue in my mind. With the second claim in mind, much of the history of ethology, philosophy, and psychology has been a sort of tug-of-war between those claiming that animals have certain capacities and others claiming that claiming as such is unverifiable, bad science, and worst of all, anthropomorphizing. While resistance to such positive

claims has certainly fallen off over the past few decades, the idea that animals can be moral is one of the last bastions of human uniqueness to which many tenaciously hold. Even those who do claim that animals can possibly act morally hold back from making the stronger claim that animals can be held responsible for their behavior. I view such attitudes against morality (or moral agency) in animals and anthropomorphizing in this case as incorrect for the same reason: combined, they assume that 1) if animals are truly moral, they must be moral in the exact way we are (which is a mix of the second and fourth claim) and 2) if they are moral, then they must be viewed/treated in the same way we do humans (third claim, mixed with first one). In short, both of these claims are dedicated to the belief that morality must be viewed from an anthropocentric point of view, and that animals, if believed to be moral, are then anthropomorphized to a degree not many are comfortable with. This section will be dedicated to showing that this point of view is conceptually flawed and suggesting a new avenue to pursue this line of thought, one that keeps in mind both animal uniqueness and, surprisingly, human uniqueness. In short, we can use this new avenue to make claims tailored to the animals themselves and thus subvert some of the issues inherent in strict inferences to the best explanations.

Before turning to the argument itself, the locution ‘anthropocentric anthropomorphism’ (henceforth referred to as AA) needs to be elucidated, and we must examine why it is a problem. While AA appears at first glance to be an exercise in useless and alliterative redundancy, the concept is central to this paper in that it highlights the conceptual flaws and underlying assumptions that all arguments on any side of the moral animal debate adhere to. I define AA as follows: The tendency to assume that 1) any attempt to claim that animals can be moral must immediately amount to anthropomorphizing, and 2), that any supposedly moral action an animal takes must be of the same exact sort as a moral action taken by a human being and showcase the

same cognitive, emotional, and intentional markers. The first problem that AA faces is that it assumes, without much explanation or even argument against it, that morality is uniquely human, which gives AA the anthropocentric push. Even those who agree that animals occupy *some* of the moral realm are sure to state explicitly that animals are not and cannot be moral agents, concluding that humans are the archetypical and paradigmatic moral creatures. Naturally, this lends itself to the second problem and underlying assumption of AA: the anthropomorphic claim that if animals are moral, they are moral in the same way that we are, which would be especially true if they are considered moral agents. This assumption is clearly evinced by the tendency of philosophers to view any claim about moral animals from the moral system to which they ascribe. Combined, the two concepts automatically present an enormous hurdle that animals must be able to overcome if we are to consider them as moral beings.

My question is this: Is this a fair hurdle that animals must clear in order to claim morality within animals? Morality is certainly defined by us in terms of us, under the assumption that we are the paradigmatic moral creatures, yet is this an arbitrary barrier placed only because that is where *we* are? I can see the impetus: if we are moral, then it could be assumed that any moral creature would be at least like us. Yet in any positive claim concerning animals that is finally accepted, there is typically the assent that animals *may* have ‘it’, but we have *more* of ‘it’, as if we must cling to such claims to preserve our, as de Waal calls them, fragile egos. Analogously, claiming that animals must be *this* moral in order to be truly moral is like stating that one is not truly flying until they have reached a certain altitude, say, 30,000 feet. Thus, humans can fly in airplanes, while birds are left behind. While facetious, there is a kernel of truth in such analogies: making man the measure of all things immediately lends itself to arbitrariness, as we are clearly not the best at everything within the animal kingdom.¹⁷ While we may have the most varied

interests and capacities, we could go the other way and claim that hearing is measured by elephants: comparatively, we are all deaf!¹⁸ As many other authors have looked into this, I will not go too deeply into this vein of argument, but it is important to take this away from it: Given the *umwelten* of a certain animal, and the correlative claim that, as de Waal puts it, animals only know what they need to know, have we put too strict of a claim on morality, stating that morality is morality insofar as we understand it or use it, and as a result putting too much weight on capacities that animals do not even *need*?

It is readily apparent that animals have much simpler lives both externally and internally than humans. As a result, it stands to reason that their understanding in morality would look much simpler as well, not measured by their responses to the needlessly complex vicissitudes of human life.¹⁹ Humans, with their advanced capacities and much richer variety in decisions and social lives, can make a *vast* amount more mistakes or decisions that animals cannot even fathom. Animals cannot get drunk and cause damage to themselves, belongings, or others. Animals cannot be so morally evil and depraved that they wipe out millions of their own kind in the name of power or other convoluted reasons. Animals do not hold multiple lies at once and then find them all

¹⁷Chimpanzees are shown to have better memory and pattern recognition in some studies, Clark's nutcrackers have to remember the location of 20,000 pine nuts buried over a large area—as de Waal quips, he can't even remember where he parked his car half the time--and in almost every physical category and some mental categories, we are bested by at least one animal. We may have the most *widely-varied* capacities, but we certainly do not have a stronghold on having them all to the greatest or most useful degree

¹⁸Are we then aural patients and subjects capable of hearing but not understanding, or incapable of hearing at all, but instead only of being heard, compared to these animals?

¹⁹One of my favorite quips in regards to the variances of human emotions is Temple Grandin's remark that contrasts typical human emotions with autistic/animal emotions: "An autistic person's feelings are direct and open, just like animal feelings. We don't hide our feelings, and we aren't ambivalent. I can't even imagine what it would be like to have feelings of love and hate for the same person. Some people will probably think that this is an insulting thing to say about autistic people, but one thing I appreciate about being autistic is that I don't have to deal with all the emotional craziness that my students do...There's so much psychodrama in normal people's lives. Animals *never have psychodrama*." (Grandin, p 89, italics mine) In the same vein, and related directly to the AA fallacy, is the claim she makes that "Animals and autistic people don't see their *ideas* of things; they see the actual things themselves. We see the details that make up the world, while normal people blur all those details together into their general concept of the world." (p 30)

crashing down around them, nor do animals find themselves beholden to ideological, political, or religious conflicts that wreak mayhem on human society. The list goes on and on, but it is plain to see that many reasons an emotion might be morally laden are not available to animals at all, as they literally cannot understand it.

With this in mind, we can begin to question just how much AA impinges upon our ability to see moral behavior in animals for what it is, insistent as we are that morality is human centric. To attempt to put a human blanket over an animal's lived experience is a flawed conceptual move, one which puts blinders on humanity and erases any chance that we see animal behavior in new lights. In contradistinction to AA's underlying assumptions, in the important situations in which animals need only to depend on experiences that they are familiar with and in which they can decide between two or more alternatives, the ratio of them choosing to do what we would typically refer to as *the right thing* or displaying what is believed to be the correct emotion as opposed to the opposite, is overwhelmingly in favor of the former. The most interesting thing to note, I believe, is that all of the other packaging that morality is wrapped in when applied to humans is only necessary *because* we are humans. If it is stated that animals are unable to use a dialectic process to discover such moral truths as 'slavery is wrong,' I wonder how this can possibly count against them when there are no cases of animals practicing systematic slavery. Neither is there systematic racism, sexism, xenophobia, or anything else that ails humanity and requires dialectic reasoning and generations of heated debate to correct.

Separate from the things that animals cannot do and have no reason to do is the further question, alluded to above, of why the things that animals *can* do are so quick to be written off as unimportant morally? We have two separate actions, with the same general results, but vastly different explanatory methods on either side. Both humans and animals even have, in many cases,

the same general capacities, so why is there such a gulf? As noted, animals often get the short end of the stick when one chooses between two extremes, but extremes cannot and should not apply here, as there is no reason for them to be considered other than through the AA fallacy. In that mindset, even with situations that both humans and animals have reason to understand, the animals are still seen as lacking exactly what we have, so this conspicuous difference in explanation is given nary a second thought. By highlighting this fallacy, however, we can focus more on questioning this difference and whether or not it is the right move to leave the two separate. I will expand more on this question in the third chapter, but it can be said now that with everything argued above and what will be argued later on, this gap has no compelling reason to exist.

What, though, does this have to do with the limits of observation and especially observation within animals? It turns out that there is quite a bit. I do not propose to answer the issue definitively, nor do I wish to downplay just how important certainty is within science, but rather my point is an offshoot of that. The popular adage goes that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and thus, while there is not a plethora of examples of definitive animal moral behavior, there are plenty of examples that seem to fall in line with what one would expect in a moral creature. The only true absence is an argument that might allow for animals to be part of the moral realm rather than just being affected by it. Yet every argument that keeps them out is of the same type: they point out what animals cannot do and that humans can, and humans being the paradigmatic moral creatures, we have no choice but to keep them out of consideration. The issue with that, as stated above, is that it seems arbitrary and completely independent of an animal's *umwelt*. If we examine animal behavior qua animal, then perhaps we might enlighten ourselves and come away with an argument that allows animals at least some residency as moral agents, even if they are not moral agents in the same manner as humans.

1.6. Looking Forward

What is most important to take away from this chapter is just how many glaring errors there are in how we view animals and just how many gaps in explanation between human behavior and animal behavior. We typically divide moral creatures into three subcategories—subject, patient, and agent—and yet we hold animals out of the last category for reasons that aren't quite defensible upon closer examination. We treat animals differently, look at them differently, experiment upon them differently, and put stringent qualifications upon them that they must adhere to in order to be seen as moral agents, yet hold humans to no such standard and ignore the differences in experimentation. At the same time, we ignore the actual lives of animals and what they have reason to understand. This insistence upon an anthropocentric view of morality greatly effects how we view animal behavior, and yet I have never seen such concerns actually taken into account in discussions of morality within animals. Instead, it seems to be implicitly accepted, as we are the paradigmatic moral creatures, yet the worry is that we assign ourselves this status and argue from there. Compounding this worry, I believe, is the fact that if we held ourselves to the same exact standards to which we held animals, we would be just as lost and wondering if we are in fact moral agents at all! Thus, the argument cuts both ways, and the four concerns—we didn't grow out of a vacuum, we must hold ourselves to the same standards to which we hold animals, we set the definitions and ignore exactly what goes into them, and that we ignore the actual lived experience of the animal—can be coalesced into one major concern, one which will be used throughout the rest of this paper: the AA fallacy.

Additionally, it is important to remember that the tentative definition offered for moral agency is not as stringent as typically viewed within humans, although it does include some parts that animals still must showcase to qualify. Animals must still act in a guided manner while at the

same time taking actions that appear to have more to them than pure instinctual behavior. On this note, one must recognize that even instinctual behavior can have some moral force behind it, while at the same time calling all animal behavior instinctual does a great disservice to the term, especially when we realize that some actions taken by humans—which we praise them for—can qualify as the same. Thus, we can keep the praise for humans alive, but we can also extend it to animals in certain situations. Combined with the AA considerations, moral behavior that animals can be praised or blamed for are those actions that showcase intentionality, understanding, awareness, *and* are part of what animals have reason to understand, such that it is *not* inclusive of everything that we understand and act upon, nor is it required to be as such. Thus, both human and animal uniqueness are kept alive, and while similar, the differences between the two are important to note.

One problem, however, is that all of this could be seen as changing definitions at will just to allow animals a new capacity. Regardless of all of the times that philosophers and scientists have done just that upon learning that in using their definitions, animals can be shown to fit the same bill,²⁰ which really means that humans don't have *too* much of a leg to stand on in terms of arguments as such, meaning that this argument misses the point of this work. The only thing that the definition for morality has given us, definitively, is what morality looks like within a human being. Even metaethical considerations fall into the same theme and always make the origins of morality or moral behavior beholden to *us*. Granted, this is not too surprising, nor is it a condemnation of both normative or metethical considerations, but rather it is an entreaty to look at how animals fit into the argument. Those authors who have done so inevitably come away with

²⁰De Waal, in *The Ape and the Sushi Master*, gives a very telling story of a professor who, upon seeing definitive studies that animals have culture, stated that in response we must change the definition of culture so that we can once again exclude them!

the conclusion that animals represent a lower rung of the ladder or a building block of the foundation, yet proudly place humans at the very top without fail as the paradigmatic and *only* moral creatures. What I must do now, therefore, is look at the common areas that animals are relegated to within morality, show that such relegations do not capture everything that is happening within morality or the animals themselves, and then further expand upon AA and moral agency to show that animals qualify for consideration within the higher rungs of the moral ladder. It is to this first task that I will now turn.

Chapter II: Patients and Subjects

2.1 Patients and Subjects Defined

As noted in the previous chapter, there are three distinct ways of viewing animals in the moral realm, namely the distinction of *moral patient*, *moral subject*, and *moral agent*. In his *The Case for Animal Rights*, Tom Regan attempts to show that animals warrant our moral concern and deserve ethical treatment due to their distinction as moral patients, which he heavily contrasts with moral agents. According to him, moral agents are:

Individuals who have a variety of sophisticated abilities, including in particular the ability to bring impartial moral principles to bear on the determination of what, all considered, morally ought to be done and, having made this determination, to freely choose or fail to choose to act as morality, as they conceive it, requires.²¹

While moral patients:

Lack the prerequisites that would enable them to control their own behavior in ways that would make them morally accountable for what they do. A moral patient lacks the ability to formulate, let alone bring to bear, moral principles in deliberating about which one among a number of possible acts it would be right or proper to perform. Moral patients, in a word, cannot do what is right, nor can they do what is wrong. Granted, what they do may be detrimental to the welfare of others...But even when a moral patient causes significant harm to another, the moral patient has not done what is wrong. *Only moral agents can do what is wrong.*²³

He then goes on to argue that animals deserve the title of moral patient, and therefore they warrant our concern and we should care about their welfare, much in the same way that we care about children or any human which we would put under the category of moral patient, such as the mentally deranged or enfeebled. However, he says nothing of the category of moral subjects, nor does he truly need to for the purposes of his argument. By now, however, it should be clear that I believe that animals are much more than just moral patients, as they understand a great deal more

²¹Regan, p 151

²²ibid, 153, italics mine

than we give them credit for, and more specifically, they have a notion of right and wrong. The examples spread liberally throughout this work—and many more examples will be used here--more than highlight this fact: an animal can understand that suffering or pain is wrong, that loyalty is a good trait, that those in dangerous situations need to be helped, and that those who are grieving need sympathy. To sum it up, as Mark Bekoff, a proponent for animals as moral agents, points out in his book *Wild Justice*:

Mammals living in tight social groups appear to live according to codes of conduct, including both prohibitions against certain kinds of behavior and expectations for other kinds of behavior. They live by a set of rules that fosters a relatively harmonious and peaceful coexistence. They're naturally cooperative, will offer aid to their fellows, sometimes in return for like aid, sometimes with no expectation of immediate reward. They build relationships of trust. What's more, they appear to feel for other members of their communities, especially relatives, but also neighbors and sometimes even strangers—often showing signs of what looks very much like compassion and empathy.²³

The phrase 'sometimes even strangers' deserves more attention than it receives, and I will be expanding upon that for an important reason later on, but the general point has been made. Where Regan sees animals as incapable of understanding what is right or wrong, there are countless examples of animals displaying the *exact* behavior that within a human being, we would praise as morally good or morally bad. However, as we have already noted, the AA fallacy stands in the way of this ascription of moral responsibility or even consideration as a remotely moral creature for a myriad of reasons. Yet as Bernard Rollin states succinctly in his wonderfully common-sense approach to the opposite effect:

"The fact that we cannot understand what highly sophisticated moral cognition is like in a non-linguistic being, does not militate against our recognizing what appear to be patent reason to believe that a given behavior is hardwired, for example, because it is rare among animals of the type we are studying, or, alternatively, where we have good

²³Bekoff and Pierce, p 5

evidence that the behavior in question has not been inculcated into the animal by rote training, it is *plausible to suggest that such behavior is indicative of some moral sense.*"^{24/25}

The middle-ground between patient and agent, most recently fully developed and embraced by Mark Rowlands for his own arguments, is that of the moral subject. Recall from earlier that moral subjects are those that act morally, not in the sense that they just impact us in morally important ways, but rather they act *from* a sense of morality and right and wrong, yet do not have enough moral knowledge or mental capacity to be handed responsibility for such actions. His distinction between moral subjects and moral agents is as follows:

X is a moral *subject* if and only if X is, at least sometimes, motivated to act by moral reasons²⁶

X is a moral *agent* if and only if X is (a) morally responsible for, and so can be (b) morally evaluated (praised or blamed, broadly understood) for, its motives and actions.²⁷

He argues extensively for animals being only able to reach the level of moral subject, stating that the belief in animals holding moral agency is troubling. In his mind, animals are just like Myshkin from Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* in that they do all they can to help others, but they cannot do so from a place of full moral knowledge. For example, if Myshkin attempts to help somebody who is going through a rough patch or who has lost all of their money, he cannot understand the subtleties inherent in both situations and will act based on one moral principle. After all, Myshkin cannot ask whether the individual brought the suffering upon themselves

²⁴Rollin, upcoming article

²⁵Note the similarities here between my definition of morality and his argument for moral behavior in animals.

