

## ANTHROPOCENTRIC ECOCENTRISM: WHY ANTHROPOCENTRISM IS COMPATIBLE WITH AN ENVIRONMENTALLY- CENTERED ETHICS?

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**Abstract.** This paper demonstrates that Anthropocentrism is compatible with an environmentally-centered ethics, that is, anthropocentrism is actually ecocentric and ecocentrism is anthropocentric; or properly, anthropocentrism is a subset of ecocentrism. It shows how anti-anthropocentric theories misrepresent anthropocentrism and how such anti-anthropocentric theories as Deep ecology, Biocentrism, etc., are practically and logically anthropocentric, albeit, in distorted forms. Thus, this paper introduces a more adequate theory of anthropocentrism that establishes the possibility of reconciling it with an ecocentric ethics and, at the same time, improves the existing anthropocentric theory by correcting or eliminating some characteristics/features that are wrongly construed as part of the said theory. By doing so, this paper offers an improved environmentally-centered (ecocentric) ethics.

**Keywords.** Anthropocentrism, Ecocentrism, Meaning of human good, Virtue ethics

### Introduction

Some philosophers have argued that the root of our ecological crises is the idea that we, human beings, are privileged creatures set to dominate and treat the earth as mere resource to be exploited. The internationally known medieval scholar, Lynn White, traced this anthropocentric view from the medieval Christian assumptions of man and nature. Hitherto, anthropocentrism is defined as “the position ‘that considers man as the central fact, or final aim, of the

universe' and generally 'conceiv[es] of everything in the universe in terms of human values.'"<sup>1</sup>

Against Anthropocentrism, "deep ecology," was coined by the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, in his 1973 article, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements." Deep ecology means, to Naess, a "deeper, more spiritual approach to Nature," and that this "deeper approach resulted from a more sensitive openness to ourselves and nonhuman life around us. The essence of deep ecology is to keep asking more searching questions about human life, society, and Nature." Deep ecology has a twist of mysticism. It roots itself in the Hindu idea of the *Atman is Brahman* (the self is [part of] God) and Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura* (God or nature, they are the same).<sup>2</sup> The basic ethico-cosmological tenets of "deep ecology" and other biocentric ethics can be stated in the following manner:

1. All things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of unfolding and self-realization.
2. All organisms and entities in the ecosphere are equal in intrinsic worth.
3. Human needs, goals, and desires should not be taken as privilege or overriding in considering the needs, desires, interests, and goals of all members of all biological species taken together.<sup>3</sup>
4. The earth as a whole should not be interpreted or managed from human standpoint.
5. Man has no right to interfere, disturb, perturb, destroy, or meddle in the ecological balance of the earth.<sup>4</sup>
6. Man is a plain member of the biotic community. He is not the master or the steward of the earth. He should let nature be.

However, as Richard Watson ably demonstrated, these tenets of biocentric egalitarianism are in fact anthropocentric in nature. Watson explained:

If man is a part of nature, if he is a 'plain citizen,' if he is just one non-privilege member of a 'biospherical egalitarianism,' then the human species should be treated in no way different from any other species... Human ways-human

culture—and human actions are as natural as are the ways in which any other species of animal behaves... We must stress that man's works (yes, including H-bombs and gas chambers) are as natural as those of bower and beavers.<sup>5</sup>

Watson further explained that civilized man wreaks havoc on the environment, disrupts the ecology, causes the extinction of myriad other species, and even alters the climate of the earth; and these are all as natural as an animal species preying on the weak and small, taking over the habitat of another, and eventually causing its extinction as has happened in millions of times in the history of the earth.

This is what humans do. This is their destiny. If they destroy many other species and themselves in the process, they do no more that has been done by many another species. The human species should be allowed – if any species can be said to have a right – to live out its evolutionary potential, to its own destruction if that is the end result. It is nature's way.<sup>6</sup>

