

**ADDRESSING ANTHROPOCENTRISM IN NONHUMAN ETHICS: EVOLUTION,  
MORALITY, AND NONHUMAN MORAL BEINGS**

**By**

**Andrew Woodhall**

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Department of Philosophy

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis I put forward a new definition of anthropocentrism based on a thorough overview of use in the literature and via analogy with other centrisms, such as androcentrism. I argue that thus clarified anthropocentrism is unjustified and results in problems for nonhuman animals and that any nonhuman ethic should wish to avoid. I then demonstrate how important nonhuman ethics theories are anthropocentric on this definition, and do not address anthropocentrism, in a way that results in these problems for nonhumans. I therefore propose a nonhuman ethic that aims to be less anthropocentric. I do this by first considering morality in light of evolution and second by looking at nonhuman moral codes. I draw upon both of these to set out a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic and show why this account is at least as viable as, and less problematic than, the current theories as well as outlining its beneficial implications for nonhuman animals and the field. I conclude that anthropocentrism and approaching nonhuman ethics in the manner I have is therefore important for considering nonhuman issues, and that the theory I have put forward is advantageous.

*For my mother and father,  
who have given so much for me.  
You are, and have always been,  
the wind beneath my wings.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Nonhuman ethics is both theoretical and practical (Regan, 1976:p.251) in outlook, having not only a philosophical aim, but one that is political, scientific, economic, and social. The effect of the field on all of these areas has been, and is increasingly, significant (Singer, in Singer, 2008:pp.1-10). As a result, having a convincing and justified account of nonhuman ethics that aids nonhuman animals as much as possible is important.

My aim in this thesis is to argue that despite this need, theories within the area do not address anthropocentrism as a source of many issues for nonhuman animals and are anthropocentric. I make this claim by arguing that the justifications for anthropocentrism are unconvincing and anthropocentrism is problematic for nonhumans and nonhuman ethics. I conclude that current theories therefore do not aid nonhuman animals, or fit with the aim of nonhuman ethics, as well as they could. I use this as motivation to present a less anthropocentric position that addresses anthropocentrism and is at least as viable as current theories. I conclude that this position therefore has advantages as a nonhuman ethic.

### *Clarifications*

Before continuing, four clarifications are necessary. First, in chapter one I consider anthropocentrism and provide a new, clarified definition, from which I argue the problems anthropocentrism causes can be seen. For this introduction, I shall simply clarify that by anthropocentrism I mean (i) interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, and, (ii) considering humans as the most or more important,

significant, or central entity that exists. Anthropocentrism should not be interpreted as meaning speciesism: though (ii) has connections to what is usually meant by this, (i) does not.

Second, I use ‘nonhuman ethics’ rather than ‘animal ethics’ throughout as an attempt to reduce anthropocentric language. While ‘nonhuman ethics’ is still problematic, no better term is currently available and it still serves to combat the anthropocentrism of the term ‘animal ethics’. This latter relies on and implies old assumptions of humans not being animals (and the anthropocentrism this perpetuates), the idea that ethics *per se* is human and anything considering nonhumans is a sub-category, and runs the risk of implying and perpetuating the separation of humans and nonhuman animals.

Third, I will briefly clarify what I mean by the aim of nonhuman ethics. Though I shall discuss this more in chapter three, in short, as Hugh LaFollette, Neil Shanks, and Cathryn Bailey note, nonhuman ethics begins with the claim that human society has a tendency – evidenced throughout history by such examples as slavery and gender inequalities, amongst others - to unreflectively accept moral standards that upon unbiased critical investigation are shown to be unjustifiable and, in many cases, morally problematic (LaFollette & Shanks, 1996:p.41; Bailey, 2009:p.141). Once identified, these standards – such as the boundaries of moral concern – can be challenged. It is this idea of challenging accepted beliefs, finding them unjustified and leading to morally problematic conclusions, and their resultant rejection that nonhuman ethics, such as Peter Singer’s theory, depends upon (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.37; Singer, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.162; Jamieson, 2002:p.7; Warren, 2000:p.68). As Cathryn Bailey states, “in the case of animal ethics, what most people apparently accept as obviously justified by common sense is part of what is at issue” (Bailey, 2009:p.141). To emphasize this, nonhuman ethics relies upon stressing the similarity between species prejudice and racist and sexist prejudices.