²⁶Rowlands, p 89

²⁷Ibid, p 75

through a great many negative choices, or if the second individual lost all of their money due to addiction. In this case, neither individual is truly helped, but Myshkin will not realize this fact. Therefore, he acts from a place of limited morality and moral knowledge, but cannot understand enough to be ascribed any praise or blame for his actions. Rowlands draws a parallel to animals here, arguing that there is no way that an animal can understand the same intricacies that go into human morality.²⁸ This discussion of Myshkin is important, as it will play an eminently important part within the rest of this work.

Rowlands, to back up his argument, also points out that it is quite obvious that we do not punish animals for their immoral actions in the same way that we punish humans. (An immediate question that arises, one which I will discuss later on, is why we must punish animals in the same general manner in which we punish humans.) He begins by arguing that claiming any sort of moral agency is a bit more problematic than anybody is willing to admit, and finds a great many pragmatic and metaphysical problems with ascribing any sort of responsibility to animals for their behavior, namely the fact that we would have to punish them for their actions if we hold to this ascription. He comments that while courts long ago used to hold animals on trial, the idea of returning to that practice now seems laughable, and states quite strongly that we do not hold animals accountable in the same way we do humans. Therefore, they cannot be moral agents as we do not hold their actions as praiseworthy or blameworthy to the degree we do human behavior.

Having laid out the three different distinctions and the general argument for each of them, and now having added specific arguments for the two lesser levels of morality, I will attempt to show that Regan's argument that animals are merely moral patients falls far short of

²⁸For a full discussion of Myshkin, see Ch 5 of Rowlands, p 124-151

the reality of animal behavior. While it works to a point in getting others to at least care about animals, he misses a great many important facts about the nature of right and wrong within the *umwelt* of an animal. I will then show that Rowlands's argument is misguided in some very important ways in that he underplays the role of a great many factors, falls victim to the AA fallacy in a multitude of ways, and even states forcefully that animals do not have certain capacities, which they are empirically shown to have. Having argued against both Regan and Rowlands, and by proxy the overall positions, I will then, in the third chapter, attempt to show that animals can be correctly labeled as moral agents. With the *umwelten* of an animal, the AA fallacy, the gap between explanation and observation in human and animals, and the flaws in the arguments for relegating animals to lower positions of morality in mind, we can argue that there is quite a bit of room for some animals in the realm of moral agency. While we may not necessarily take them to court for their actions (barring the fact that it is horribly misguided and borderline facetious to even suggest doing so), we still can praise and blame them for their actions while examining said actions through the consideration of their own typical experiences and knowledge base, and thus gain new insight into both the animals and the morally salient features of their actions and lives.

2.2 Regan's Patients: Right and Wrong in Animals

A bit has already been said about Regan's dichotomy, but it needs to be explored in a more detail if we are to be able to set it aside fully and move on to the two higher levels of animal morality. The specific argument that I wish to highlight is his belief that animals lack the ability to formulate right and wrong, thus abdicating them completely of the responsibility for their actions. Regan seems to merely take this for granted rather than arguing specifically *why* animals do not have this ability. Granted, this is often taken for granted in general, and he only

needed or wanted to establish the case that we should care about the welfare of animals as a whole rather than spending time getting into a much larger debate over the intricacies of responsibility and the formulation of right and wrong. However, such a capacity can no longer be ignored or dismissed offhand lest one fall into question-begging behavior now that the question is being examined much more closely and claims cannot be assumed as easily. However, setting that to the side, we must turn our focus to this complete inability to formulate right and wrong, a trait that animals supposedly share with infants, young children, and the mentally enfeebled or certifiably insane. To be sure, establishing such a capacity is not enough to raise one to the level of moral agent, which is likely why Regan is quick to corral all—well, most—animals into the level of moral patient, yet using new terminology, we can examine this and raise them to the level of, at the very least, moral subjects.

The most basic question that one can ask in the face of Regan's argument is: Then why do animals act the way that they do?²⁹ If one just assumes hardwiring or evolutionary factors, then there is a large swath of actions that literally cannot be explained and would have to be labeled as a fluke. A few cases would be understandable, but consistent behavior over a long period of time and thousands of case studies show that there is more than a fluke at play here. Before going so far as to say that animals understand the full ramifications of their actions and that they are fully worthy of praise or blame, let's attempt to ascribe to them even a cursory understanding of right and wrong. First of all, there is a reason that I define moral actions by animals as quite distinct from what their instinctual reactions are or what evolutionary

²⁹I have found that such a question can easily be applied to many of the arguments individuals raise against animals having a certain capacity, and as Rollin points out, many animal actions make sense *only* when such a capacity is assumed. Granted, one cannot merely just assume it as an explanation, yet there is more evidence than one could possibly ask for that allows one to argue for such an ability.

principles—namely, reproductive success—would tell them to do. This difference is in need of immediate explanation, and everything runs back into a cursory—at the very least—understanding of right and wrong. Why else would a macaque refuse to pull the lever in order to get food? Why else would a dog risk its life to save another dog from traffic? Why else would animals go out of their way to rescue human beings, even those they have had no contact with? Why else would animals raise the children of other animals that are considered predators? Why else would a bonobo pick up a bird and attempt to help it to fly if it didn't understand that it was a good thing for the bird—I repeat, *for the bird*-- to be able to fly? The list of questions goes on and on, and while I have seen some authors attempt to explain such behavior using engrained evolutionary principles, there is one rather important notion they leave out. When discussing the adoption of the young of predator animals by their typical prey, one argument is made that this is merely maternal instincts writ large, where animals merely see young without a mother and feel compelled to raise it. Yet there is something missing in their argument, namely the question of why they feel compelled with this certain animal. An example is important here. The most striking example I have seen in the literature is given by de Waal in the *Ape and the Sushi Master*, where he gives the following example: “The most absurd animal exhibit I have ever seen was at a small zoo in Lop Buri, Thailand. Two medium-sized dogs shared a cage with three full-grown tigers...I learned that one of the dogs had raised the tiger cubs along with her own puppy, and that the whole family had happily stayed together.”³⁰ For prey animals, their instincts are quite sharp in telling them to avoid certain animals, and certainly a dog would realize that a tiger is an apex predator. As he argues later, “it is hard to imagine that a dog is unable to tell a tiger cub from a puppy by sight, let alone smell.”³¹ Thus, the maternal instinct is at war with the prey

³⁰ de Waal, *The Ape and the Sushi Master*, p 315-16

³¹ *ibid*, p 317

instinct, and the dog has to *make a choice between the two*. If the choice is based somehow around a puppy, I can easily see the dog adopting it without having to make a choice. And yet, a tiger cub is far removed from a puppy, thus necessitating the choice between two eminently powerful instincts rising up in the dog. After all, “She didn’t do it for herself, her family, or even her species...”³² Therefore, there is a sense here in which the dog can at least recognize that taking care of an abandoned baby is the ‘right thing to do.’

Now, ‘the right thing to do’ appears to be a human locution applied to an animal action and thus cannot qualify for a true or verifiable statement—a la ‘The squirrel is up in the tree’-- of the choice made by the animal, and one can certainly argue that an animal cannot cognize it as such, yet barring the philosophy of language, all empirical evidence points towards the ability to recognize right and wrong, *even if they do not use the same language*. Again, actions matter more so than words in human behavior, so I see no reason why animals cannot enjoy the same consideration. To change Ian Fleming’s famous quote, once is an accident, twice is a coincidence, three times signifies something more. Once we reach triple digits, at the very least, in the number of occurrences, we can assuredly say that animals recognize right and wrong (in their own way), and not only recognize it, but *act* on it. Even more important is the other side of the coin, in which animals not only choose what is *right* in such cases, they can choose to do nothing even if all previous signs point to them being able to act in such situations. This rather interesting debate, however, is one that needs to be explained further, as one can question whether inaction in some cases by animals is equivalent to acting immorally.

To continue with the example of the dog and the tiger, or even any animal in similar situation, let’s assume that it morally *good* to choose to take care of the abandoned cub of a

³²ibid, p 317

predator. By definition, if animals can be moral, then, they can also be immoral, so it stands to reason that the immoral thing to do in such a case is to leave the animal to fend for itself, which would more than likely result in the death of the cub or other young. Yet while the dog is certainly *praiseworthy* for deciding to take care of the cub, would we *blame* the dog for deciding not to do so? After all, we understand that there is a good chance that the dog could come under harm or be killed if the tiger decides it wishes to do so. There's a level of sacrifice present in the right choice, yet self-preservation that is completely understandable and excusable on the other side. If something was of great danger to us, I find one would be hard pressed to argue that it is morally imperative that we take that action. Rather, we would likely not think anything different of those that refused to take the action. Take the military for instance—many people view those who fight in wars as heroes, yet we do not think of those who do not do so as villains. Thus, I think the only immoral action an animal can take in this circumstance is to directly kill the young, because that would go against the typical behavior of the prey animal and would cause harm to an animal that has not developed far enough to be a threat. The other examples appear to suffer from the same issue: is the opposite really immoral behavior as defined by human actions? Does *not* saving the dog that has been struck by traffic equate to a morally wrong action? Does standing by and not helping those in trouble equate to an immoral action by an animal? It would appear then, that immorality does not necessarily mean the same thing for animals as it does for humans, at least not in the same way. Thus, while we have established that an animal can pick out the morally right action in a situation, it is still an open question of whether or not they can perform the *wrong* action.

Yet we need not look in opposites to find examples of immoral behavior in animals, and while this will be examined in more depth as I discuss the notions of punishment and reward

concerning animals, a cursory look is warranted here, if only to establish such a capacity. Funnily enough, our focus on all of the great things that animals have done tends to overshadow all of the other actions that animals take, and when it is reported, many assume that it is due to the animal's true nature. The reason for this disingenuous split between an animal's nature and their morally good actions is due to the popularity of what Frans de Waal terms Veneer Theory, which states that morality in humans is merely a fake covering that we put over our more natural, immoral and animalistic tendencies. Thus, any 'bad' action taken by animals is unsurprising, but the good actions are heartwarming and extraordinary feats that deserve media attention. Look at arguments that pit bulls and Rottweilers are naturally vicious, that lions are 'man-eaters' and the like. Once again, this appears to lead to the conclusion that while morally *good* actions are possible, anything morally *bad* is typical behavior.³³

What then, does immoral behavior look like in animals? Mark Bekoff, interestingly, spends only a brief amount of time on this question, roughly four pages out of 153. He gives a couple of examples and then gives a brief definition for what immorality entails, yet for how vexing the issue is at present, his attempts fall far short of truly establishing the capability. In *Wild Justice*, he states that it is easy (!) to state that animals can be immoral, arguing that "In those animal species where we find moral behavior we also expect to find immoral behavior. Moral and immoral need each other like peanut butter and jelly; you won't find one without the other."³⁴ Passing over the fact that the analogy to peanut butter and jelly is horribly misguided—

³³The common arguments, such that animals are cannibalistic or eat their young, as well as reports of other behavior we find morally repugnant are both applicable to my own conception of immorality, which will be given later, and also bring into question how it can be explained behaviorally. I am not fully aware of the impetus behind such behavior and will make no claims concerning it here. Bekoff himself points out that there are relatively limited sample sizes here and it wouldn't do to include such behaviors too quickly into their behavior repertoire across the entire species. Although, I am wont to say that a male lion eating a lion cub to spur the female towards reproduction is, as an isolated incident, immoral in that the ends in no way justify the means. This is a distinction that Bekoff seems reluctant to make—between individual actions and species-wide implications.

³⁴Bekoff and Pierce, p 16

for instance, for roughly eighteen years of my life, I rarely *ever* had a peanut butter *and* jelly sandwich-- and an attempt at levity that falls flat, I would hope that his proof is not a comment on the necessary duality of morality/immorality. Thankfully, he goes a little bit further, yet his fleshed-out explanation still falls flat. He states later that behavior is only immoral when it goes against social expectations. He fleshes out this claim by stating that a wolf chasing down and eating an elk is not immoral because the wolf and elk are from different ‘societies’, yet “if wolf pups are playing and one tries to dominate the other, a norm has been violated.”³⁵ He then turns to a discussion of cruelty in animals, yet there’s still an elephant in the room that he completely ignores, and his definition raises *far* more questions than it answers.

First of all, he fails to demarcate where manners and morality intersect and then deviate from one another. He has a discussion of both, and yet he seems fuzzy on his usage of such terms. In discussing manners before he brings immoral behavior to the table, he differentiates between the two by stating that “Conventional violations, it is said, are wrong by standards of social acceptability. Moral transgressions are more serious, and their wrongness relates to harming others. Driving on the correct side of the road or eating salad with the shorter fork have little to do with fairness, reciprocity, or the welfare of others.”³⁶ Barring the appalling lack of recognition that driving on the correct side of the road has quite a *lot* to do with the welfare of others, he also fails to state which ‘socially established expectations’ are violated in immoral actions. Social norms have to do with both manners *and* morality, as shown by the unspoken agreement between humans to wear clothes or refrain from certain actions in public. Where, then, is the line where pure common decency ends and outright immoral action begins? Bekoff states that if we wish to see which actions are considered immoral amongst animals, look at

³⁵ibid, 16

³⁶Ibid, p 15

which are punished, yet how many actions do we take that are punished merely as a way to remind an individual of socially expected cultural norms rather than moral ones?

The other problem with his definition is the fact that it seems to ignore any cross-species relations outside of predator-prey relationships. Strangely, he claims that *morality* is possible across species, so why is the opposite not considered in his argument? The wolf is not acting immorally in hunting an elk, but is it acting immorally in hunting and killing, say, a human child? We are from different societies, true, and thus different rules apply but at the same time, there is no established predator or prey relationship between humans and wolves. Perhaps, though, this example is a bit of a misnomer, as we *do* have experience with wolves. Yet it highlights an important point, and shows that Bekoff once again fails to draw a line that allows us to determine exactly when immorality begins. After all, we look down upon and punish, in a way, a lot of behavior that is not inherently immoral, but rather questions of taste and certain ways we do not want our children behaving. Yet it also becomes obvious when we have made our way into immoral territory. Bekoff appears to think that both law and religion allow us to notice this change, but there are many questions that can be raised here as well, especially when one can ask whether law creates morality or morality inspires the laws that we have. The same goes for religion, and the Euthyphro dilemma raises its head here. Without delving too far into metaethical theory, it becomes apparent that Bekoff's definition of immorality falls short of just about anything that we would expect of immorality, and even goes against the very argument that he previously laid out.

However, while it does not contain *everything* that we should expect when determining what immorality is in animals, there is the genesis of an important notion, namely that of harm. Bekoff discusses the possibility of cruelty in animals, concluding that it is not only possible for

animals to be cruel, but it has been documented, such as Jane Goodall's observation of a group of chimpanzees systematically hunting down and murdering another group over a two-year period. Yet he also notes that this is not the default behavior of animals,³⁷ which makes it all the more surprising when it happens. Right there, I believe, is the crux of the argument: if animals have an understanding of what is good, and typically choose that, then immorality is not the opposite of their typical choices, but rather a knowing choice to cause harm. As mentioned in my discussion of the AA fallacy, there is a vast difference between the number of immoral things an animal can do and what a human can do. For example, the sexual proclivities of bonobos are *quite* different from the sexual morals of humans. This difference is a result of the fact that humans have much more subversive means to cause damage and often impose much more serious and all-encompassing checks on their behavior or the behavior of others. Yet the effect that animals have on others or each other typically revolves around physical harm, and animals are more than capable of causing that, even against their young, the young of others, and more. Temple Grandin gives a grisly example of this concerning killer whales, where a pod "had become killers for sport. The cameraman filmed the pod separating a baby whale calf of another whale species from its mothers and killing it. They crashed their bodies on top of it over and over again, pushing it underwater repeatedly until it finally drowned. It took them six or seven hours to kill the baby. Then they ate the tongue and nothing else."³⁸

Yet there is also the question of whether or not we can *blame* animals for not acting when they see a situation where they are capable of helping. If a human refused to act in a situation

³⁷Contra Tennyson's claim that nature is 'red in tooth and claw', which has the distinction of being both incontrovertibly wrong *and* being the basis of a great deal of political philosophy, not to mention the conception of Veneer theory

³⁸Grandin, p 161-2. She also memorably notes that "I don't know why animal violence happens, but when I read through the research literature I'm struck by the fact that the animals with the most complex brains are also the ones who engage in some of the nastiest behavior." (p 162)

where they were able to intervene, it seems to be an unspoken rule that they should have done so, and thus the individual is blamed in some sense. Yet a great deal more goes into such thoughts concerning humans, such as questions of possible harm and other ramifications. There's no black and white response here, and while once again we call those that do act without a second thought heroes, we don't go so far as to call those who don't act *immoral*. Rather, words such as cowardice or selfishness are thrown around, comments which focus more on their personal character rather than their moral character. At the same time, the line between 'custom' and immorality in animals appears to lie where the animals are knowingly causing direct harm. In a roundabout way, Bekoff appears to state this, as many of the customs put into place in the differing animal societies appear to stop harm from happening, especially when it comes to concepts such as play between members of the same species, as play can easily escalate directly into fighting. Once again, while Bekoff does not address such issues head on and rather seems to imply them, his argument does contain the genesis of more important arguments.