The generic claim of any anti-anthropocentric ethics is that man should let nature be. However, the problem with this claim is that man is part of nature and should be included among all the organisms in nature. Any conceptual dichotomy between nature and man, regardless whether man is placed above or below nature, is anthropocentric since it poses man as the interpreter of the proper relationship of nature to man and man to nature. If we should let nature be, then we should also let humans be. We should let everything unfold their own evolutionary potentials, including man. But as Richard Watson have explained, consumption and destruction of trees and other species, including making H-bombs, gas chambers, wars, etc., are part of the evolutionary potential of man. Hence, to say that man should curb his technological enthusiasm or act in such a way that some of his desires, needs and goals are regulated is to say that man should act in a distinctively human way, that is, as a moral agent distinct from the rest of nature. Thus, anti-anthropocentric arguments of deep ecologists and biocentricists are self-contradictory for when analyzed carefully, they are, in fact, anthropocentric.<sup>7</sup>

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**What Anthropocentrism is not: A Preliminary Remark**

Anthropocentrism does not necessarily claim that nature has no normative definition in itself. We, thus, cannot agree with William Baxter's, a defender of anthropocentrism, statement that any definition of the natural state would be understood "by reference to the needs of man." According to him, there is no normative definition of the *natural state* and no normative definition of clean air or pure water.<sup>8</sup>

The problem with Baxter's claim is that he talks about the general natural state or nature as having no normative definition and then also applies this claim to ecosystems or other specific complex bodies in the biosphere. It is certainly true that nature, taken broadly, has no normative definition, because nature in this very broad sense can refer to everything in the physical universe and in all its forms. However, an *ecosystem* certainly has a normative definition since it has reached a particular higher level of organization—it is nature defined or organized. Hence, the concepts (raw) "nature" and "ecosystem" must be distinguished.

An ocean for instance has reached a degree of state that gives it a *normative definition*, that is, as something to be constituted in such a way that a rich number of life forms can flourish. This means that an ocean which is full of toxicity, poison, or very salty, etc., cannot be equal with an ocean rich in vibrant life forms. An ocean is not merely "raw nature" but an ecosystem. A healthy ecosystem has an order in itself. Living things have to thrive and flourish—they have a "will-to-live". The environment has to have its (ecological) balance for the flourishing of different species. "Healthy ecosystems are vital to life: They regulate many of the chemical and climatic systems that make available clean air and water and plentiful oxygen. Forests, for example, regulate the amount of carbon dioxide in the air, produce oxygen as a byproduct of photosynthesis..., and control rainfall and soil erosion. Ecosystems, in turn, depend on the continued health and vitality of the individual organisms that compose them. Removing just one species from an ecosystem can prevent the ecosystem from operating optimally."<sup>9</sup>

Our body or any organism, as a second example, is a natural system. As such, it has its own, biologically determined normativity.

We do call a healthy body not only because it is healthy or good for our conscious goal or good that we intend to set. But it's healthy based simply on its relation, as a whole, to its parts, or healthy in its parts in relation to the whole. A sick body cannot be said to be normatively natural as a healthy body. If a body functions well when it urinates 3-4 times a day, urinating 10 times or more per day certainly is not good for the body. Although we make this judgment, it is not based on a subjective end that we set for ourselves as valuable, but on the physiological order of the body which is beyond our control. The bodies of other living animals also have their own physiological order, and any defect from this order is physically and chemically undesired. Even the hypothetical law of evolution has its own descriptive normativity. Features of animals don't evolve arbitrarily and randomly. On the contrary, they do so according to a biologically set of order, namely, the development of superior and elimination of inferior features in order to adapt to environment and survive.

Note that the above statements are descriptive judgments. They are based not on a set of goals or values set by man for himself but on the natural physical interdependency and chemical relations of organic and non-organic, and living and non-living things. This natural flourishing of rich balance or *biodiversity* is itself the normative structure of an ecosystem. In fact, in an environment where there is aridity and barrenness, its natural tendency is to grow more plants and produce more variety of living organisms until it reaches equilibrium.

Each biotic and abiotic element in the ecosystem has objective value both in its objective relation to others and in itself. When a particular species is lost, the entire environment is affected. This is a value which is objective because the species' value is felt, not by any conscious evaluator, but simply by the *objective physico-chemical interdependency* of things.