As such, the aim of nonhuman ethics has been to fairly and unbiasedly (and non-prejudicially) consider and represent nonhuman animals ethically in a way that could be justified, in the same way that we have approached other groups that have been morally excluded or disadvantaged. For instance, Tom Regan notes that nonhuman ethics theories should avoid unjustified species bias (Regan, 2004:p.xxxiii). Similarly, Steve Sapontzis intimates that nonhuman ethics involves a rejection of anthropocentrism, as he claims that the focus and aim of nonhuman ethics, i.e. liberating nonhumans, would “eliminate anthropocentric prejudice from morality” (Sapontzis, 1987:p.272) and make possible non-anthropocentric reasoning and morality (*Ibid*).<sup>1</sup> The aim of nonhuman ethics can thus be understood as (i) the rejection of unjustified beliefs regarding or impacting nonhumans, and (ii) the attempt to fairly and unbiasedly consider and represent nonhuman animals ethically in a way that results in them being treated as they deserve, in a justified manner that is ethically consistent. In short, to do the best we can (both theoretically and practically) for nonhumans in a fair and unbiased way (*Ibid*).

Fourth, within this thesis I focus on nonhuman ethic theories, and the impact anthropocentrism has here, rather than approaching individual debates, as, I contend, this is crucial to recognise anthropocentrism. This is for three reasons. First, the arguments within the debates rely on shared background assumptions which span topics. For instance, if harm should be reduced or prevented whenever it cannot be justified, then this is a basic claim that should apply to all debates (Pluhar, 1991:p.121; Jamieson, 2002:p.114). There may be differences, for example with regard to the number of nonhumans, or harms, involved, or the difficulty of

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<sup>1</sup> Sapontzis believes that nonhuman ethics theories form a basis for how we go on to consider nature morally, i.e. as the basis for then forming an environmental ethic, rather than nonhuman ethics being considered only an inadequate environmental ethic. While Sapontzis does not claim that nonhuman ethics theories currently are environmental ethics, he does claim that they can be the beginning and develop to consider nature morally (Sapontzis, 1987:pp.271-272)

showing the practices as ungrounded,<sup>2</sup> but the background normative assumption that justifies this reasoning is not restricted to any one debate. These background assumptions require clarifying and justifying, however as they can involve prejudicial influence or bias, and thus anthropocentrism. Parallel feminist arguments raise this same issue, and I draw on these when making this case in the first three chapters. Moreover, given the clarification of anthropocentrism, especially in the sense of interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, such assumptions may likely be the source of anthropocentrism, and thus considering this source may provide a clearer picture.

Second, as I draw on analogies with some feminist thoughts in clarifying anthropocentrism, and as many feminist positions argue that one must consider systems of thought and practice as a whole when looking at problems facing women, considering theories rather than debates would seem the better place to clearly find anthropocentrism and begin resolving it.

Third, if anthropocentrism is present in a nonhuman ethic then this will shape how nonhuman issues are responded to. Thus, if a theory can be shown to be anthropocentric, then rejecting or modifying it will change any position within the debates that draws upon it. Consequently, a focus on general theories enables a more robust consideration of anthropocentrism within nonhuman ethics and may have a greater impact upon particular debates.

### ***Methodology***

In order to make my claims, I use philosophical argument as well as drawing upon empirical research. This is common within nonhuman ethics as a means to combat species bias and

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<sup>2</sup> These, however, only imply (at most) that one debate may be more urgent or tactically advantageous to address – not that it should be focused on alone.

assumptions regarding nonhuman animals. For instance, most theories appeal to biological, cognitive, and behavioural studies when considering which nonhumans are relevantly-similar in sentience to humans.<sup>3</sup> I draw upon a wider range of fields and evidence in order to support my new claims, such as those regarding current theories and those challenging deeply-held and largely unquestioned beliefs (e.g. that nonhumans are moral). Such areas include nonhuman ethics and politics, philosophy (especially ethics), ethology, evolutionary biology, evolutionary studies (especially regarding morality), environmental ethics, feminism and ecofeminism, historical evidence (especially regarding human-nonhuman interaction), primatology, nonhuman cognitive and behavioural studies, and various scientific experiments involving nonhumans. My aim is to provide support for my claims and to use the empirical research to combat anthropocentric assumptions, such as what capabilities nonhuman animals possess and what is human and nonhuman (e.g. whether morality is only human), that occur even within nonhuman ethics. This methodology has the benefit of making my claims more compelling and means that both my arguments and the empirical research must be addressed to undermine my position.

### *Thesis Claims & Structure*

In sum, I shall consider nonhuman ethic theories. Any such theory should fairly and unbiasedly (and non-prejudicially) consider and represent nonhuman animals in a way that can be justified and as much as possible. Thus theories should avoid unjustified beliefs, e.g. species, race, and sex bias<sup>4</sup>, especially those problematic for nonhuman animals. This may seem obvious, as

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<sup>3</sup> By this such theories do not mean cognitive development in the sense of intelligence, but rather which nonhuman animals are conscious and can experience/suffer as humans can.