In the end, it appears that animals, having knowledge of the salient moral features of a situation, are capable of both moral right and morally wrong actions. Despite Regan's insistence that they are not, there is far too much observation that cannot be ignored that shows evidence to the contrary. While this may appear to immediately allow animals entrance into the category of moral agents, there is one other category that animals have to make their way through before they can reach that status. After all, even if they can act on such notions as good and bad, how much does their understanding of each situation extend into their responses? Here, the issue of responsibility arises, and so we turn to Rowlands' claim that animals are moral subjects, the middle-ground between the two other categories of patient and agent.

2.3 Rowlands' Subjects: Two out of three is bad

Recall from the introductory section and the first chapter that the category of moral subjects allows animals the capacity to act morally, and yet keeps the ability to praise or blame the animals away from them. It seems, in a way, that under this categorization, animals are morally incontinent, to borrow Aristotle's terminology, in that one can state that even when they act morally, *they have no control over it*, as if the choice has been pushed on them. Ancillary to this conclusion is, again noted in the introductory section, the issue of reward or, more importantly, punishment being given to the animal for their actions. Rowlands defends the argument that ascribing moral agency to animals is problematic, more so than many are willing to acknowledge, and while I can understand his reluctance to put animals on the same level as humans when it comes to morality, he is far too dismissive and partakes in some hand-waving that is detrimental to his overall argument. In light of the problems within his argument, and due to other considerations, I believe that Rowlands categorizes animals as moral subjects based on a flawed foundation. Here, I will attempt to prove that his worries are unfounded and that animals can indeed be moral agents.

There are two glaring errors that he makes within his foundational work that need to be addressed. Troublingly, these two foundation errors are actually part of this three-headed argument for why animals cannot be moral subjects. The first part of his argument is referenced within the introductory section of this chapter, and the second is admittedly the most minor part of his argument, but the ramifications of his error actually seep quite a bit into his own argument because it gives animals another capacity that undermines his Myshkin example. I will address this second issue first, as the first issue ties most clearly into his overall argument. This second issue is more of an aside on his part than an actual argument, as he states in a short paragraph that there is a

Discrepancy between the way an individual presents or represents the severity of her suffering to Myshkin (and others) and the real severity of her suffering. However, the

simplicity of Myshkin's presumed context will make him immune to this sort of mistake. The misrepresentation of the severity of one's suffering, in whichever direction, *is a human phenomenon*, and not the sort of thing we find in wolves, coyotes, elephants, vervet monkeys, and other social mammals. In these sort of animals, an individual's representation of its suffering is, in general, a reliable guide to the severity of that suffering.³⁹

I am not fully aware where Rowlands obtained this information (a cursory search immediately shows thousands of articles stating examples of this and stating that what animals show is often a *horrible* guide for the severity of suffering), and he gives no examples or reference, but I can think of multiple examples of animals, including some of the most social animals, that mask their suffering in order to keep up appearances, or do the opposite and *fake* pain in order to get preferential treatment or something that they want. Animals are quite capable of misdirection and acting, and the most important aspect of this capacity is that it is *deliberate*. An animal appearing strong even while suffering is quite different and even more pressing for an animal than it is for a human: after all, if an animal appears weak in the wild, predators will go after them first. The life of the animal is on the line in the wild, whereas humans mostly have to worry about maintaining their 'stiff upper lip' and, ergo, their ego.⁴⁰ While this capability may seem innocuous at first glance, there are some important underlying subtleties that need to be addressed, as this small fact actually has quite a large impact on the distinction between subjects and patients.

First, it shows that animals are quite aware of the facts of a situation and that they can choose to ignore them or play with them to suit their needs. This may seem like a very human

³⁹Rowlands, p 137

⁴⁰Note that dogs, when pampered following a show of pain, will often feign the same pain in the future in order to get the same treatment once again. Bernard Rollin gives a memorable example where he didn't notice that his dog was faking it until almost the last possible moment.

capacity, as Rowlands points out, but this just highlights the fact that it is not. There's a moral element at play here because the animal in the second case—where they fake pain—is flat out lying to get its way, and when caught, *will change its behavior accordingly*. In the first case, they understand that pain is a negative thing in all cases, but can also recognize when it becomes downright deadly to them.⁴¹ There's another case too, pointed out by Rollin⁴², where a killdeer will pretend to have a broken wing in order to attract the predator's attention to them rather than those they care about. Is this not morally laden behavior? I fail to see how instinct could hardwire an animal to sacrifice itself, as that is evolutionarily *disadvantageous* and eradicates the chances for reproductive success, the barometer of the success of any species.⁴³ Animals even hide pain in order to keep themselves locked within the hierarchy, especially when at the top, because those beneath them often look for any sign of weakness. Everything here points to the fact that even social animals or those animals without too much to worry about in the way of predators still either hide or fake pain in order to get their way, and this deliberative aspect to it means that there is room for praise or blame, depending on the situation. Therefore, Rowlands's attempt grant Myshkin and animals immunity from this 'moral mistake' is misleading and misguided.

In a roundabout way, Rowlands appears to address this fact, although he does not tackle it directly because he had already taken that capacity away. The paragraph after his claim deals with another 'mistake' that animals—or any moral subject—cannot make, namely that of lying projected into the far future, or concern about anything but the present. Therefore, moral subjects

⁴¹For reference, look at the typical human male, who refuses to go to the doctor even while under quite a bit of pain until it becomes life-threatening. My wife is quite open about the fact that she disagrees with my actions regarding this scenario...

⁴²Rollin, upcoming article

⁴³Perhaps it is instinct to protect one's children, but then again, is this not moral behavior? Would we view a human mother sacrificing herself for her children without a second thought as merely typical behavior, without heaping praise upon her?

will “tend to privilege short-term interests over their long-term counterparts, and therefore find himself experiencing emotions that foster the short-term interests of an individual, but are, at least sometimes, inimical to the individual’s long-term interests.”⁴⁴ He later argues that the concern with long-term interests is uniquely human, as only they can project far into the future and make decisions with a moral bent now and understand the impact on their future goals or lives. This is a simplistic worldview, brought on by the fact that for animals, life is “*just one thing after another*”⁴⁵, (a highly tenuous claim to make about *all* animals) meaning that they lack another insight into morality that would allow them to be responsible for what they do and to make informed decisions based on the circumstances.

Once again, though, I have to question the reason for making such a claim. After all, the hierarchical nature of chimpanzees often necessitates such long-term interests and lying. In any attempted coup, they have to keep track of exactly who is in power, who can undermine that power, how they can help to create a power base to help their rise and overthrow the leader, they have to appear to be on the side of the alpha male at the same time as working against him, and can often work with multiple others at once, resulting in a double-cross or triple-cross as those who help the *new* alpha rise up then use their own connections to turn their back on their previous partner. The entire time, they have a long term interest in mind, and while it may not be mapped out decades in advance as some humans do in planning their lives, for animals, this capacity is incredibly advanced and shows much more than simply care for the short-term. I often compare a reading of *Chimpanzee Politics* to reading a *Game of Thrones* novel, as one can see the same various intricacies of power in-fighting carried out in the long-term. These types of behaviors may not be true of all animals, but at the same time, how often is an advanced capacity

⁴⁴Rowlands, p 138

⁴⁵Ibid, p 138

a result of a more comfortable life lived where the future is almost guaranteed, and not fully allowed in the wild where things can be much more dangerous and the parameters are much different? Thus, we can state once again that human capacities are just animal capacities stretched out into a much bigger area and over a much longer period of time, allowed by the differences in their lives. Again, the *umwelt* is important, and the AA fallacy does not allow us to see this as clearly as we should. In this case, the AA fallacy prevents Rowlands from seeing even the inkling of this argument.⁴⁶

At the same time, for many animals I suppose that there is an element of truth here. A lie told by a human often has far-reaching circumstances that project into the future; it could ruin relationships or form a faulty basis for a close friendship. Yet if an animal lies based on pain, it is often for the moment only, with only short-term impacts, unless a human owner decides to give the animal preferential treatment for an extended period of time, thus reinforcing the behavior, or to take the animal to the vet and pay for multiple tests that are unnecessary and invasive. Yet animals would not be able to see *that* effect coming and understand the full ramifications of their actions, up to and including euthanizing the animal because the animal appears to be suffering and nothing is able to help it. Yet what this highlights, once again, is merely the difference in the way the human mind works and the way an animal's mind works, and the only difference is the frame of reference one holds when making decisions. Thus, there is no difference in moral decisions other than how long one can project the effects of their actions. Once again, the adage that the difference between animals and humans is one of degree, not

⁴⁶Which is ironic, as he does discuss *Chimpanzee Politics* at length in a previous book of his, but strangely only in light of how humans take the capacities that they show and go much further with them. Thus, we are *like* animals, but we are much more advanced than them, seemingly rendering their capabilities moot in comparison.

kind, rings true. The difference here is that moral outcomes are at time x for animals, and $x+1$ for humans. This '+1' though, is not the difference between moral and amoral in the moment x .

To make that a little bit clearer, think of it in terms of the AA fallacy and see how it once again impinges on our understanding. A human being is able to think of multiple scenarios at once, and also able to think of multiple paths the situation can take and hypothesize, based on the information they have, how this will affect themselves and others now *and* in the future. Kantian ethics and utilitarianism are based on these capabilities, and therefore, we can hold moral principles, guidelines, and the like in a way that animals supposedly cannot. However, morality in this regard is based on our capabilities, and naturally, if we use this as a guideline for moral responsibility in general, we will have to exclude animals. After all, we punish or reward humans based on the immediate and secondary effects of their actions. However, animals have access to the same *immediate* scenario and have to choose based on that, based on what is best for themselves and/or others. For them, the morally salient features of a scenario are bottled up in that very moment and they can project, at best, at least a little into the future. Everything to them is short-term, and we treat animals based on what they do in that moment, not the long-term effects of their actions. A fitting example of this behavior is of humans that act in the moment, often without a thinking, to save somebody in traffic or in an emergency situation, yet are still thought of as heroes. I'm pretty certain that they do not immediately process *every* possible scenario and outcome in that split second before they act, but rather, they think of the immediacy of the moment and how best to fix what they see. If humans can be held morally responsible for what they do in those situations, then why are animals excluded from that merely because every moment is like that for them? Not all animals have shown any *need* to project far into the future, and it is still quite possible to reward or punish them for what they do moment-to-moment and

not for something they did two years ago. The only thing this inability to make a moral mistake brings about is a way to show that animal and human minds are different, a fact without a vast morally important gulf between the two. We can reward and punish, *just not in the same way*. This locution, in a manner of speaking, is the entire point I have been trying to make throughout this work; the only argument philosophers have against animals is that they do not work in the same way as us, which is a vacuous statement to base negating their capacities upon—they are not us therefore they do not operate in the same way as us and cannot be treated in the same way as us—and yet, in the most important features, they have the same capacities, ones which merely present themselves in different ways, *by definition!*

2.4 Myshkin and Morality

As two of the three criteria Rowlands uses to differentiate between moral activity in humans and animals and therefore exclude animals from the category of moral agents have been called into question, let's examine the last criteria, one that I believe actually holds true, but has no real application to animals anyway. This last worry that Rowlands points out is that "Myshkin does not possess the level of phronesis required to judge whether someone's suffering is deserved or underserved. So if Myshkin were inserted into a human context, he might frequently be found offering compassion to those who (arguably) do not deserve it because they have brought the misfortune upon themselves."⁴⁷ Yet Rowlands points out that this is only if the human society Myshkin was part of was subject to all of the vicissitudes of human emotion that cause deserved suffering such as "avarice, pride, arrogance, culpable thoughtlessness or myopia, and so on."⁴⁸ Myshkin's society, however, is not capable of such emotions or mistakes, due to

⁴⁷ Rowlands, p 137

⁴⁸ Ibid, p 137

their inherent emotional and moral simplicity, and therefore, their suffering is never deserved and they cannot judge if the suffering of others *is* deserved, so cannot be held accountable for their actions in such cases. On a certain level, this makes sense, but given the arguments above, is it enough to cut any animals (represented on a proxy basis by Myshkin) from the category of moral agent? All that this shows is that they cannot be held accountable *in certain cases*.

Certainly, it doesn't cut them off from all cases. Those cases that they can understand, and react as if they do understand fully what is at stake, still have moral import and show deliberation on the part of the animal. Once again, this highlights the fact that animals cannot be moral in all of the ways that we can, but that is just true by definition, but is not an indictment of their overall moral capacity.

Additionally, is there not something to be said that animals attempt to help all who are suffering? It could very well be the mark of an inherently good being if they attempt to end all suffering, even if brought about through mistakes on the part of the human. Should we help only the homeless who were put into a situation through no fault of their own? If an individual is suffering because they made a mistake and regrets it for the rest of their life is this not a case where they deserve help as well? The argument above appears to take a very small part of an individual's life and base everything based around that decision, and there is an open question here whether or not this is moral from even a human standpoint. Is it moral to tell an individual that they deserve *no* help because it was their mistake? There is teaching somebody to accept the consequences of their actions and then there is damning somebody to a difficult life because one cannot look past it. Certainly, there are cases in which we would not step in to help somebody, and we certainly wouldn't blame those that help them, but these cases are far rarer than those that

make mistakes and still can be healed.⁴⁹ Look at those animals used in prisons as companions to the inmates—there are cases where the inmates are rehabilitated and are no longer problems. This is another case in which perhaps animals, through their lack of insight into human mores, are actually more capable of helping others than humans, as we just throw inmates in prison and expect them to come out rehabilitated.

Setting that aside, however, the point to the argument is that even if we cannot hold animals accountable for their blind devotion, or praise them for making an informed decision to disregard the circumstances which caused one's suffering, this only speaks to another layer that human morality holds that animals cannot replicate. This inability, however, only appears to apply across species, as perhaps the animals do not understand all of the intricacies and established patterns within another society, and certainly animals do not understand everything about human life, while chimpanzees just the same will not understand life among dogs, nor will birds understand the lives of dolphins. Again, though, this is not a reason to exclude animals from the realm of moral agents, but merely to add a caveat to the category where animals are concerned, and once again make the important point that animals only understand that which they have reason to. Perhaps they can generalize as well—as with the bonobo helping the bird fly again—and understand after a long period of exposure, but that understanding will not be perfect, nor will it necessarily take hold in every animal. Note the difference among domesticated dogs and wild ones, or even other canids; animals over time do become accustomed to variances, but it is still not perfect, even after 10,000 years. Another interesting behavior to note is how horses will change their behavior and gait to accommodate autistic or

⁴⁹We would not blame Hitler's German Shepard, for example, for being loyal to him, nor would we believe that Hitler was just making an honest mistake, but this is an example of the extreme, on either side not the norm.

within morality that animals easily grasp. Thus, all Rowlands can establish based on his three handicapped children⁵⁰, showing that there *are* some universal markers and salient features categories--one of them greatly mistaken—is what I have been repeating for a while now: animals are not humans. Nor can Myshkin count as a perfect representation for animals.

Despite this fact, the Myshkin argument looms large over a great many arguments concerning animals, even if they do not fully realize it. Recall Rowlands's claim that one cannot act as a moral agent and be held responsible for their actions without knowing everything involved, knowing alternatives, questioning whether one deserves to be treated in such a way or not, questioning the ends of a certain action, and knowing based on those criteria whether or not one *ought* to take an action. Rowlands argues that Myshkin is incapable of this and cannot help but to be good, thus negating responsibility. The question I wish to raise here is if these capacities that animals seemingly lack are necessary conditions for moral agency, or merely human capabilities that add an extra layer to moral agency. One of the main cruxes of Rowlands' overall argument is that because these capabilities are necessary, one cannot act morally *and* be responsible for it without knowing all of the salient features involved, which, notably, are those very features that humans are able to perceive. Whether this is by design or simply a matter of definition and a weighted importance of the human capacity for morality is up to debate, although those that argue against animals being moral tend to work around this question. Therefore, animals are not to be held responsible for what they do, even if the action has moral consequences in our definition of morality. Yet this does *not* mean that the action itself is a(n) (im)moral one. We seem to have a moral effect divorced from a morally responsible cause here, which, albeit appearing possible and

⁵⁰This is a fact that is used by groups that practice equine therapy, a technique instituted to great effect. Additionally, in a touching story, Rollin gives an example of a developmentally disabled child he allowed to ride a previously temperamental horse that he'd trained for a year to accept riders. Although nervous about how his horse would react, he found that he "walked with care and deliberation we never saw before or since." (Rollin, upcoming article)

even probable at first glance—as the same differentiation applies to moral patients as well-- runs into some problems.

Looking at the reason for the existence of this gap, it is a valid and open question, it seems, to ask just *what* animals possess that allows them to take into account the variances of a certain situation and respond accordingly, in what we see as a morally significant way. Many have responded to this question and have the typical ammunition ready: instincts, evolutionary principles, our training of them, or the way in which we raise or them or act around them. I will set aside the first two responses listed and focus on the latter two here to illustrate one last point that needs to be made. Rowlands, near the end of his book, discusses how the way *we* act around dogs and how we train them allows them to make out the morally salient aspects of a situation. He gives a lengthy example of his German Shepard, Hugo, whom Rowlands trains using a bite sleeve made of Kevlar. When training with it, Hugo will “Regularly knock his one hundred and eighty pound owner (me) off his feet when working with the sleeve—as he has been trained to do. However, if my four-year-old son puts on the sleeve, Hugo will merely walk up to him and gently chew on it.”⁵¹ Rowlands includes this anecdote for an important reason, namely to show that “Hugo is sufficiently intelligent to understand the differing consequences of the same behavior when it is directed toward two different individuals....This is a form of canine practical wisdom targeted at a morally salient feature of the situation in which Hugo finds himself.”⁵² Yet Rowlands is quick to point out that this is not *true* morality because Hugo’s concern for his son is a manifestation of Rowlands’ own concern for his son, which Hugo is able to watch and adopt on his own, meaning that if Rowlands were to mistreat or act angrily towards his son, Hugo would do the same.