### **An Improved Understanding of Anthropocentrism**

The sociologist, Lewis Moncrief, argued against Lynn White that the cause of our present ecological crises is complex, which includes democracy, technology, urbanization, and an aggressive attitude toward nature.<sup>10</sup> Moncrief asked, "if our environmental crisis is a

‘religious problem,’ why are other parts of the world experiencing the same environmental problems that we are so well acquainted with in the Western world?’<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to deep ecologists, anthropocentric environmental ethicists maintain that every activity towards the environment is man-centered. However, the concept, “anthropocentrism,” is broad, and can be misleading. The question that remains now is what precisely is anthropocentrism and whether anthropocentrism is really incompatible with an ecocentric ethics.

a. Man-Centered means *Human Good-Centered*

Anthropocentrism literally means man is the center. However, this concept does not assert something cosmological, but rather a moral concept.<sup>12</sup> In other words, anthropocentrism is *morally specified*. It is to be understood according to its *moral genus* and not its *physical genus*. As a moral concept, “man-centered” is accurately understood as “*human good-centered*.” The concept “*human good*,” further, is not a physical notion but a moral notion. That is, human good means the moral good and not the physical good of man.

The Swiss academic philosopher, Martin Rhonheimer, explained that this *human good*, which is nothing but the moral virtue, is the product of the natural and spontaneous regulative act of the *practical reason* on each of our natural inclinations or instincts.<sup>13</sup> For every natural inclination, man spontaneously recognizes the need to regulate it. This is a natural moral obligation or “ought”, which corresponds to every natural inclination. Following Thomas Aquinas, Rhonheimer explained that each *ought* naturally and spontaneously derived from each inclination corresponds to a moral virtue. These natural precepts or *oughts* (the moral virtues) are actually the primary precepts or principles of the natural law. In other words, the moral virtues are the most fundamental human values. They are the most basic moral values which are universally held by men. The reason for this is because the moral virtues are the natural obligations commanded by our common reason. Thomas Aquinas called this natural knowledge of the first principles of the natural law *synderesis* or conscience.

Thus, the first specifying principles of the moral good are the moral virtues, the highest of which is justice. Hence, when we say that human relationship to the environment and animals is always measured in terms of the human good, we are talking about the moral virtues, which of course include the virtue of justice. In other words, the measure of right action towards the environment is the moral virtues.

The notion “physical good” is essentially distinct from the “moral good.” The physical goods are the goals of our instincts (human inclinations), e.g., sexual pleasure as goal of the inclination to sex, leisure, food, shelter, convenience, friendship, physical, mental and emotional health, children, happiness, fame, honor, knowledge, freedom, human flourishing, God or religion, etc. They are *ontic* or *pre-moral* goods and are not yet the moral/human good. The adjective “moral” is equated with the adjective “human” because what makes something specifically human is its moral character.

Most ethical theories have set either of those physical goods as the ultimate norm of morality. Accordingly, it is argued that an action is good if it leads to these goods. For instance, it is claimed that an action is good if it leads to “authentic human flourishing,” and wrong if not. Some Catholic theologians argue that the sexual act is wrong if it does not lead to pro-creation or if its pro-creative meaning is prevented. Some also argue that an action is right if it leads to the promotion of life and wrong if not. Others argue that an action is good if it leads to happiness (*eudaimonia*) or wrong if not. These ethical theories which ground morality on the physical goods, or the maximum benefit in the case of utilitarianism, commit the so-called “*naturalistic fallacy*.” Peter Singer, following Jeremy Bentham, was also guilty of this fallacy when he identified the moral basis of *equal consideration* of animals on the capacity to suffer and enjoyment.<sup>14</sup>

The exegesis of Martin Rhonheimer on the works of St. Thomas Aquinas has led the former to discover the true position of the latter. According to Rhonheimer, Aquinas did not espouse a *physicalistic* notion of natural law.<sup>15</sup> In Aquinas’ account of the moral phenomenon, the moral “*ought*” is not derived from “*is*” or from the nature or order of things by means of discursive reasoning (speculative intellect).<sup>16</sup> Rather, the moral oughts, at least in their

general forms, pre-exist in the mind or are naturally known as intellectual habits (conscience).<sup>17</sup> They represent an original experience that is *sui generis*;<sup>18</sup> however, they are not to be interpreted as innate ideas. Rather, they are products of the practical reason's active and spontaneous mensuration of every instinct within man. When a person begins to perceive a tendency, a desire, or an inclination, he automatically becomes conscious of an *ought*—an *ought* directed to the ordering of this tendency, and the end of this *ought* is a moral virtue.