<sup>4</sup> These are noted as, (i) the rejection of species bias for nonhuman ethics should be obvious, and (ii) as almost all, (perhaps even all), nonhuman ethics theories consider speciesism as analogous to racism and sexism, and claim it is unjustified and problematic for similar reasons, such positions do not (often explicitly) wish to endorse either bias.

illustrated by Regan and Sapontzis' views above, but it is important to note as if beliefs are unjustified and raise problems, and are contrary to the aim of nonhuman ethics, then even if rejecting those beliefs undermines a position, this only provides a motivation to posit an alternative theory rather than keeping that position or belief.

In my thesis I make three main claims. First, I clarify anthropocentrism and show why it is not justified, involves and leads to problems for nonhuman animals and nonhuman ethics, and does not fit with the aim of nonhuman ethics. Second, that anthropocentrism should be avoided as much as possible *and* be addressed by nonhuman ethic theories. Third, any theory that is less anthropocentric than others, and remains as viable, will therefore have advantages. Taken together I claim that important nonhuman ethic theories involve, and do not address, anthropocentrism, and I thus offer a less anthropocentric, yet plausible position. I make this argument over the course of eight chapters.

In chapter one I clarify what is meant by anthropocentrism, and distinguish it from and map its relation to other terms – namely, speciesism and human chauvinism. This clarification reveals important problems that current theories are not adequately able to respond to, often perpetuate, and miss due to the confusion over the meaning of anthropocentrism.

Chapter two considers the common justifications for anthropocentrism, and argues that none stand up under critical reflection. I conclude that anthropocentrism is therefore unjustified, and this is a concern for any nonhuman ethic.

In chapter three I show problems anthropocentrism causes for nonhumans and nonhuman ethics and conclude that anthropocentrism must be addressed by nonhuman ethics directly, rather than speciesism or human chauvinism, and be avoided as much as possible. I argue that the less anthropocentric a theory, the more advantages as a nonhuman ethic it has.

In chapters four and five I consider important and contemporary theories that consider nonhuman animals – Singer and Regan in chapter four, and purported non-anthropocentric

theories (Deep Ecology, Holism, Care Theory, and Ecofeminism) in chapter five. I argue that while positive steps forward, each theory involves, and does not address, anthropocentrism. I also briefly illustrate how these theories relate to the problems shown in chapter three.

In chapters six through eight I turn to outlining a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic. In chapter six, I consider an evolutionary account of morality and the indications of current empirical research on the relationship between humans and nonhumans.

Chapter seven draws out the implications of chapter six on the possibility of nonhuman animals being moral beings, in the sense that at least some behave morally and have moral codes of varying complexity.

In chapter eight, I draw upon chapters six and seven to construct a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic, both in how the principles and criteria for moral considerability are derived and what they are and how they work. I consider how my position works as a nonhuman ethic, in relation to the debates, how it addresses anthropocentrism and responds to the problems in chapter three, and its implications.

I conclude the thesis by summing up and indicating new and interesting implications of my claims throughout the thesis, and thus its contribution to the field.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **CLARIFYING ANTHROPOCENTRISM**

In this chapter I clarify anthropocentrism. I do this by considering the definitions and uses of the term within the literature to show how anthropocentrism is used. I then claim that defining anthropocentrism via analogy with other centrisms – such as androcentrism – not only clarifies the term and covers all uses (and intending meanings), but also provides new insights. To accomplish this, I first consider the meanings of speciesism, human chauvinism, and what some term ‘value assumptions’. This is important as anthropocentrism is often considered analogous to (and interchangeable with) speciesism and human chauvinism. I argue that it is not, although it is a related concept. I argue that clarifying anthropocentrism can not only provide the bias nonhuman ethics traditionally rejects, but also reveal previously unconsidered problems.

#### **§1.1 Value Assumptions**

In this section I outline what is meant by ‘value assumptions’ (VA). I briefly explain the difference and relationship VAs have to speciesism. I argue that this will distinguish VAs from speciesism, human chauvinism, and anthropocentrism, but will also enable a clearer understanding of how these terms differ and relate.

VAs are the least opaque of the four terms I consider. Even so, few theorists have explicitly stated VAs or their endorsement of them even when they are implicitly accepted or indirectly expounded. However in recent literature some theorists have begun to distinguish between VAs and the other three terms.