⁵¹Rowlands, p 210

⁵²Ibid, 210

Immediately, a couple of issues spring up with this argument. First, Rowlands points out that there is no responsibility involved because this is not a *true* moral action. Hugo shows concerns and inhibits his desire to bite at the sleeve in the case of Rowlands's son because of factors that have nothing to do with Hugo himself. Yet the flipside of this is conspicuously absent. If Hugo refrains from biting consistently to the point that it is fully expected of him, yet one time attacks with full force and harms Rowlands's son, is there any responsibility involved? This question is not as easy to answer, yet I have the feeling that many would merely respond that in this instance, Hugo actually went along with his desire and his instincts. Yet 'momentary reversion to the norm' seems to be a weak argument that doesn't quite explain everything. If refraining from biting is engrained in Hugo, then there has to be a conscious decision to go against that, much in the same way we have to consciously decide to go against behaviors that we typically perform. I find it difficult to see where the demarcation between our decision to go against the norm—a move that is often celebrated—and an animal's decision to go against the norm differ on such a large scale so as to remove responsibility from one party entirely. If we wish to make the argument that the dog isn't responsible because we have trained them as such, then why don't we make the argument concerning humans and state that a large part of them, even later in life when they are responsible for their actions, fall under the same category? How many of them are taught by their parents to act a certain way, moral ideals instilled in them at a young age, ones which they have a difficult time going against to the point that it takes a massive amount of effort to look past it and actually question their behaviors? Remember, philosophy is often held up as difficult *because* it involves questioning one's actions and reasons, something that not many are capable of or even willing to do. Once again, the split between animals and humans make little sense other than to place humans at the top and make us responsible for the

‘civility’ within animals while at the same time stating that if they do something bad, they are merely acting as expected in nature.

Despite this, it may still seem quite apparent that one needs to be able to take all of the variances listed above into consideration in order to be said to actually be making a *choice* such that they can be praised or blamed for, yet I believe that there are points in which one deserves even *more* praise for some actions without taking everything above into consideration. In fact, if we were to look into ideas such as whether or not one is actually worthy of being on the receiving end of a morally good action, then there are some rather insidious side-effects that have to be addressed. One immediate question is where the line between deserving and underserving lies in such a scenario. Does one have to put themselves into a bad situation in order to be undeserving? One can question if this is the result of an honest mistake or not. Even if one did put themselves into a bad situation, does that mean that we should do nothing to help them get out of it?⁵³ Don’t we often praise those that go out of their way to help all of those they come across, even those many consider less deserving?⁵⁴

On the subject of the morally salient features of a situation, recall that Jeremy Bentham famously stated, concerning animals, that “The question is not, Can they *reason*? Nor, Can they *talk*? But, Can they *suffer*?”⁵⁵ When applied to animals from the viewpoint of a human individual or scientist, the statement serves well to give us pause concerning the typical treatment of animals and our backwards justifications for much of our actions. However, when applied to

⁵³Granted, there are some individuals whom I believe to have gone beyond a line where one deserves anything, but the *majority* of people stay away from that line, and the question is a bit more muddled than we often give it credit for. After all, questions of deserving are often quite subjective. I need not remind readers of what many people think anybody in the Middle East ‘deserves’ simply for living there.

⁵⁴Again, based on one’s views on race, culture, sexuality, etc, the question of *deserving* help is left far too open; many think that one can only help others by showing them religion, convincing them they are sinners, or many other methods that are actually *immoral* in many different ways.

⁵⁵ Bentham, p 311

animals *qua* animals, I am quite pleased to note that this question, or worry, appears to be one of the underlying question at play in many of the actions animals take—often to a much greater degree of success than we do! Their typical response to suffering has been well-documented through many examples, and more examples will be given shortly, but this idea is important to keep in mind. In conjunction with this idea, there is one more important fact of suffering that bears keeping in mind when looking at animals behavior: Whereas we question the nature of suffering or if somebody deserves to suffer, without all of the other factors involved, animals are clearly capable of seeing the most important facet of the situation-- can/do/will/is the animal in question suffering—and acting accordingly. They may not necessarily see what is happening as *suffering*, per se, but animals can clearly tell when something is wrong. An offshoot of this first consideration, is that an animal knowingly causing suffering in another is acting *immorally*, which clears up some of the contentious arguments about whether or not animals are indeed capable of acting as such.⁵⁶ As they have shown the capacity to understand and alleviate suffering, doing the opposite through direct action—rather than inaction—is where I would place immorality within non-human animals. This focus on suffering is key because it holds within it empathetic behavior—i.e. an understanding or at least acknowledgment of other minds--, an understanding that suffering is a negative thing, an overpowering of other evolutionary or instinctual behavior in order to act in such a way to alleviate the suffering, and lastly, an ability to carry behaviors across species, meaning that the scope of their actions is not merely within their own group.⁵⁷ These are merely the highlights of what this capacity holds, and more may arise as we discuss the issue further.

⁵⁶And, contra Myshkin, grants them such a capacity for responsibility and means that there *is* thought behind and knowledge of the important aspects of a situation.

⁵⁷The immediate question that arises, then, is whether or not a carnivorous diet is immoral, contradicting what I said in the first chapter. I will discuss this further on in this work but I believe it is possible to disconnect causing deliberate suffering and hunting to eat.

The other important aspect that this shows is alluded to in previous discussions, and requires Rowlands's elucidation of the Myshkin example to fully explain. As mentioned, Myshkin is a representation of all of the capacities that animals do *not* have and, it seems, *cannot* have, which is meant to be an indictment of their status vis a vis moral responsibility. Yet Myshkin cannot be a 1:1 stand-in for an entire species or for any singular animal in the manner proposed, Myshkin—a human—cannot have what a human typically has, which is reasonable in the moral realm, but to then put a blanket similarity between Myshkin and animals misses the point in that the difference is not in what they should have as members of their species, but what they do not need and have no reason for as members of their species. What the arguments *fail* to do is take into account that even if animals do not have those capacities, do they even need them? Thus, Myshkin does not count as a moral agent because he does not have what humans are *expected* to have within moral reasoning. However, animals are not expected to have such capacities and do not even many of them in the first place if we recall the *umwelt* of an animal and the considerations against the AA fallacy. In other words, they can still hold, as needed, important moral capacities as we define them, yet we can still examine and respect them for what they are: *not humans*.

Many of the arguments that are put forth here show an important overlap with those that argue that machines cannot be moral. The general argument is that even if machines can cause certain scenarios and circumstances that are replete with moral possibilities and actions, the machines themselves cannot be blamed. One can blame how they were programmed, or blame some sort of malfunction within what it was intended to do, but one would be hard pressed to find anybody willing to argue that the machine *itself* made the decision and executed it to such a degree that it deliberately caused the circumstance to arise. However, there is a difference between the two: a machine only acts within its programming and their actions are considered

mistakes if anything they do goes against it, yet animals do not have that problem. One does not argue that the dog in the example used previously made a mistake in taking care of the tiger, or mistook the tiger for one of their own. How are these actions explained then? Can they be explained as anything other than conscious choices made between two morally salient alternatives? What else was needed to be understood in this case? A wild animal like a dog would clearly understand the danger presented in an animal such as a tiger, would understand what could happen to it, and would naturally be wary of such situations. It would also understand mothering and the importance of doing so, understand that the tiger would otherwise slowly die. I fail to see how an understanding of Aristotelian habituation or Kantian categorical imperatives would add anything to the situation in any way. We come then back to my main argument: animals can be moral agents, but at times in different ways and situations that we ourselves would understand.⁵⁸ The problem is that many attempt to put animals in the same types of situations that we could find ourselves in, and then say why animals wouldn't be able to act in the same way or envision all of the possibilities that we could. Does this have any bearing on their possibility of action, though? If one animal saves another, or saves a human being, how would instinct bring about this, especially since other animals and humans would certainly not be said to belong to the same social groups and therefore qualify for a group-centered evolutionary impulse that engenders altruistic behavior? To bring the Myshkin example back into play, how would Myshkin being unable to understand if another individual deserves to receive money have bearing on the action of say, a chimpanzee? The underlying sentiments are important, but as argued previously, what does the issue of *deserving* have to do with animal behavior outside of

⁵⁸Put any one of us at random within an animal society and one can question how well we would live up to their standards or even understand them. Would we show the proper respect or behavior towards those that deserve it?

their own social groups? Within these groups, they appear to be perfectly capable of determining who deserves help, who should be punished, and who has helped them before or needs help, even if it goes against the natural order of things. After all, refer back to the two examples in the first chapter where, against the typical order, those who needed help or were unable to keep up with others were given leeway that would have been impossible for any others. In the most telling example of just how far animals will go against what is normally established in order to, as we would typically call it, ‘do the right thing,’ Bernard Rollin gives the following example of how three horses he kept responded to a certain situation, breaking ranks when morality seemed to call for it:

As is the case with all horses, the three had a rigid and well-established dominance hierarchy. Festus, a very large animal, was most dominant, with April next in line, and the colt was dead last. The hierarchy was diligently maintained by Festus, and was manifested in bite marks and kick marks primarily on Jubilee. Raszam eventually assumed third-place after April. Once established, such hierarchies tend to endure. One day, Raszam developed a condition of temporary blindness, colloquially known as “moon blindness.” He could not see and could not locate his food or water. My wife and I watched in amazement as Jubilee, the lowest-ranking horse, began to nudge and guide Raszam to food and water, and, *mirabile dictu*, to protect him from Festus. What was most extraordinary was how Jubilee would keep Festus away from Raszam, breaking the hierarchy, and would not eat his own food until Raszam had finished and no longer needed protection. This behavior occurred at every feeding for two weeks; Jubilee would even guide Raszam to the shelter that protected them from wind and rain and provided shade... When Raszam’s sight returned, things reverted to normal, and the old dominance hierarchy was restored, with Festus again moving to the top.⁵⁹

Therefore, Rowlands’ lengthy Myshkin example ignores many of the important questions and undermines many of the capacities that animals hold. Within the animal realm, they are clearly capable of more than Myshkin, and so the underlying sentiments do not apply. With that said, and his argument for animals as moral subjects who cannot be moral agents weakened, we turn to the final mistake Rowlands makes, this one much more important and damaging to his overall

⁵⁹Rollin, upcoming article

argument: the nature of punishment when it comes to animals. While I brought it up briefly before this point, it is worth examining in detail to give more of a push towards examining animals on their own grounds, and not falling for AA sight unseen by expecting a perfect 1:1 ratio between humans and animals ala Myshkin.

2.5 Punishment

While Rowlands does not go *too* far into detail about the idea of punishment, he does bring about a couple of objections—both his and those of others—about animals being moral agents based on this worry. His objection seems to be that if animals are responsible for their actions, then we have every right to punish them in the court of law, as we do with humans, yet he argues that not many would wish to seriously consider this scenario. If this scenario is not considered, however, then we cannot state that animals are moral agents. When faced with the objection that we do not punish them in the court of law because animals would not understand *why* they are being punished, therefore making the whole process moot, he raises the following question:

Why is it that the offending animals do not understand the connection between their actions and the subsequent punishment? This, it seems, can only be because they are incapable of grasping relations between cause and effect of the sort required to grasp the significance of their original offense. If so, they would fail to qualify as moral agents—if we assume that an understanding (the significance, likely impact, and so on) of what one is doing is a necessary condition of responsibility.⁶⁰

While it is quite apparent that we do not take animals to court for all of their indiscretions against our laws, that objection raises a number of ancillary questions. Additionally, it is important to question whether or not cause and effect, in the general way that we view everything, has any bearing on how animals live their own lives. Lastly, the most problematic aspect of this argument is that in arguing as such, we apply our standards to them and expect them to

⁶⁰Rowlands, p 84

understand and respond accordingly. Yet how do we get them to understand our standards? We don't fully understand theirs except through observation, so how can they come to understand ours when we relay them harsh words and painful stimuli attached to an abstract and unknown concept?

The thought that immediately springs to mind—mine at least--when faced with the objection that animals are not held accountable, in our own way, for what they do or punished for their actions, is one of shocked disbelief. After all, we *do* punish the animals for what they do, often far in excess of how we punish humans for their actions. We euthanize animals that are considered dangerous, whereas we throw humans in prison for the same. We give little thought to killing an animal for causing us trouble or for destroying part of our property or livelihood, we use incredibly painful traps on them if we wish to catch them, and we shoot animals that pose even a small threat. While I wholeheartedly believe that this is in and of itself unethical, the overall point to be made here is that animals are punished to cruel and unusual extents for, in many cases, *being themselves*.

Yet while that much is apparent, the ancillary question that arises is who we are doing the punishment for. The general consensus is that humans are supposed to learn the error of their ways and understand what they did wrong after having such a long time to think about it and seeing the consequences of their actions. Animals, it seems, do not understand the connection. Ignoring this claim for a second, it would seem then that we are punishing animals for our own sake, for our own safety and consciousness, after applying our own ethical standards to an animal in a backwards justificatory action. If an animal presents a danger, we take care of the danger as quickly as possible because reasoning with the animal would not get us very far. This is exactly the reason that we do not take animals to court—how would we communicate what

they have done, what they need to do, and how they were wrong according to our laws? Does this problem, however, give us a justificatory basis for going to extremes almost as an immediate response in some cases, with the actions taken with nary a second thought?

Additionally, if we are to take the memory span of animals into account, subjecting an animal to our justice system would be an exercise in facetious futility, because the animal would have no concrete recollection of what it had done in the first place, so naturally, belated punishment would engender no change within the animal's behavior. The best way to curtail behavior is immediately or in a context where the animal can be reminded of what they had done or shown that all behavior of that nature is wrong. So the argument concerning court and the iffy connection between cause and effect does not hold much water because it disregards an important facet of the animal's mental capability. Not only that, but the court system is immediately meant to apply to justice or wrongdoing within humans. Are we to make an animal court, and would it even be feasible to do so? After all, our society is different and we cannot hope to entrench ourselves within that society to such a degree that we can hand out punishment in the same way. What is apparent here, then, is that we can still punish an animal, just not in the same way that we punish human beings for their actions, and not in the same way that animals punish each other for their actions. This one fact is not enough to keep them out of the realm of moral agents, as it only establishes a curtailment on the *method* of punishment, not the concept of punishment altogether.

To that end, must examine whether or not animals can understand the relationship between cause and effect to the point that we can hold them culpable morally for their actions. One does not need to prove that animals are capable in general of understanding cause and effect, as that is easily documented by the fact that animals are still alive and able to operate

within the world, and the fact that it is possible to train them and that they can understand patterns. However, these are all relatively simple instantiations of cause and effect, as they are only requisite to actions and virtually any living creature is able to act in such a way. Rather, the question that needs to be raised—discussed here solely in terms of punishment-- is whether or not animals can understand the effect that certain actions have upon the world around them as morally bad and that they are the *cause* of such actions. Then, they would need to understand that they are being punished for that specific action and nothing else, to the point that one can effectively stop the behavior. If they cannot understand this, then they cannot be moral agents because they have shown that they do not understand their actions as good or bad and their actions will not qualify as ones worthy of praise or blame, but rather blind actions.

Before the discussion can begin, a couple of finer points need to be made. First of all, I am not attempting here to argue that it is at all possible that animals can be told that what they are doing is wrong. Frankly, it is an exercise in futility because the language barrier is too great, and just as we must do when confronted with other human beings that speak a language we cannot understand, we attempt to pick up on emotional content rather than factual content. Animals respond quite powerfully to emotional content, and can often pick up on subtle cues that are invisible to humans.⁶¹ They also understand physical cues, which is why we often resort to either moderately painful stimuli or an angered posturing using a firm tone of voice. Thus, animals cannot be *told* what they are doing is wrong, but they can be *shown* through actions. Yet the worry here, as many have pointed out, is that by doing this, they are only reacting out of fear of *our* reaction, not the impacts that their actions will have on the world around them.⁴² They show fear and cower, or they wait for the punishment, yet do nothing to really change their

⁶¹Recall the Clever Hans story, where a horse thought to understand mathematics was shown to only be responding to the subtle and unintentional cues of the owner.

behavior. If this is true, then they have learned nothing about the fact that the action is wrong, but that those around them disapprove of the action.