Hence, anthropocentrism or man-centered ethics is not self-centered, individualistic, or egocentric ethics as anti-anthropocentric ethicists would present it. It means that it is centered neither on whatever man finds to be valuable nor of interest (for this includes physical goods). Rather, it means centered on the “human good”—not the physical good of man or the goods (goals) of his natural inclinations, but the *moral good* which is nothing but the moral virtues. We can thus define anthropocentrism as “the position which considers the human good (a moral good), which are the moral virtues, as the ultimate measure of man's use of and relationship with nature.” In the succeeding discussions, we will attempt to demonstrate how this definition of anthropocentrism is compatible with an ecocentric ethics.

#### b. Anthropocentrism and the Ecosystem

The problem with anti-anthropocentric ethics is that when they talk about nature, they forget to include man, as if man is an alien entity or a species of an entirely different order. But man is an animal belonging to the class *mamalia* and order *primate*. He is part of the ecosystem; hence, he is also part of the forces that keep equilibrium or balance in ecosystem.

The consumption of plants, vegetables, trees, and some species of animals by human beings is very much part of the ecosystem. Man, who is as natural as trees and animals, has a right to thrive and flourish; hence, he has a right to consume other living and non-living forms. Part of the structure of natural ecosystems is the *food web*—a mechanism of circulating energy and nutrients. And as other members in the cycle eat other animals, there is nothing against



Mother Nature when men eat some animals. Consumption, therefore, of animals, trees, or plants is not merely anthropocentric, as some ecologists complain, but is also ecocentric. It is ecocentric because it is what nature “wills”. It is the will of nature that man should take part in the food web. *Hence, to have a deep ecological awareness and unity is to recognize the fact that human consumption of animals is what nature “wills”.* To say that man should not take part in the food web or should not eat meat is to impose a strange type of “anthropocentrism” which is not nature-centered.

An ecosystem means that all organisms contribute in their own diversified ways. Hence, like all other life forms which, in their own way, contribute in the balance and rich ecosystem, man has to contribute his own also. The contribution of animals in the preservation of balance is to act according to a determinate set of instincts—this includes consumption of other organisms and competition against them. Grasses contribute as grasses; mosquitos contribute as mosquitos; cows contribute as cows; tigers contribute as tigers, etc., and man contributes as man, that is, anthropocentrically.

Now, since nature designs that human contribution is specifically human or anthropocentric, then based on our definition of anthropocentrism, it has to be a *moral contribution*. And since anthropocentrism means that human actions are to be measured in terms of the moral virtues (human good), then it includes *intergenerational justice*. It includes preserving and conserving the environment for future humanity. Consequently, it includes his higher role of *stewardship*. Hence, anthropocentrism implies that man should *preserve and conserve the environment primarily for his own kind*. In doing this, he is doing something which is ecocentric.

The full meaning of anthropocentrism therefore is now becoming clear. It is not to make man center at the expense of everything else; rather, it means *man’s own way of contributing to ecosystem, that is, a moral way*. Anthropocentrism therefore is the very nature of human contribution to ecosystem. It is anthropocentric, not because it is simply man-centered but because it is exclusively and peculiarly human. It is an inevitable contribution because no other organism can be substituted to perform it.

Our conclusion here is that anthropocentrism is not really against a balance and rich ecosystem and is not against the idea of ecocentrism. On the other hand, to truly contribute to the ecosystem and make nature as the center is to contribute in *the human way*, that is, in an anthropocentric way. When man places humanity as the center of his actions toward nature, he is simply following what nature “wills.” In other words, he is doing something ecocentric. The above shows that the idea of anthropocentrism is actually a subset of the idea of ecocentrism.

Thus, the idea of ecocentrism includes the fact that man must consider his environment as resource—a resource for the welfare of himself and for future humanity. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is morally acceptable as long as it remains within the reasonable limits, that is, on what is virtuous. What is immoral in animal experimentation are those unnecessary and unjustified and compassionless handling of them. Thus, the position of Peter Singer<sup>19</sup> that we are bound not to cause any harm or pain to animals and that of Tom Regan<sup>20</sup> that it is morally impermissible to use animals as food or even in necessary research is unacceptable.

In the next section, we will show that our definition of anthropocentrism also includes treating animals as ends in themselves.