An immediate counterexample is the famous experiment involving macaques, who “...were fed only if they pulled a chain which caused an electric shock to be delivered to an unrelated macaque who was in plain view through a one-way mirror. If they refused to pull the chain, they starved.”⁶³ Upon learning the effects of pulling the chain, 87 percent of the macaques refused afterwards to pull the chain, effectively starving themselves rather than harm another member of their species.^{64/65} There are a multitude of similar examples of animals acting in what appears to be a moral manner without any human intervention of punishment, but this one has long stood out in my mind for the fact that the macaques were *rewarded* for making what would be a morally bad decision, but still refused to act upon it, to their own great detriment. Some have argued that they only did this after hearing the pained cries of the other macaques, but doesn't this show an understanding of cause and effect, leading to an important choice that they had to make? They understood the relationship between pulling the lever and causing pain for those around them, and they understood that if they did not pull the lever, they would starve. There are two choices here, and again it was a battle between a survival imperative and causing harm to another. That is the definition of self-sacrificing behavior, and to me it stands up as the most (documented) striking case of it within animal experimentation.

⁶²Another worry is whether or not they understand exactly what point in what they have done is being punished when we punish them in our own ways. Rather, all they seem to understand, as pointed out by de Waal, is “Evidence+Owner=Trouble.” (de Waal, *Good Natured*, p 108)

⁶³Shapiro, p 360

⁶⁴The immediate question is whether or not humans, subjected to the same experiment, would do the same thing for nearly as long as the macaques were able to. Part of me wants to believe that the results would be even better, but I feel as if it could just as easily go the other way as well.

⁶⁵Some argue that the macaques only refrained from pulling the lever only to avoid the cries of the injured party, thus establishing a sense of ‘selfish in the moral sense’ behavior rather than self-sacrificing behavior. Yet any cynic—and I have read multiple examples of this—could say the same exact thing about the supposedly moral behavior of humans, where every last bit of it is undercut by our selfish impulses. So this counterargument establishes nothing.

A multitude of other examples limned this capacity, and a great many of them defy behavioral expectation, showing that animals aren't just acting based on instinct, but are rather always choosing between behaviors in the same manner that we are. The fact that their behavioral possibilities are more limited does mean they do not possess them at all.

What this argument does, then, is attempt to apply, across the board, human justice to animals, while at the same time negating any possibility of animal justice. It is interesting to note, at this juncture, that Bekoff's book is entitled *Wild Justice*, showing that animals do have their own standards within groups and expect members of the society to keep such standards. Many authors give examples which showcase this capacity, and show that such responses to a social miscue actually work to prevent such miscues, to the effect that an animal does not showcase them again. In one example, de Waal relays how two young chimpanzees held up dinner for the entire group. The rule was that none of the chimpanzees were fed until *all* of them were inside, and these two dallied for two hours. The next morning, the rest of the group vented their frustration by beating the two culprits, and as a result, "Needless to say, they were the first to come in that evening."⁶⁶ This examples illustrates that the animals do in fact understand cause and effect, as well as an understanding of what they have done wrong. Note how the alpha males in both canid and primate society need only make one simple movement or noise, or even be present, and the behavior of those under the alpha male will change completely. This system goes so far that those animals that don't respond to punishment and continue in their ways are eventually ostracized by the group. Is this any different from how we act in the presence of authority and not showcase the extent to which our punishments go, and for the same ends? For this reason, it is easy to see why our typical punishments fail to work: they are of a different kind, different nature, and for things they do not have reason to understand. Would a dog

⁶⁶de Waal, *Good Natured*, p 89

understand, abstractly, destruction of personal property? No, but they understand the rules of playing, and the effects of escalating or crossing the established boundaries. Thus, reprimanding them for what in our minds is a clear-cut violation of social expectations in *our* society will naturally prove ineffective to curtail that specific behavior. Yet if an animal were to growl or gesture angrily/threateningly towards us for an action we take, would we understand exactly what they meant without fail in every situation?

We can also take into account how many humans fully understand punishment, what exactly they did wrong, and therefore are rehabilitated and at the same time recall how often one makes an insincere statement to never do ‘x’ again and show fake emotions to assuage those around them.⁶⁷ To this end, though, there are some universals that both humans and animals understand, as shown by the prevalence of cross-species moral behavior and understanding, such as how one is not to hurt children or the enfeebled within their societies, or how children are not meant to be approached by complete strangers who might cause harm. (Again, note how similar the reaction of a human is to the reaction of a bear when children are involved, with some locutions directly being influenced by such events.) In every case, there are different societal expectations or methods of punishment in particular cases, which is the cause of variances in success regarding punishment, but the universals are present as well. Therefore, there seems to be a continuum between animal behavior and human behavior, punishment, remorse, and ‘rehabilitation’ so even if we do not take animals to court, there are other means in which animals show understanding and remorse focused on a specific action. Thus, Rowlands’ last argument, and one of his most pressing ones, falls short of the reality of life between animals and

⁶⁷As a lighthearted example, how true is this in relationships, where one does not understand in the slightest what their significant other is upset about, yet castigate themselves and act repentant in hopes that such anger will pass? The typical joke, after all, is that men and women do not understand each other and thus speak different languages, proving the difference in societal norms even within the same genus.

humans, once again showing that he falls for the AA fallacy and does not take into account the *umwelt* of the actual animals, rather just putting human expectations on animals and then removing many capacities from them because they do not show themselves in the same way.

2.6 Moving Forward

There are myriad more arguments that Rowlands and others like him bring into the fray, but I do not have the space to respond to them all. Various concerns such as how specific ethical concerns apply to animal behavior are brought up by Korsgaard, who takes a Kantian approach, and Nussbaum, who takes an Aristotelian approach, amongst others, while others delve into the philosophy of language, metaethics, and many more aspects of the moral landscape. Yet my purpose within this chapter was to show that many of the general arguments against animals make the same general mistakes. As such, we have seen, through all of these discussions and examples in the last two chapters, that every attempt to deny animals any ascription of morality or responsibility is done through a very specific lens, namely that of anthropocentric anthropomorphism. By holding animals to the exact same standards as ourselves and arguing that if something works for us or exists within us, then animals *must* showcase the same behaviors in the same way, we ignore everything that differentiates animals and humans. This difference does not mitigate against their capacities, but rather, it highlights the various ways in which animals see, experience, and live within this world. Granted, I am not able to respond to every single argument against animals, nor even to all of Rowlands' and Regan's arguments, but my responses to their most pressing ones should prove to be enough for the moment.

Having shown that the scientific arguments against animals fall short in a variety of ways within the first chapter, and now having shown that the main arguments within philosophy fall victim to the AA fallacy, and in many cases also completely disregard some of the abilities of

animals (or worse, refuse to acknowledge that they exist), the last step that must be taken is to show that some animals can in fact qualify as moral agents. While a full argument can be given briefly for seeing some animals as moral agents, I believe that most of the most important work has been done through showing the faults of the other arguments, thus showing that animals still have (or don't need) these qualities that are considered requisite for consideration as moral agents. The concept of punishment, morally salient features, lying, future projection, self-sacrifice, choice, and more are all well and alive within the animal realm, even if they showcase themselves in different ways—ways in which the crossover with human moral principles or actions are not cognizable by the animal in question. The main point is that the most important and underlying features still hold. While we are not fully done with showing the faults in all of the arguments against animals, as two larger and less focused arguments will be discussed in the next chapter, we will be able after that to discuss the conclusions of the overall argument. This will include a return to what is meant by moral behavior and just what the ramifications are of making such a theoretical move as allowing some animals to be categorized as moral agents.

Chapter III: Final Issues, A New Perspective, Ramifications, and Conclusions

3.1. Introduction

Thus far, we have established that the underlying means used within science to undermine any claims that animals can behave morally undermine themselves in many areas, and do not necessarily apply fully to animals in every category. As worried as science is about anthropomorphism, scientists have unknowingly made such claims fallaciously *necessary* while at the same time incorrect in application concerning animals. This in turn causes a great deal of obstruction concerning discussion about animals and what is typically assumed about them, so much so that capacities are often either not given the full credit they deserve or the typical reluctance to grant them ‘more than necessary’ is heralded to the point that far more than necessary is used to explain away what is necessary for more understanding. At the same time, we have seen that the common philosophical arguments used to keep animals out of the realm of moral agent, and in some cases, away from moral behavior at all, fall far short of the mark and do not hold up against deeper examination or the reality of animal behavior itself. Their mistaken claims about animals serves to weaken their claims, and upon closer scrutiny, they carve out wide generalizations that do not apply to all animals, meaning that there are multiple ways to poke holes in their arguments. At worst, they fall victim to multiple and inexplicable claims about animals that have no bearing on animal life whatsoever and then quickly dismiss anything associated with these claims. What we have realized, above all else, is that the same principles applied to animals and humans is by no means even *meant* to be a 1:1 relationship, and far from being a knock against them, what we have found is that many of the same ideas apply to animals in a different, but still

valid, verifiable, and important way. Lest we fall victim to the AA fallacy, we would be wise to recognize this fact.

What we must turn to now, though, is discussing what moral behavior, and by proxy moral agency, is within animals. There are myriad ways in which this discussion can have a far-reaching effect on morality in general, and what morality truly is for humans, so it is important to draw clear lines concerning all possible variants of and questions concerning this argument. Before turning to that, however, there are a few other concerns that need to be addressed, namely questions concerning larger aspects of morality than were discussed within the last chapter. With those out of the way, we will have a much fuller and clearer picture of what moral behavior within animals entails and how they can still have it even in the supposed absence of all of these capacities. With this picture in mind, we can conclude with how such discussions as these can move forward and hopefully inform the way in which we view animals qua animals, rather than animals seen purely through our own eyes, beliefs, principles, and lives.

3.2. Different Lives, Different Morally Salient Features

Recall my argument within the first chapter against anthropocentric anthropomorphism, which I define as *the tendency to assume that 1) any attempt to claim that animals can be moral must immediately amount to anthropomorphizing, and 2), that any supposedly moral action an animal takes must be of the same exact sort as a moral action taken by a human being and showcase the same cognitive, emotional, and intentional markers*. The purpose of highlighting that tendency, taken in conjunction with the other arguments I have made thus far, is to show that we fallaciously see morality only in our *own* society and assume that everything to do with morality must fall under the same parameters, or work within the same confines, with animals having the same prescient abilities as well as control over when morally laden emotions are shown and acted

upon. Anthropomorphism has done us a disservice in this case, and while I would usually support such an enterprise as proving that animals are like us in that they *do* have certain capacities, the important distinction to be made here is that ascribing morality to animals is *not* anthropomorphic, and they are only like us insofar as they have certain capacities, but are not a perfect facsimile of us in how these capacities present themselves or are put into effect within animal society. An anthropomorphic reading of this ascription is actually anthropocentric the entire way because it begs the question that *only* humans have morality, or that any animal moral action must be done in the same vein as human moral action, complete with a disregard for the fact that, as I have said many times now, animals do not have the same issues, problems, or lives as us. There may be similarities, and certainly there are continuums between emotions, cognition, and certain actions, but in morality, there is a difference that doesn't need to be explained away, but actually grasped and *used* as an explanation. So, having started in the first chapter, we can now attempt to fully explain and argue against AA here, starting by expanding upon the concepts of morally-laden emotions and morality tied to innate behavior, rationality, and language. First, let's look at two common objections against animals as moral creatures: animals do not have morally-laden emotions, and animals cannot determine if whomever they are helping *deserves* such help, two positions highlighted by B.A. Dixon and Mark Rowlands, respectively, with a couple of others serving to back up these ideas in their own ways.

B.A. Dixon, in her book *Animals: Emotion & Morality*, argues that while animals can quite obviously have emotions, the more important question is whether or not they have the correct emotions *directed* towards the correct individuals at the correct time. In her argument, she attempts to give an account of what it means for an emotion to be morally laden and then questions whether or not animals can live up to these criteria. Using Martha Nussbaum's

definition, Dixon concludes that while animals can have emotions, such emotions are not morally laden or directed towards the right aspect of the situation. She illustrates her argument in terms of compassion, stating that “being compassionate implies the belief or judgment that the misfortunes or suffering is serious...Some losses are genuinely trivial compared to others.”⁶⁸ To illustrate, she juxtaposes a serious loss or tragedy with a woman unable to find “exactly the right shade of green in her search for yet another pair of shoes.”⁶⁹ Quite obviously, we would care more about one than the other, but this seems to exclude animals, who would not be able to tell the difference between the reasons or judge one or the other as worthy of compassion, rather instead showing compassion to both.

This is reminiscent of Rowland’s Myshkin example and it appears that those who argue against animals as moral agents are all stuck on this idea, even if they are unaware of it, highlighted by Rowlands’s claim that even if animals act from a moral sentiment, they do not use it correctly, thus abdicating animals of responsibility entirely. Dixon herself argues in the same vein, stopping animals far short of calling animals moral agents and accusing those who attempt to claim that animals are moral agents of not asking themselves enough questions. Once again discussing the virtue of compassion, she says that we must ask ourselves questions such as “What is the nature of a compassionate state? And second, how is the emotion of compassion conceptually linked to morality...?” She then adds additional questions that we must ask concerning animals, adding queries such as “Does the emotional state of compassion always lead to right action?...Do we have to learn how to develop a compassionate disposition or trait of character? If not, why do we morally praise human beings who act compassionately? What does

⁶⁸Dixon, p 66

⁶⁹Ibid, p 66

a person or an animal understand when she has compassion?”⁷⁰ As such, it would seem that there are subtleties to life that animals do not appear to be able to pick up on. Martha Nussbaum explicitly states that there are many emotions that animals cannot experience, arguing that “Some emotions will prove altogether unavailable to many animals, to the extent that the sort of thinking underlying them proves unavailable: hope...guilt...romantic love...compassion...types of shame...and even some forms of anger, fear, and grief, to the extent to which they require causal and temporal judgments.”^{71/72}

I believe that this objection presses things a bit too far and focuses far too much on human life and not enough on the larger questions facing us, and it quickly puts animals into situations and circumstances that they have no precedent for. For example, look at the majority of examples we have concerning animals into which we may be tempted to read moral features. Many of them involve animals saving another animal or human in danger, or attempting to help another perform something that they were not able to do themselves (without expectation of reciprocation), or protecting another animal or person from harm. None of the examples such as these involve needing to question whether or not an animal truly feels compassionate for an irate person who cannot find shoes of the right shade. Even if one can go so far as to claim that the individual got themselves into such a situation that their life was in danger, how many of *us* even would be callous enough to stand by and question our emotions before showing them? Our first instinct would be to help the person, and then ask questions. Are we mistaken, then, for helping

⁷⁰Ibid, pp 63-64

⁷¹Nussbaum, qtd in Dixon, p 53

⁷²While the list *may* appear to be valid, the most important question is whether or not these are the most important emotions in morality. Again, animals have many of the same emotions, but not quite to the extent that we do. Romantic love isn't needed, but they obviously love and are loyal and close to many around them. Do they need the exact words, as many of our emotions are tied to our own direct experiences and suggest how we view the temporal world around us? As Bekoff states, animal emotions will be of the animal kind. If nothing else, this appears to be a list of things that animals cannot do without any true importance behind such claims.

them? The arguments like Dixon's, then, appear to apply *after-the-fact* considerations and then make them the considerations that are somehow fully apparent beforehand. If we see somebody despondent or irate, we usually feel compassion or some emotion first, and then ask what was wrong, judging the emotions afterwards based on what we think of their predicament. That, however, does not erase that first emotion nor does it make us completely incapable of having such emotions. Besides, compassion is not moral in the first place. A feeling of compassion is not a moral action for which one can be praised or blamed, it is merely something that *might*—but does not have to—propel one to a moral action. Dixon does argue as such, but what she does not account for is that if we cannot even understand the situation in the first place, *and have no reason to*, it should not matter that we may feel the wrong emotion, so long as we showcase it correctly in situations we have every reason to understand.⁷³ What would an animal do in these cases anyway, with no precedent for action? They might be compassionate that their owner, perhaps, is irate, and attempt to help comfort them in the way only animals seem to be able to, yet I don't think a dog will truly care that their owner cannot find the right shoes and thus their outfit is ruined.^{74/75} In this vein, when animals *do* understand the situation, they then act upon it far beyond than merely showcasing an emotion.

Immediately, this argument appears to run into the objection that animals (strongly) cannot or (weakly) do not understand the reasons behind a certain emotion, and are thus grouped back in with a Myshkin-esque figure. The problem with claiming that, however, is that we also

⁷³Ancillary consideration: It would be worthwhile, if not difficult, to parse out what it would be 'reasonable' for an animal to understand considering its *umwelt*.

⁷⁴Would we even term a dog attempting to calm down a human as moral anyway? It might be 'good' but adding a moral comport to it seems to take the action too far. Thus, this focus on what they *cannot* do delimits our ability to see what they *actually* do.

⁷⁵We understand that this reaction by the woman is an unwarranted overreaction, yet do we do so unfairly, refusing to care if we ourselves wouldn't care, thus putting such concerns off merely because of our own experiences? Yet it is true that indiscriminate compassion shouldn't be the replacement. Is this indiscriminate compassion we see a result of our own propensity to, when we own dogs, look to them for emotional support, or is it actually what they do?

have to wonder why an animal should even know or care about the despondency caused by fashion failures or esoteric things like that. Unless exposed to the day-to-day lives of humans, animals have no reason for such knowledge, and much of what they see within the world at large will include animals being despondent *for a good reason*, such as the heartbreaking story Jane Goodall told of a seven year old gorilla that was incredibly despondent after losing his mother, to the point that he gave up on living completely.⁷⁶ Dixon, of course, is quick to point out that this is genuine, but says that this story and stories like it do not qualify animals for moral behavior, as she buys into the Myshkin argument as well, as evinced by her shoe example. Yet if we expose animals to situations that they do know about and are familiar with, we see stirring results that show a rational and emotional response that is perfectly gauged to the scenario and they act in ways that, if a human being did so, we would be quick to call them moral, heroes, selfless, and brave, among other things. Once again, arguments against animals as moral creatures are helped along by the anthropocentric anthropomorphism inherent in any such argument.

With that in mind, the important fact is that animals show compassion and other morally-laden emotions *when it matters* and in contexts that they can understand and act upon. First shared by Frans de Waal, one of the most unique stories that illustrates the ability to showcase compassion and other capacities is of a bonobo who comes across a bird with an injured wing. This anecdote was referenced in the second chapter, but is important to examine in its entirety here. Upon seeing the bird, the bonobo grabs the bird and attempts to help it fly by climbing to the highest point it can, and after helping the bird spread its wings, throwing it into the air. While the attempt failed, the bonobo read the situation correctly, felt compassion towards the correct individual, for the right reason, and applied the best method available to it to help the bird. Even after the attempt failed, the bonobo still stayed by the bird to protect it. It is these types of

⁷⁶Recounted in Dixon, p 12-13

situations, ones we have multitudes of, that illustrate that in their own lives and in their own ways, animals go above and beyond what is usually expected to help when needed, both in their own groups and across species.⁷⁷ Another example, again given by de Waal, is of a chimpanzee named Krom, a low-ranking and mentally slow chimpanzee who was attempting to retrieve a tire filled with water, but was unable to as six tires needed to be moved first. After giving up and leaving, Jakie, a strong male, did what Krom could not do, and without hesitation, walked over and gave the tire to Krom, then left.⁷⁸ What this shows is that animals *are* capable, and even adept at, figuring out the problem facing others, understanding that this problem is causing some emotional problem for the other animal, and acting upon it in the correct manner. If they had shown behavior that attempted to showcase support or help, but done it in a manner that had nothing to do with the problem at hand, then these cases would not matter at all, but the fact that they did exactly what needed to be done, or attempted to do, means that they cannot be overlooked, even though they appear to be written off quite easily in the literature. Are these capabilities not some of the building blocks of morality, even though many, including Jeffery Masson, are adamant that only humans can have such a capacity?⁷⁹

This is what animal compassion and morally-laden emotions would look like, not their responses to the needlessly complex vicissitudes of human life. Humans, again, with their advanced capacities and much richer variety in decisions and social life, can make a *vast* amount more mistakes or decisions that animals cannot even fathom.⁸⁰ Recall the list from chapter one of

⁷⁷ Recounted in de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers*, pp 30-31

⁷⁸ Recounted in same, pp 31-32

⁷⁹Of course, Masson also posits that animals are incapable of exhibiting such traits as “gentle-heartedness, graciousness, heroism, insight, love for mankind, ministrations to the sick, sorrow for another’s suffering, display of mercy, tenderheartedness, universal goodwill...” and many more. (Masson, p 171-172) His claims are little more than a list, with no actual reasons given for this list or arguments for why they cannot hold such traits. Some of them are questionable, some of them are flat-out wrong in the face of research, and worst of all, *all* of them display question-begging to the point that the question had to have been on its hands and knees begging for mercy at some point in the writing of his book. His addition of ‘*love for mankind*’ is especially egregious.

the actions I gave that animals cannot do. The list can go on and on, but it is plain to see that many reasons an emotion might be morally laden are not available to animals at all, as they literally cannot understand the situation calling for such an emotion. Instead, they respond to what they understand.⁸¹ Yet does this mean that animals cannot exhibit such emotions and are therefore not truly moral? I do not believe that this is the case at all, and the argument only shows that animal lives are, for the most part, much simpler than human lives. Once again, questions of suffering and situations that animals can understand based on their experiences or observations are the most important, without all of the esoteric filling that human life is heir to.

Thus, I posit that animals are capable of acting on moral emotions and showing them at the correct time, evinced by their actions in various scenarios. I have yet to see stories of an animal constantly or randomly showcasing the wrong emotion at all times in all situations and acting in inappropriate ways when confronted with certain situations. Instead, they showcase the proper emotion and we are often surprised that they seem to have some of the same standards/reactions as we do, even if they do not vocalize them. Any claim, then, that animals are incapable of differentiating situations or what not seem to rest on tenuous foundations, and seems rather an unquantified claim. The situations they understand are usually of the same general type: a response to suffering, pain, abandonment, danger, loss, breaking of an expected behavior, and on the more positive side, loyalty, friendship, and more. All of these are available to animals, and in all of them, we seem to see the same emotions and reactions that we would display written clearly in the faces and actions of the animal in question. In a rather facetious and succinct quote, Stephen R. L. Clark makes an important point akin to my own

⁸⁰It is hard to question whether or not this is to their detriment or credit to their quality of life. Personally, I lean on the side of the latter.

⁸¹Of course, humans can also perform some incredibly miraculous actions and save multitudes of people, but these should be seen as advanced examples of morality, not the foundation

argument. For many animals, the human world is strange and at times occult, with events happening for no apparent reason to them. To this end, he points out that if we expected animals to act fully like us and “try anything once” we would be faced with quite a problem in experimentation in that “we would have killed them off long ago!”⁸² In other words, if they did not proceed with caution in the unknown or did not care that they had little understanding of what was going on around them and charged in blindly—in this case taking poisonous medication—just to figure it out, they would quickly end up dead. In short, the differences between animals and humans are explainable through much different means than they simply do not have the same capacities. Thus, there are valid reasons for such a difference and lack of response in animals when faced with unique situations.⁸³

The question then becomes just how we are to proceed and how we are to judge animal behavior if we do not look at their actions through a distinctly human lens. The answer, I find, is to be found within one of Marc Bekoff’s arguments from *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, where he states that (concerning emotions here, but morality is just as applicable, and true. Replace the word ‘emotions’ with ‘morality’ and the result is my argument summed up neatly.) “even if animal emotions aren’t always exactly the same as our own, or for that matter the same across species, this doesn’t mean that animals don’t feel. In fact, animal emotions are not restricted to “instinctual responses,” but entail what seems to be a good deal of conscious thought...In the end, the truth is simply that [an animal] has rich and emotional cognitive experiences of the

⁸²Clark, p 21

⁸³As such, it stands to reason that they can understand on some level some parts of human life through exposure, but this isn’t the same as us teaching them and thus negating their abilities. After all, how many children are born with knowledge of the inner workings of human society? Instead, they must be exposed to unique situations and learn from those around them through social cues or their parents/guardians. Children can learn and respond over time, being of the same species and makeup. Animals do not have that same luxury or ability, but this is not a knock against them.

[animal] kind.”⁸⁴ Unpacking these two statements provides us with a unique insight into how we should view morality within animals. Morality in animals can be viewed as *of the animal kind*, not with the framework of AA. This morality of the animal kind can be seen as being constitutive of, but not fully, human morality, sharing many, if not all, of the most important features, but without the added features required by the complexity of the human experience. It also involves easing up on some stringent requirements, not merely to allow animals easier entry into the moral realm, but instead because it makes sense, in many ways, to talk about responsibility and everything else morality entails when looking at the *umwelt* of the animals in question. To sum up, I believe that Frans de Waal states it best when he says that all that comparisons which hold humans as the epitome of any capacity have done is “make us measure animals by human standards, thus ignoring the immense variations in organisms’ *Umwelten*. It seems highly unfair to ask if a squirrel can count to ten if counting is not really what a squirrel’s life is about....In other words, what is salient to us...may not be salient to other species. Animals often know only what they *need* to know.”⁸⁵

3.3 The other side of rationality and language

With two of the most prominent arguments against animals cleared up, even briefly, we can turn to two other common arguments used against moral behavior in animals: the supposed necessity of rationality to the degree that humans have and a grasp of human language in order to understand the world around them in the same manner and thus make moral decisions or proclamations. I have already given the account of language in the second chapter, but I cannot give a full account for argument for rationality within animals here. Instead, I will argue as such: Those capacities which we hold up as bastions of morality often prove inimical to morality. This

⁸⁴Bekoff, pp 12-15

⁸⁵de Waal, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*, pp 12-19

may sound self-evident, as any capacity can go either way within the moral realm, but there is another element at play here. Rationality and language actually obscure the true nature of morality. The fact that we have them does not mean that we are *prima facie* better for it. In showing the downside of each with argumentation, I will show that advanced rationality and language are not *requisites* for moral behavior, but rather an extension of morality within humanity, one which can either add or detract. Then, I will turn to the question of innate behavior and whether or not any such behavior is moral or can be seen as moral, both within humans and animals, bringing into question my own definition of moral behavior within animals that I introduced in the first chapter. In doing so, I will bring into question why there is such a disconnect between what we unhesitatingly call moral behavior in humans and what we grudgingly *consider* as *possibly* moral in animals.

To expand on the point made above a bit, we have to briefly examine our historical love for rationality and all that comes along with it, including language, as the two are often inextricably linked. This faculty has been held in high esteem since the period of the Ancient Greeks, and exalted by almost every philosopher since. After all, without rationality, how would philosophy have even come about? Certainly there are no animal philosophers (Aporcupinas, Aristurtle, Immanuel Ant...) and so it makes sense that the faculty that makes the enterprise possible in the first place is the one we treasure above all else. We applaud rational actions, call wrong actions irrational, and use rationality as a benchmark for intelligence. Robert Nozick once claimed that we use the term irrational as a fear tactic and that the worst thing that can be said about an argument from the viewpoint of philosophy is that it is irrational and thus not even

worth considering.⁸⁶ Within moral systems, rationality is taken as a prerequisite for any moral action; after all, rationality leads to deliberation and an understanding of all the variables, not to mention the ability to go outside oneself and take the viewpoint of an impartial spectator all of which are held up as hallmarks of morality. My question, however, is whether or not this admittedly *advanced* degree of rationality found in the average human being is a necessary condition for morality, or if it is merely, as suggested previously, an extension of the capacity for morality. If we are to find that they are extensions or an advanced degree, then there is little reason to claim that animals, without such advanced degrees of rationality, *cannot* showcase moral behavior or qualify as moral agents.

On the face of it, this pseudo-deification of rationality has inimical side-effects in that we are so convinced that only we humans can show it in any meaningful way and thus it is what truly sets us apart from the animals.⁸⁷ Descartes claimed that animals are nothing more than machines responding to natural impulses, lacking any form of consciousness and therefore rational ability. In the same vein, Kant can easily take animals out of the moral realm because his entire system is based upon the prerequisite of rationality. Utilitarianism can do the same because it can ask how animals understand such conceptions as good or bad and generalize their actions in such a way that each is aligned to propagating the greatest good. Aristotle's definition of a human is 'the rational animal,' automatically separating the two and cutting off such a possibility from animals to have moral acts. Aristotle's ethics, of course, require long-term plans, habituation, and rationality, so it's a double whammy against animals in his view. Wittgenstein

⁸⁶It's worth quoting in full, as Nozick is always worth quoting: "Though philosophy is carried on as a coercive activity, the penalty philosophers wield is, after all, rather weak. If the other person is willing to bear the label of "irrational" or "having the worse arguments", he can skip away happily maintaining his previous belief. He will be trailed, of course, by the philosopher furiously hurling philosophical imprecations..." (Nozick, p 4)

⁸⁷Yet this can only be said to be in degrees, not kind. There is no question that in many rational capacities, we are far ahead of animals, but at the same time, we are not *set apart* from animals due to such capacities.

stated that even if animals (lions) were rational and could talk, we would not be able to understand them, as their rational capabilities are cultivated by their environment and society, meaning that they possess thoughts and ways of talking that are completely alien to us.

Therefore, an implicit consequence of this would be that we would not be able to apply human notions to them, and certainly not a moral system that we could make sense of. Many more examples from philosophy can be given, but in all cases, the problem seems to be that animals do not have the same capabilities as humans. Yet is rationality such an important aspect of morality that it supersedes everything else? We seem to believe so, as we do not consider any individual to be truly moral *until* they have some rational capacity to reflect upon their actions.⁸⁸

Certainly, much has been made of how one cannot be moral without rationality or language, but at the same time, the rational and linguistic capacities of humanity also lead to a great deal of *immorality* that wouldn't happen otherwise. As much documentation as there is of animals exhibiting what could be termed, *ceteris paribus*, moral behavior towards humans or other members of the animal kingdom, there is, sadly, a great deal of evidence to show the diametric opposite in our treatment of members of the animal kingdom, and what we have done to them is far worse than anything negative they could do to us, and it is *much* more sustained. Animals, without having to have it explained to them or without them having to argue for it and without having to go through horrific periods in history to show the necessity of having such capacities, routinely show empathy and sympathy for the majority of creatures while humans have historically lacked such attitudes towards the 'lower' creatures, and that applies even to other *humans* who are deemed 'lesser.' In fact, the problem is so pervasive that a very interesting

⁸⁸Many psychological studies, such as those of Piaget, argue that children who know why they are doing something bad are morally worse than those who merely do an action because they were told to, or do so without understanding. He grants children the ability to think logically no earlier than age 7, and argues that they cannot think in abstract terms and generalize until the age of 12.

argument could be made that perhaps the ability to rationalize or to come up with reasons for everything and to use logic to come up with some sort of justification for our actions is actually morally *debilitating*, rather than required for even the beginning of being part of ethical consideration.

Consider the following: how many horrific acts have been perpetrated through the use of rational argumentation? I cannot go over them all, but a short list of them is quite enough to make my point clear: religious killings in attempts to save the soul of an individual, the Holocaust by convincing others that Jews were the enemy, actions in the USSR in an attempt to force Communism, a supposed good, upon others, any sort of segregation through convincing one group that another is inferior, and countless more. In each case, one had to *argue* their cases to others, convince them, and then watch the effects perpetuated over years or decades. It is not random, indiscriminate hatred, but rather directed, deliberate hate and violence promulgated through rational means. To be overly cynical, witness the rise of politicians such as Donald Trump that are capable of disguising their actions and twisting the facts of the matter until they are vociferously defended even while they are thought by others to be trampling over human rights and decency. Witness how scientists convinced themselves in the twentieth century that animals felt nothing and were thus free to be used as desired. In, every case, it has been evil designed as a moral *good*, a moral *necessity*, or an entire group written off as unimportant in morality. This propensity to, through language and the ability to rationalize, be convinced to do anything, so long as they are made to believe that it is the *right thing*, or in some worse cases, be convinced to to hide morality, is uniquely human, and one brought about by our advanced capacities.⁸⁹

⁸⁹Animals can be made to do so as well, granted, but this is not done on their prerogative, but is rather a reflection of the human ability to take somebody's mind and meld it to whatever they wish for whatever reason they can find.

For a less gruesome example, one can focus on the bystander effect. If a group of people witness a crime, many people feel as if they should do something, but then argue with themselves that others will likely take action, so why should they themselves intervene? Thus, a murder or crime occurs while others, being purely rational, stand by and do nothing. We deliberate, but do nothing, are rational, yet allow evil to happen. Yet for some reason we hold rationality to be a hallmark of morality, a sentiment which Bernard Williams thoroughly disagrees with. He states that "...the resources of most modern moral philosophy are not well adjusted to the modern world...this is partly because it is too much and too unknowingly caught up in it, unreflectively appealing to administrative ideas of rationality...governed by a realm of a community of reason that is too far removed...from social and historical reality and from any concrete sense of a particular ethical life..."⁹⁰ However animals often act unhesitatingly to correct suffering or alleviate the danger that they see others in. Is this somehow less moral, though, because they did not go through the entire deliberative process?

On the opposite end of the spectrum from what was discussed previously, we have many acts which are quite obviously morally good, but that require no lengthy rational deliberation at all. Imagine an individual standing in her front yard, when she suddenly sees a child run out into the street directly into the path of an oncoming car. Does she stand there and wonder if she should take an action, think about the moral implications, wonder what principle guides them, or does she merely act without any other thought to save the child? How would we react in the either case? If she thought about her action beforehand and the child was hit by the car as she deliberated, certainly we would not praise her rationality as a good thing and ignore the fate of the child. If she merely *reacted* and saved the child, we would view her as a hero and morally good, *even though there was no rationality involved*. In many cases such as this, we hail the

⁹⁰Williams, p 197-198

individuals as heroes, even as they state that they did nothing more than react without a conscious thought. Granted, there is still some possible internalization of the fact that acting as such is a good thing, perhaps allowing us to act without hesitation in such extreme situations, but once again, without having to go through this process, animals often do the same things as humans do, to the same effect, yet we strangely try to find any other possible reason for their action. If humans have internalized such action and react viscerally to certain situations, then could it be said that humans are just so moral that they have internalized certain aspects of it, or is it better to look at the continuum argument and state that many animals can have the same internalization process and immediate response, born of necessity and the inculcation of the most important parts of life, something which was passed onto us?

We are left then, with quite a conflict. On one hand, we see rationality in actions that either cause horrific events to occur, or we see that rational deliberation *allows* evil to occur. On the other hand, we see that many heroic actions do not require rationality at all. How can we hold rationality in such a regard within the moral realm that it becomes a necessary condition considering this?⁹¹ The fact that we can deliberate and look at our actions and understand why we are doing something, or the fact that we understand generalities, or that we can align our actions with the type of person that we wish to be *is* important, and I do not mean to lessen that fact, but is this tantamount to morality in and of itself? Again, we can see that the systems that we build ignore many problematic considerations and do little more than hold human attributes above all else while surreptitiously holding animals at arm's length.