### c. Anthropocentrism and Treating Animals as Ends

Ethicists who oppose anthropocentrism argue that it allows abusing animals at will, putting animals into violent fights for leisure, or torturing them for fun. But such are never part of, nor necessary to, the idea that animals are to be treated within the purview of human good. *For part of the human good is the protection, preservation, and kindness to animals.*

Further, some advocates of anthropocentrism wrongly construed that humans don't have direct duties to animals because they (animals) don't have rights and that our duties are only to their owners or to any man who might be affected. If by “direct moral duty” we mean a duty under the species of justice, then we agree with these ethicists. This is true since the moral basis of the discussion

on animal welfare is not about justice because animals are not subjects of moral rights.<sup>21</sup> But moral duties or obligations are not only about satisfying the virtue of justice. Moral duties or obligations also arise as imperatives of the other moral virtues such as compassion, mercy, sympathy, integrity, tenderness, etc. Under these moral virtues, our moral duty towards animals is direct.<sup>22</sup>

Cruelty to animals is wrong because it is against the virtue of kindness, mercy, tenderness, and compassion and against human dignity or integrity. The spontaneous act of the practical reason allows us to immediately experience an *ought* to be kind, compassionate, merciful, etc. to animals suffering from unnecessary pain.<sup>23</sup> Cruelty to animals is not against justice because animals are not entities that possess rights.<sup>24</sup> But justice or injustice is not the issue with regard to the proper human treatment of animals since there are many moral virtues which govern such acts.

Of course, when we treat animals kindly or forbid abusing or causing them unnecessary pain, such actions are directed for their sake, that is, for the sake of them not suffering pain. In as much as they are subjects of pain, they are to be treated, with actions related to pain and pleasure, as ends in themselves. Hence, the end of treating animals with mercy, kindness, etc., is the welfare of animals and not only in order that men may develop those virtues or that we have duties to their owners or to humanity in general. We forbid causing them unnecessary pain because pain is painful for them. And this is an *ought* (a moral duty) commanded spontaneously by our practical reason.

These being said, still the act of treating animals as ends in themselves is anthropocentric. This is because recognizing the value of treating others as ends in themselves is a value only in so far as we see it. Animals are incapable of valuing the act of treating others as ends in themselves. Recognizing the *ought* to treat others for other's sake including animals is a natural moral estimation grounded on the spontaneous regulative act of the *practical reason*. It is a unique human capacity. Hence, fulfilling this capacity is essentially anthropocentric.

Care and protection of animals from sufferings are done to them for their own sake. But this does not mean that they may not be used

as means for human flourishing when reason finds it fitting. If killing an animal is not against any virtue, then it is moral. Eating them, for instance, or eliminating some of them when they pose danger to human life, is not contrary to any of the moral virtues.

The confusion among ethicists in their discussions of animal welfare and rights is that they think that if animals are to be treated as ends in themselves, then they cannot be treated as means. The rejoinder to this is since we do treat them as means, then they are not beings that are an end in themselves. The concepts “end in themselves” and “means to another,” therefore, are seen to be mutually exclusive. Contrary to this view, we advanced that treating animals for their own sake depends on the nature of the particular act in question. And it does not prevent us from treating animals as means to our ends in another type of act. Hence, the moral norm here is not whether animals are *ends in themselves* or simply as *means to another*. The moral norm, again, is whether a human act affecting others, like animals, is against a moral virtue or not. As a matter of fact, a human being, being an end to himself, can be treated as means to another but only when it is not contrary to the moral virtues, especially, the virtue of justice. This gives us an insight into the fact that the principles “intrinsic value” and “end in itself,” and perhaps many other moral principles that have been used in moral reasoning as primary principles, have no normative value and are to be subjected to the measurement of the moral virtues.

#### d. Anthropocentrism and Animal Preservation

Often, we preserve animals for purposes serving, directly or indirectly, our interests. But we can also preserve animals simply for the sake of preserving them. Nonetheless, this latter act is still anthropocentric. When we preserve them for their own sake, we are still doing something anthropocentric because it still involves responding to a moral ought. Preserving a species for that species' sake is still a moral duty commanded by compassion for the natural desire of that species to survive. This is grounded on our capacity to understand or empathize, and hence, sympathize to their feelings and natural inclinations.