⁹¹Philosophers such as Alfred Mele have recently made arguments that even without understanding everything at a deep level and without knowing everything involved, it is still possible to hold somebody responsible for their action. He uses the example of Huckleberry Finn, who, even though he couldn't have understood everything surrounding the situation of letting Jim go, can still be praised for his actions.

Of course, I can be seen as being unduly critical of rationality/language and the use that humans often put it to. I would be remiss, however, to miss the flipside of this argument. After all, our ability to reason and create has brought more good to this world, and more leaps and bounds in understanding and variations on ways to live and prolong our lives and save others than could be accounted for here. We can solve previously insurmountable problems, words can be used to create, heal, restore, and inspire a great amount of good, to name just a few of the uses. Surely we have to take the good with the bad, but the overarching argument against my claims is that still, rationality is required for morality—whether it is moral good or moral bad—to take effect *at all*.⁹² This, however, is not the point that I am attempting to make. Rather, I am attempting to argue that in all of this, the underlying theme is that there is morality without rationality, and the disconnect between humans who do good things without thought and animals who do good things without being rational is too wide of a chasm to be justifiable. We can't merely explain away animal behavior by stating that they simply cannot know or understand the good. After all, the impetus of the action is the *same*. To be fair, however, we can also argue that animals can act in morally bad ways as well without rationality. Dogs who maul children and animals that attack humans, animals that attack each other without much of a reason, such as chimp picking up a spider monkey and throwing it, and more all highlight that animals can act immorally as well.⁹³ Yet all that this point shows us is that animals can act in morally significant ways both good and bad, without needing rationality. We are then left right back where we started: why is it that while the actions have the same import and effects, rationality is the one

⁹²It could be argued, after all, that many of our systems and uses for rationality are in fact in *response* to the negative effects, and that we are by no means close to understanding exactly what morality is, rather figuring it out as we go along.

⁹³Well, in some cases, animals that attack humans do so out of fear or to protect their own children—what human wouldn't do the same if they sensed a threat? That mere fact that we do not understand them is what leads to the fear, mostly. I don't believe that any animal would go out and attack indiscriminately...yet humans do.

thing standing between morality and random range-of-the-moment actions? The easy answer is that it should not and *cannot* be.

Note that the uses for rationality and language *in the moral realm* fall within the AA fallacy. Even if we were to grant, for the sake of argument, that rationality and language are required for moral behavior, we still fall into the trap of stating that they are not rational *like us*, or that they do not use language *like us*, that somehow our way of seeing and describing the world is inherently superior to anything that animals could have. I question how this is important or even justifiable. After all, we can study animal language, and even if there are no words to translate perfectly, we can understand the underlying ideas, recognize concepts, and see how animals change their words based on what is happening around them. Do they have moral language? I am not sure, but they are at least capable of knowing and recognizing what is happening around them, thereby adapting to certain situations.⁹⁴ The fact of the matter, as I see it, is that they get around the world just as well—if not better in some cases—as us, even though they do not have the same ability to describe the world with such complex thoughts. Even without the ‘benefit’ of advanced thought, they are still capable of approaching novel situations and working out solutions without having to be told how to do so.⁹⁵ Thus, they, as de Waal puts it, know what they need to know to survive.⁹⁶ In both cases, they have rationality and language *of the animal kind*, and this quick dismissal of the *umwelt* of the animals because they don’t measure up to ours lessens their abilities, which at the same time causes no small amount of

⁹⁴One interesting question that I have is whether or not, as we have established that chimpanzees and gorillas are capable of learning some sign language, at least in concrete terms, they could learn abstract notions such as good or bad and use them correctly, or even possibly recognize it, showing their own understanding in how they use such concepts? How much more could we learn about them, then? Of course, we would run into questions about imitation or if they are using the concepts in ‘novel’ ways.

⁹⁵For the most up to date information on and survey of this capacity, see the entirety of *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*

⁹⁶We, on the other hand, know infinitely more than we need to survive, and are wont to abuse all that comes from the extraneous capacities born from this overflow.

consternation when animals perform better than us in some areas. Taking away the prejudiced perspective of AA, we gain more insight into the life of the animals and how they operate, and we can note that within their unique lives, moral behavior is born from these capacities, limited as they are.

The final conclusion that one reaches if everything I have said in the last two sections is applied, is that humans and animals often reach the same actions through different means, yet the chasm between the moral ascriptions to both is baffling in both size and justification. If two individuals set out on a journey to the same destination, with one driving a high-end sports car and the other individual walking, we would not claim that the second individual cannot reach the destination, or that once they get there, that they reached it through incorrect or invalid means by sheer virtue of the fact that it is different. Yet the human woman saving the child from being stuck by a speeding car and the dog saving its companion from certain death in the middle of a busy intersection illustrate the same destination⁹⁷, as does a chimpanzee throwing itself into water (*knowing* the danger it typically presents)⁹⁸ to save a family member, so why do we call into question the means of getting there? Granted, if animals *never* reached the destination, or if they randomly did it with no emotional capacity of cognitive abilities, or if animals never responded the certain situations in the same way we do, then the question may remain valid. Yet with *both* existing within the same creature, every other box at the entry level being marked, and nothing appearing random about the actions but instead being shown across a wide swath of actions in the species discussed, the *only* difference between the two is that the human method is

⁹⁷This specific example involves a pair of dogs in Chile. One dog had been hit by a car, and was lying unconscious in the middle of a busy road, and “The dog’s canine companion, at enormous risk to its own life, weaved in and out of traffic, and eventually managed to drag the unconscious dog to the side of the road.” (Rowlands, Aeon, 2012)

⁹⁸As Goodall explains: “In some zoos, chimpanzees are kept on man-made islands, surrounded by water-filled moats...Chimpanzees cannot swim and, unless they are rescued, will drown if they fall into deep water. Despite this, individuals have sometimes made heroic efforts to save companions from drowning...One adult male lost his life as he tried to rescue a small infant whose incompetent mother had allowed it to fall into the water. (Goodall, p 213)

more advanced, yet at the same time, far flashier than needed, and perhaps even more dangerous to themselves and others.

3.4 Sometimes Even Strangers: Morality Across Species

With these arguments out of the way, it is important to bring up one last piece to my argument: the idea that animals will go across species boundaries to help those in need. Recall that while Bekoff painted the picture of moral agency within the specific societies that an animal belonged to, he mentioned the possibility of going outside of such societies to help strangers. While he left this concept woefully under-examined, this idea that animals will go out of their way to help others, sometimes even going so far as to help strangers or *predators*, is an eminently important one. The reason for this is that it circumvents the idea that animals will only help those that they recognize, or who have helped them before, or who have something to give them in return. This locus of behavior is an important place to start, and the most germane ideas that need to be addressed are the possibilities of true altruistic behavior in animals, the already established possibility of friendship across species and what that entails for the capacities the animals have, and the pure recognition of what is right and wrong in a situation leading to actions that almost beg for some ascription of responsibility. While there are some ways in which Myshkin can rear his head here, I have 1) weakened the force of the argument concerning the correlation between Myshkin and other animals, and 2) shown that the example of Myshkin is not equipped to deal with cross-species actions/relations. In fact, for some reason, there are still arguments that animals do not even have this capacity to go outside of their own species. As recently as 2014, this possibility is completely glossed over, the most glaring example of this being Jeffery Moussaieff Masson's confounding claim that "we are perhaps the *only animal* willing to risk our lives for the

sake of an animal from a completely different species...”⁹⁹ his only exception being dogs. While it is indeed true that many examples of cross-species care do include dogs, there are countless others without them.

In fact, many of the examples that I have already used within this work highlight this very possibility, but there are many examples not used in this work such as tigers and humans (tigers protected a frightened child from kidnappers), gorilla and human (Jane Goodall tells of a gorilla that protected a human from harm by others gorillas), pig and human (when the pig’s owner had a heart attack with nobody around, the pig did everything it could to get a human there, including running into traffic to stop a car), dog and owl, and many, *many* more, all of which are easily available through any search engine, and all show either cross-species or stranger relations. This is no new phenomenon; many popular stories abound concerning friendships between various pairings of animals that have no true reason, evolutionary or otherwise, to be friends, no reason whatsoever other than decisions between the two (or more) animals in question. Of course, many have just taken it to be some sort of strange occurrence within nature without looking at the underlying concepts that have to be present. By many I mean within the public; many ethologists have long studied this concept, yet few philosophers have addressed this, for reasons that are beyond me. If anything, many just take it for granted that animals can be friends without wondering what that entails or says about the animals in question. For these reasons, it is important to address this possibility, and it is perhaps one of the surest signs that there is more at play within moral behavior in animals than I have intimated so far.

First of all, such relationships or actions immediately cut the legs from any argument that animals only care about those that have helped them, *can* help them, and those that stand within

⁹⁹Masson, p 2, italics mine

familial or kin relationships to them. It can of course be argued, and in many cases has, that some of the most prominent examples include mothers and children, intimating that perhaps the animal in question only adopted or protected the others because they were reminded of the cries of pain of their own young, or were moved strongly by motherly instincts to help others, even knowing that some danger could be involved. In some cases, it might make sense, but are we then supposed to say that this is not moral? If a human mother comes across an abandoned child, would there be no moral problem with leaving it there, because it could just be an instinct that could be ignored? Interestingly, humans often pass care for such young off to others, alleviating them of responsibility, whereas animals raise the animals they come across themselves, knowing full well that such animals grow up to become predators, or in other cases, knowing full well that they typically *eat* such animals. To write this off so easily is to greatly confuse everything behind such action and give no import to all of the various features at play here. If one makes an argument that only instinct is at play, then the issue becomes *completing* instincts, which is, in many ways, a defining feature of what we call morality. Once again, the inexplicable chasm of AA rears its head, leaving us with no clear answers as to the justification of such actions.

Yet such counterarguments to the importance of cross-species moral behavior only cover a small sample, as not all of them involve mothering instincts. In many of the stories used within the media, what captures our attention is precisely the fact that they are so unconventional, often between a small animal and a much larger one, or between a docile one and a typically violent one, where the docile animal is unafraid and the violent one is perfectly behaved. Not many of these have something to offer the other,¹⁰⁰ and many such examples are quite unconventional, but the

¹⁰⁰If we were to go by Aristotle's definition of friendship, the only option we are left with is friendship of the good; if it were mere utility, we would not see some of the actions taken by animals. An ascription of Aristotelian notions to animals is not perfect, obviously, but many of the defining features are indeed present in their own way.

animals themselves see something in it and these bonds are formed for life, with one often sacrificing itself to save the other. In each case, powerful emotions coupled with altruistic and literal self-sacrificial behavior are on display, with few other factors involved or needed. In each case, there has to be something involved. The exact details, naturally, vary, but the underlying action remains the same, and no easy explanations can be offered to write these cross-species interactions off.

The most important part of the interactions, however, is that it shows an understanding amongst animals of right and wrong even outside of the typically established rules which they live by. Not only that, but these rules outside the society seem to be held amongst every animal discussed so far. As such, even though there are specialized rules within a certain animal society, there seems to be a much more common ground to *all* societies, one that is universalizable, at least insofar as we can put a universal tag on them. The animals may not realize this, but they are more than capable of acting upon these notions, which is more important than the recognition in my mind. This is analagous to how within human society, there are a multitude of variables that change across cultures, but some aspects concerning the treatment of others and what is morally right appears to remain the same, to the point that, as Bernard Rollin often points out, societies that have fallen astray merely need to be reminded of the values which they hold to be important in order to change their behavior. It is not too far of a logical leap to state that animals cling closely to these as well, showcasing them in unique and surprising ways, without the muddled waters brought about by the insidious side effects of language and rationality. As such, to wax sentimental for a brief moment, there is quite a bit that we would do well to learn from them.

3.5 What then, is morality?

We have seen, to this point, a much larger discussion of what it appears that morality is *not* rather than what morality is. With all of this in mind, it is quite tempting to then state that what we perceive as moral behavior is just muddled or misconstrued, leading to us latching onto concepts blindly in hopes that we understand what it means to be a morally good individual. I do not, however, believe this to be the case. While there are certainly some cases in which our understanding of morality can be increased by examining the possibility of ethical behavior within animals, and the possibility that animals can be moral agents, I do not believe that this takes anything directly away from morality within humans.¹⁰¹ Rather, I have done nothing more than shown that the *degree* to and *manner* in which we hold these capacities cannot be the measurement for moral behavior or moral agency, as it can be shown that animals hold a great many of these same capacities, leading to the same results in similar situations, but do not hold them in the same way. If anything, I would state that there is a baseline that constitutes moral agency, and that some animals fall within these parameters, granting them status as moral agents. We can find issue with some of the extraneous niggling factors surrounding moral behavior, but I believe that some very strong cases can be made for the inclusion of animals, and perhaps in the future, more animals will be added and the parameters may change. At this juncture and point in time, however, I am comfortable arguing as I have.

What I have argued, thus far, has been stated within the discussions concerning the factors often thought to work against animals. To state it more clearly, we can combine the definition I gave for moral behavior within animals in the first chapter and everything that has been discussed up until this point. Recall that the definition offered was: *Moral behavior is an action or series of*

¹⁰¹Although it certainly does make constructivist notions as the be-all-end-all of moral explanations quite a bit more problematic.

actions taken with an intended outcome in mind, (and showcases knowledge of how their actions will affect the situation) whether it be positive or negative, such that it is often distinct from—or even directly in conflict with-- instinctual behavior and, more often than not, incapable of being explicated in purely rote or behavioral terms, such that the animals in question can be held responsible for their actions While I do not think that anything else truly needs to be added to this, we can see how what I have argued for and against fits within the confines of the definition. It would appear that animals recognize both right and wrong, responding to it in their own way to certain effect, even going so far as judging others for how they treat others. They, as many other authors have discussed, clearly have cognitive capacities and respond directly to the salient features of a situation, while at the same time showcasing an emotion that is directly tied to the situation when they are capable of understanding the full situation. They are capable of showing the same behavior across species as well, often in situations that require knowing how the one they offer help to has been affected and why, which goes far beyond instinct and rote behavior. Additionally, they are capable of altruistic, self-sacrificial, and, to put it into human terms, heroic behavior. They also punish within their own group, showing that they understand right and wrong and that this is capable of being understood. While such notions may be tied to social constructs, the same can be said of us, and most of the social taboos are meant to prevent harm from coming to individuals or the group. Lastly, animals are capable of adjusting their behavior to fit a certain situation once they understand it, going so far as to offer those that need extra help relaxed standards, and chastising those that do not help those that need it. None of these animals showcase the same grasp of the linguistic or rational capacities that we hold to such high esteem, but they are still capable of reaching the same ends as us in a multitude of situations. Thus, I unhesitatingly call some of their behavior moral and would hold them responsible for their actions.

The list of behaviors that fit this definition or seems to fit it at first glance can go on for quite some time, and I have offered only a small amount of them. That does not mean, however, that all animal behavior is moral, that we can hold animals responsible for their actions, or that every animal is even capable of even being relegated to the level of moral subjects. Instead, what it shows is that in some cases, in some animals, there are many strong reasons to look at their behavior through this lens, one which leaves our own conceptions and standards on the backburner and instead focuses on the animal itself and what their lives are like to the best of our ability. There is room for misinterpretation here, and it is by no means a perfect enterprise, but I still find it a great deal more satisfactory than the typical way in which we approach the question of whether or not animals can act morally. Even with all of this being said, however, there are two more important points that need clarification if my argument is to be fully understood.

Without collapsing into relativism (I am not arguing over what *is* right and wrong) I believe, as noted, that morality can often be construed differently for animals than for humans. One interesting side effect is the possibility that morality is unique to each species, so that perhaps the baseline for moral agency must be moved relative to each unique species, making it immensely more difficult to pin down what exactly it is and perhaps allowing *any* animal moral agency. After all, if we are most concerned with the *umwelt* of each animal, then such claims do not seem out of the realm of possibility. Perhaps we might one day come to argue that comparing a corvid to a primate, for example, is unfair and falls under the same sort of fallacy as anthropocentric anthropomorphism. I do not, however, believe that this will be the case. My argument about the minimum baseline still stands, and that includes a cognitive and emotional component, as well as understanding of the implications of their actions and the world around the animals in question. Not all animals can reach this baseline, and while there may be *some* argument that their actions

are moral within their own understanding or their own realm of possible actions, I would still hold to that minimum baseline rather than making it relative to each species. In other words, our *understanding* of animals may increase, but the necessary components of morality would not change. They must live *up* to the line, construed within the natural world and not from an anthropocentric point of view, rather than the line changing to suit the animals each time we learn something.

The second point I wish to make is that this newfangled definition of morality, one with animals in mind, is not meant to delimit what is possible for humans. Morality of the animal kind can be seen as being constitutive of, but not fully, human morality, sharing many important features, but without the added features required by the complexity of the human experience. If it helps, one can take to calling moral behavior within humans *morality*', whereas moral behavior within some animals at the baseline is simply called *morality*. As such, the difference, as always, is in degree and not kind.¹⁰² To follow Kant's categorical imperative is to be *moral*', yet for an animal to put itself in harm's way to help another that is suffering while the first animal is considered prey to the helpee (as it were), or vice versa, is to be *moral*. To work to wipe out systematic racism is to be *moral*', yet for a chimpanzee to jump into a moat in order to save a loved one, knowing full well the consequences, is to be *moral*. Thus, we can rightfully keep a small distinction in mind, one that keeps in mind that uniqueness of both animals and humans, but at the same time narrowing that previously vast chasm in explanatory quality between the two.

¹⁰²Actions performed by moral patients and subjects, to keep with the terminology, can be called *ethical*, as if brings about good or bad consequences, but in my mind *morality* implies responsibility. At the same time, both morality and morality' involve moral agency; one merely shows that we have taken moral agency further than any other animal. While I personally do not think the distinction is too important, it is useful to illustrate the exact meaning.

In regards to this line, however, it is difficult to pin down the *exact* place that it would lie, and that is certainly an open question that can be examined in detail in other works. However, it is still important to at least make a general stab at it for the sake of this argument, lest the impression is given that almost any animal that performs something we would deem morally good fall under the category of *moral*. Admittedly, it is a difficult distinction to make, given the fact that innate actions could possibly qualify as such, made even more difficult by the question of just how far we are willing to go with that argument, thus negating further the need for an emotional and cognitive aspect. Overall, however, I would focus more on actions that *clearly* show intentionality, thought, an emotional aspect, and an action aimed directly towards the eradication or remedy of such concerning circumstances. If this minimum baseline is accepted, then a great many animal actions will be left out until such a time that we can understand just how the animals work. Knowing just how quickly our views on a multitude of animals are changing given all of the new information that we are constantly supplied with, I would not leave it as an impossibility that more animals might reach this line, but at the same time, I would not wish to assume all animal behavior with any positive or negative effects as moral. There may in fact be behavioral explanations for some actions, but at the same time, just as there are other explanations we can turn to for the genesis of human ‘moral’ action, this possibility of alternative explanations should not shut animals out of consideration as moral creatures.

In this sense, my definition of moral behavior within animals still holds up. In many cases, animals show a powerful ability to respond to situations correctly and in a manner directly suited to solving the issue to the best of their knowledge and ability, going so far as to risk their own lives in the process. They may not have their actions planned out far in advance, may not

live by principles that are set in stone and spread throughout the animal world, they may not create grandstanding moral theories that are meant to explain everything about the world around them, and they certainly do not sit back and examine every single action they take, but in the moment they are fully aware of the situation, the possibilities, how they are suited to help, and react emotionally, cognitively, and physically. These actions are not random, are only performed under certain circumstances, and are of the same type of actions that we are able to cognize as morally good in our own understanding and various locutions, and as such I am fully comfortable considering animals responsible for their actions and discussing the action as moral behavior.

3.6 Ramifications

What does this mean, though, for both animals and humans at large? As noted in the first chapter, the consequences of allowing animals into the moral realm, and more specifically, allowing some animals the moniker of moral agent, do not seem to be all that drastic as compared to some of the other areas of studies within animals. It could be argued that arguments as such are more for us than they are for actual animals, perhaps to satisfy some curiosity or sate some desire for reassurance that we are unique in at least one way. Yet these do not allow for the full ramifications of such arguments to come forth. In my mind, there are at least two major ramifications or such arguments, as well as multiple ancillary questions that can be raised, but which space limitations did not allow for in this work. The two major questions are as follows: does the belief that animals can be moral put a responsibility on us to guide or change animal behavior, whether through punishment or training? and What does this entail concerning how we are to go forward either looking at or explaining the behavior of animals? I will tackle the second right now and then move on to the first question.

If we are to allow, for the sake of argument, that what I have argued thus far is convincing and compelling, then there are multiple suggestions that we can glean from my arguments in how to move forward in our typical view of and experimental record concerning animals. Many of the anecdotes that are promulgated concerning moral and ethical behavior in animals are often recorded in situations not meant to look for such behavior. The fact that they are unique and challenge the typical view of animals is enough to get observers to write such behaviors down, but comparatively little has been done in the field to actually look at how morality might be construed within animals or how they would respond to such situations as morality requires. The fact that moral behavior within animals is often changing and multifaceted in that so much has to be established or taken into account makes this difficult, as it is much less straightforward than emotion or cognition, but there are some tests that have been done specifically with a view towards moral behavior such as questions of altruism in rats, fairness in primates, recognition of good treatment by dogs and monkeys as opposed to bad treatment¹⁰³, etc. Admittedly, there is much more at play or stake than these experiments allow for or show. After all, how does one take out *all* of the other various possibilities and make room for only one possible action or inaction? Still, these experiments are important building blocks towards a more robust view of animals. To this effect, I would call for more experiments do be done to look at reactions to specific events, taking away all other possible influences or explanations as best as possible, (which has the effect of quieting other possible interpretations) and then to question just how similar it might be to how *we* would act in such situations. This is an important field and could give us a great deal of insight into unexplored territory. At the same time, we

¹⁰³The other two have been mentioned, but the last one if a fascinating new study in which it was found that dogs and monkeys are able to recognize good versus bad treatment, and will respond to the humans accordingly, even if the treatment had not been directed towards them, always favoring the one who treated others well. (See the article mentioned in New Scientist.)

must remember to look at it from the viewpoint of the *umwelt* of the animal as best we can, *not* from the viewpoint of AA. It might not always be completely possible or feasible, but the more we attempt to do so, perhaps the closer we can get to a clearer answer.

I have mentioned previously how philosophy can approach this new conception of morality, but there are a couple more questions that need to be answered or looked into. Firstly, if animals can be moral agents, and if animals are shown to hold many of the same principles that we do (albeit silently) and if animals, without x,y,and z, are capable of reaching the same set of actions that we can in similar circumstances, what then does this mean for morality in general? What effects would this have on both normative and metaethical considerations? These types of questions are fascinating, and many individuals in the past two decades have turned to the use of neuroimaging and neuropsychology¹⁰⁴ to study just how deeply rooted some ethical principles or responses are, so every little bit that we can learn in this vein will go a long way towards illuminating questions that have vexed us for centuries. These new philosophical avenues also lend themselves towards a new set of ancillary questions, some of which I have hinted at previously, but which philosophy must make much clearer. Chief among these is the question of whether or not animals should be punished for their actions, or if we have the responsibility to step in and prevent some animals from acting as they do if such actions could possibly lead to suffering in another animal.

Recall from the first chapter and second chapter that my answer to both questions is a resounding no. The mere fact that we believe that animals can act morally does *not* entail that we have the responsibility, or even right, to diametrically change their behavior or to punish them

¹⁰⁴The studies of Jonathan Haidt are especially interesting and promising along these lines, testing the immediate reactions within the mind to certain moral questions, showing that rational thought appears afterwards, while the emotional reaction is first, and opinions are not changed that often through rational deliberation. (See 'The Emotional Dog and his Rational Tail.')

for perceived wrongs from our point of view. First of all, our own moral beliefs are often inextricably influenced by our own actions. For instance, many refuse to eat meat because of the method in which meat is provided, through factory farming and other abhorrent means.¹⁰⁵ Trying to then paint that reaction in more general and moral terms, standards which we then apply to animals, completely misses the point. As noted previously, there are already fail-safes in place and animals do not go around causing untold amount of suffering and producing great amounts of excess. To stop animals from eating each other is to confuse morality' and morality, a confusion which is quite disastrous in implementation.¹⁰⁶

Ancillary to this is the question of punishment in animals. As questioned in the second chapter, what good does this punishment do? First of all, we punish animals from the human point of view, and as such, the reason for such punishment is incredibly vague or unavailable to the animal. Human punishment is made with humans in mind, after all, and we can't even state that it is even fully effective for humans! As such, animals that are punished often learn to either fear a human, immediately subjugate themselves to their owners, or are quite nervous in any possible situation that might lead to a repeat of what they have faced before. It appears that animals err on the side of caution and act guilty in many cases, causing many to believe that they do not truly understand the concept of right and wrong. However, once again, this misses the point in some areas and overlooks the fact that animals punish indirection among themselves in ways that animals *do* in fact understand. So while human punishment of animals does not necessarily work towards the intended goal, the fact remains that animal punishment of animals does do so and brings about the intended change. Recall the story of the chimpanzees that were

¹⁰⁵Note that the typical reaction to seeing such farms is a promise to never eat meat again, even if such concerns never crossed their minds previously.

¹⁰⁶The picture of an emaciated pit bull, one which was forced to eat a vegan diet in conjunction with its owners, is one which will haunt me for quite some time.

punished for holding up meal time, who the next day changed their behavior. Also note the behavior of dogs who are punished by their own kind for pushing play time too far and causing pain. Or note the castigation of the ring-tailed lemurs by the grandmother of the injured youngling, who then immediately changed their behaviors. In each case, these animals *understood* what they had done wrong and changed. Punishment therefore *does* work, but once again, AA rears its head by pushing upon us the belief that if human punishment of animals does not work, then animals must not understand right and wrong, an empirically false claim in the face of this evidence. Ridding ourselves of the AA fallacy, we can see that it is not *our* place to monitor or control animal behavior, for the most part, as they have their own ways of doing so. The most we can do, and most we seem to care about, is stopping animals from destroying our property, a rather abstract notion that animals have no true reason to understand, having no access to *our* minds and interests. Still, we can effectively do so, even if the end result is that they are unsure of what exactly they have done wrong and thus we eliminate a wider swath of behaviors that we originally intended do.

The flipside of this discussion is, of course, the notion of praise. If animals are moral agents, after all, then certainly we can praise them just as much as we blame them. However, the same questions raise their heads here. Do animals understand what they are being praised for, as it inextricably is linked to what we view as a moral good. Additionally, do animals even *care* about praise? We are, of course, worried about our reputations and perceptions within the world, but do animals have much reason to care? There are some observations that suggest this, given how some in the primate family gain reputations as a peacekeeper or an instigator, or are more likely to help or punish in certain situations, causing them to be approached or avoided accordingly by those who are aware of this reputation. Still, the question is whether or not

animals would care if *we* praise them. I do not believe that every animal is looking for the equivalent of a dog being called a *good boy*, nor do I believe that even dogs fully care about it as such other than the tone of voice used to say it. Praise, just as with punishment, is for our own sakes, rewarding them for living up to our standards but in ways that animals have no recourse to understand. Thus, moral agency may allow for praise and blame, but it is not, in the animal world, a difference that really makes a difference.

Recall that within the first chapter (1.2.) I gave a brief overview of the problem itself and why it is important to make a foray into this line of thought. In that argument, I argued that the actual impact upon our treatment of animals would be minimal at best or negligible at worst. While questions such as pain and consciousness have direct moral import in our treatment of them, radically changing our attitudes towards animals and the permissibility of certain actions, certainly there is no such moral import in these arguments, at least not from the viewpoint of permissibility. Now that the argument is out of the way and a great many questions have been dealt with, it is worth asking whether anything has changed or some previously unknown ramification has raised its head. I would argue that it hasn't, but that at the same time that this does not lessen the importance of these arguments. Outside of the ramifications of the actual acceptance of animals as moral beings, the ramifications of taking in such arguments as AA deal with the methodology of science itself. While not as ghastly as claiming that animals feel no pain and are nothing more than machines, attempting to argue from the viewpoint of AA rather than realizing the underlying commitments within it does showcase a bias that we may hold without even realizing it and one which *still*, even though we may be more cognizant of it and attempt to be more careful in recent years concerning animals, has a great impact on how we look at the behavior of animals.

Even among those that are exceedingly careful with their work still fail to recognize a number of other outside influences and try to ascribe the human experience to animals. Mark Rowlands, at one point, stated that it would be an exercise in futility to try to argue that animals are just like humans, yet proceeds, for another two hundred pages, to do just that and use a direct human analogue to argue against moral agency within animals. Frans de Waal, in writing about morality within animals, always compares them to humans, even when he states in other places that there is no reason to assume that an animal needs what a human has to carry out its' life. All others try to put animals through a specific human moral system and, to nobody's surprise, find that they do not meet the requirements in the correct way. Such arguments are quite similar to the ideas of pain, consciousness, cognition, and more, in that they arbitrarily attempt to cut animals off from consideration, yet on the most fundamental level, fail to recognize just how they are arguing. Thus, the importance of arguing for moral behavior within animals, up to and including moral agency, lies not in how it affects animals themselves, but in that it highlights some flaws within scientific methodology while at the same time taking off some of the blinders that have affected how we view animals for centuries. This import, in my mind, is just as pressing as the moral import of other arguments.

Therefore, the majority of the ramifications that we tend to worry about or all of the various import we put into such beliefs often come from the viewpoint of AA, which is misguided and not applicable to the notion of moral behavior in animals at large. As such, we need to cut back on taking some beliefs to extremes when it comes to animals, while at the same time vetting such beliefs through questioning whether or not they are based within the *umwelt* of animals or if instead they are based upon our own prejudices which we then apply incorrectly to the world at large. If even the best laid plans do not survive first contact with the enemy, then we

should not be overly surprised when even our most stringent beliefs do not always necessarily survive contact with reality. The solution is not to state that it doesn't matter insofar as they are not like us and to cling to the AA fallacy as a sort of defense mechanism, but to instead look past that and focus on the individual *umwelt* of the animals themselves.

3.7 Conclusions

I am not, in writing all of this, attempting to state that animals are like us in every single way and that they should be seen on the exact same level, as that would be both disingenuous and impossible. I do not wish to grant them the same specific faculties as humans, nor argue that they can do the intellectual work or nuanced activities that we can, but this mere fact does not detract from what they *can* do. They may not occupy the same moral space or have the same ability to pontificate, justify, or generalize, but they are still moral creatures who can and do behave morally. To believe that we are the cause of their emotions, or that they are only moral because we imbue their actions with moral considerations, or to endlessly insist that everything is due to our influence is to greatly delimit any consideration which is owed to them. If they did not, of their own accord, have access to many of the same aspects of life, morality, understanding, emotion, and intention that we had, then their actions would be vastly different and make no sense, as if a multitude of actions arose either in a vacuum or coincidentally. Such explanations, obviously, are not compelling by any means, and so it is important to look at them on their own terms.

To this end, though, I have barely scratched the surface of what is a vast undertaking and enterprise. There are so many considerations that they are difficult to sift through, and I have offered only a few examples out of countless that deserve to be examined. This, by necessity, is a general overview and examination of the most general arguments, with criticisms and

suggestions built in to each response. Yet as I mentioned, there is much more science and philosophy to work through. At the very least, what I hope to have accomplished is the beginning of a new or different way of looking at both animal and human behavior, one which separates the two and keeps the uniqueness of both in mind with a special consideration given to the similarities brought about *despite* these differences. Animals and their behavior have long fascinated us, and while animal behavior has remained remarkably steady over history, the one thing that has to change is our perception and appreciation of it. As such, I find that there are a variety of interesting questions that we need to ask rather than worry fully about the ‘concerns’ listed above. Sadly, I was and am unable to go into detail concerning these questions, but it is enough to list them so that somebody else may look into them or raise these concerns about my own arguments. First, what is the demarcation between moral and immoral in such a case? I gave some small arguments, but surely they do not cover everything that can be said about such cases. Second, as mentioned before, is there room for innate or rote behavior to move within the moral realm, and can humans and animals still be held responsible for such actions? Thirdly, to just what degree are some of the requirements for morality, required? I mentioned a baseline, but it is difficult to place *exactly* where it is and just where the line between responsible and not can be placed. Note that these are all questions of practicality and of more concrete ideas. However, there are multiple ramifications and questions that that can be made/raised in the philosophy of language, moral psychology, ethology, metaethics, phenomenology, sociology, and many more fields. As such, while the immediate ramifications within the actions of both humans and animals can be written off quite easily, there are still multiple issues that need to be addressed to clear up multiple remaining worries. While they are far beyond the scope of this work, they deserve every little bit of attention that can be brought to them.

In light of all of this, I find that there are no indefeasible or rational reasons for stating that animals are not moral. To hold onto such notions is to neglect a great amount of evidence and to hold far too tenaciously to the idea that humans are above than animals in every conceivable way. As the anthropocentric anthropomorphic fallacy shows, such assumptions immediately delimit our understanding of animal behavior and get in the way of a great deal of progress. We may only be able to understand the world fully through our own conceptions, but that does not mean that ours is the only way to understand the world, either. Charles Sanders Peirce once stated that in science, nothing is certain, and that what is considered indubitable one day is proven wrong the next. If 99% of all theories taken seriously are proven wrong in the end, then why is it that we still hold so strongly to this outdated notion that has been propagated by many scientists, but has been debunked by a great deal more of science? Many argued that animals don't feel pain; that was proven wrong. Many argued animals don't have consciousness; that was proven wrong as well. Still others argued that animals cannot be moral, while using a definition of morality that is tied inextricably to what only humans possess; but if we widen the scope of morality, it is plain to see that animals are complex, intricate, and, indeed, moral creatures. Will they understand calculus, attempt to justify their actions, create moral theories, or write novels? No, but I sure as hell trust them to make the right decisions when it matters, which is, coincidentally, much more than I can say about a great many humans.

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