Preserving animal species for their own sake is anthropocentric because it is a human way of contributing to the ecosystem. Nobody else in the biotic community preserves another species or sees the value of preserving another species for that species' own sake except man. We see it valuable not because we can derive a certain benefit from it like aesthetic satisfaction, economic, medicinal, or any physical benefit but because we see it as a moral duty. We spontaneously and naturally see it as an *ought* because there are corresponding moral virtues that govern it such as the kindness, compassion, benevolence, and stewardship.

The above implies that man is becoming more human when at cases he preserves animals for their sake even when he sees no benefit from it. Preserving animals for their own sake is a meaningfully human act. It is a type of act which only human beings can recognize as an *ought*. It is a specific role of man in the ecosystem—not a physical role arising from man's natural physical and chemical disposition towards the environment, but a moral role. Hence, doing such act is intrinsically anthropocentric.

Although, theoretically, we can perform such act of preserving an animal species for its own sake alone, that is, without having any other motives or intention, like aesthetic satisfaction or economic benefit, in actual practice, such act is always mixed with second motives or intentions which are human goals. This is because we are now deeply aware of the importance and significance of every animal species to us owing to the fact of the interdependency of all organisms.

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Richard Watson, "A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics," in *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Louis P. Pojman (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2005), 206.

<sup>2</sup> Louis P. Pojman, *Global Environmental Ethics* (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing, 2000), 176.

<sup>3</sup> Watson, "A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics," 206.

<sup>4</sup> This is the "preservation principle" of Tom Regan.

<sup>5</sup> Watson, "A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics," 209a-b.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 210b.

<sup>8</sup> See William Baxter, "People or Penguins: The Case for Optimal Pollution," in *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 5th edition, ed. Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997), 481-486.

<sup>9</sup> Niles Eldredge, "Biodiversity," *Microsoft® Student 2009* [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Pojman, *Global Environmental Ethics*, 100.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> I am not stating here how the concept "anthropocentrism" is commonly construed both by its proponents and critics. Rather, I am arguing how it should be understood.

<sup>13</sup> See Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> See Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal," in *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 5th edition, ed. Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997), 436-446.

<sup>15</sup> For a criticism of the classical scholastic version of the natural law, see Germain Grisez, *Christian Moral Principles* (Chicago Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), chap. 4, question F.

<sup>16</sup> For a reply to the Humean objection against the natural law theory, see Redentor A. de la Rosa, *Introduction to Moral Philosophy: An Anthropology-based Ethics* (Davao City: Scientiarum Publishing, 2011), 85-88.

<sup>17</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas' natural law ethics, therefore, belongs to the category, *deontological ethics*.

<sup>18</sup> Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Singer, "All Animals are Equal," 441.

<sup>20</sup> See Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights," in *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 5th edition, ed. Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997), 446-451.

<sup>21</sup> The failure to distinguish between moral duties under the virtue of justice from moral duties under the other moral virtues has led to the confusion of the nature of rights.

<sup>22</sup> Carl Cohen correctly pointed out the distinction between obligation and rights. For him "rights entail obligations, but many of the things one ought to do are in no way tied to another's entitlement. Rights and obligations are not reciprocals of one another, and it is a serious mistake to suppose that they are" (Carl Cohen, "The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research," in *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997), 460. Cohen, however, failed to identify the individual basis of these moral obligations. As we have explained already, the moral duty or obligation to the rights or entitlements of others are grounded on the virtue of justice. However, other moral duties may arise on the basis of the imperatives of other moral virtues.

<sup>23</sup> These "oughts" which we cognitively perceive have effects on our emotion. The degree of reflectiveness on these *oughts* determines the degree of emotions felt. In other people, this emotional response is overwhelmed by the emotion of excitement, hatred, fear, etc., so that they are said to be "calloused" in conscience.

<sup>24</sup> Some philosophers have argued that some animals have rights on the basis that they possess a degree of intelligence. Apes for instance are said to be more intelligent and autonomous than infants. However, I believe that the claim that apes possess intelligence and are capable of language was already given a *coup de grâce* by Dennis Bonnette in his research paper, *A Philosophical Critical Analysis of Recent Ape-Language Studies* (Dennis Bonnette, Ph.D., "A Philosophical Critical Analysis of Recent Ape-Language Studies," *Faith & Reason* 19:2, 3 (Fall 1993): 221-263).

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