By value assumptions I mean: the assumption that there is a difference of (moral) value, generally in the favour of humans, between human and nonhuman animals. The two explicit statements of VAs in the literature, made by Richard and Val Routley and Tony Milligan, put forward two value assumptions as possible: a ‘Greater Value Assumption’ and a ‘Sole Value Assumption’ (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.104; Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.226).<sup>5</sup> Essentially, the ‘Greater Value Assumption’ is the claim that humans and nonhumans have (moral) value, but humans have a *greater value* than nonhumans. The ‘Sole Value Assumption’ is the claim that *only humans* have (moral) value. Throughout I will generally refer to ‘*the VA*’ (singular), meaning just the assumption of difference in value, regardless of extent. When referring to specific strengths of VA, I will identify this.

It is important to note that while I refer to ‘*the VA*’, as I ultimately reject both VAs as anthropocentric in §1.4.2, the distinction between both has been crucial for nonhuman ethics. This is because distinguishing between ‘moral standing’ (Greater VA) and ‘moral status’ (Sole VA) enables one group to comprise the moral community without necessarily excluding others from all consideration (Jaworska & Tannenbaum, 2013; Hale, 2011; Goodpaster, 1978).<sup>6</sup> Recognising this has traditionally been important to arguing for nonhuman animals (as well as the more-than-human world (Feinberg, in Blackstone, 1974:p.51)) to be morally considered,<sup>7</sup> even if they are not equal to humans (Garner, 2013), and to putting forward policies regarding

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<sup>5</sup> While these theorists are the only two to explicitly clarify VAs as shall be seen when considering speciesism, human chauvinism, and anthropocentrism the VA is a common element that nonhuman ethics’ theories implicitly refer to when using these three terms. It will also be seen as a central aspect of what such theories object to when they use the other three terms.

<sup>6</sup> Amongst the arguments made regarding this, and the relationship of value distinctions with speciesism and human chauvinism, given how I clarify anthropocentrism in this chapter any value distinction is also as problematic as it would be for other centrisms, such as in regard to race or women.

<sup>7</sup> One clarification ought to be noted here. Several theorists *have* recognised this distinction and used it to argue within nonhuman ethics and environmental ethics, by arguing that given this distinction the exclusion of either from even just moral standing is speciesist/anthropocentric. Goodpaster, Feinberg, Garner, shallow environmental ethicists, Midgley (to an extent), Callicott (in his newer position – cf. chapter five), amongst others, are clear examples. Still, other theorists have not recognised this distinction or have argued that nonhuman animals or the more-than-human world must be included in the bounds of moral status or (i) this is speciesist/anthropocentric, or (ii) they are not considerable at all. Singer, Callicott (in his original position), Taylor (in theory, at least), Plumwood, and Routley, amongst others, are some such examples. Thus this distinction is important in both nonhuman and environmental ethics, but it must also be noted that it is not uncontroversially accepted or rejected.

nonhuman welfare.<sup>8</sup> This distinction is therefore important when considering claims regarding ‘moral considerability’.<sup>9</sup> Presently, however, understanding *the* VA (i.e. *any* value distinction between humans and nonhumans) is all that is required.<sup>10</sup>

Value assumptions are evident when charges of speciesism or human chauvinism are levelled, in that either explicitly states this value distinction or implicitly assumes it (and as most do the latter, the term ‘value assumption’ arises). As Milligan notes, “we might provisionally regard speciesism as the endorsement of...*any* belief whatsoever that is normatively equivalent to regarding humans as the only creaturely bearers of value or as creatures whose value *as humans* systematically trumps the value of all other creatures” (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.226). This, in conjunction with the varying strengths of VA, has given rise to variations in both speciesism and human chauvinism, in that one can be a ‘weak’ or ‘strong’ speciesist<sup>11</sup> (or in Oscar Horta’s terms, a ‘simple’ or ‘combined’ speciesist respectively (Horta, 2010:pp.257-258)) depending on which of the two VAs one endorses. Most humans (and most nonhuman ethics theories) would be weak speciesists as few discount nonhumans from all moral concern.

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<sup>8</sup> Welfare laws regarding nonhuman animals, and the statutes governing them, for instance evidence the recognition and acceptance of this distinction (Garner, 2013:p.78; Tannenbaum, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> For instance, while some may argue that those who are not included within their criteria for moral considerability are consequently of no moral concern – such as Singer expressly states – others may grant that even those outside their criteria, while less valuable, still have *some* standing and thus cannot be treated however we wish.

<sup>10</sup> Having noted this, while the distinction between moral standing and moral status has been used by many within the debates and has been crucial in many ways to nonhuman ethics, the following should also be noted. First, while the VAs can be understood along the lines of moral standing and status (in the sense of one group solely having a specific value and others have some value even if excluded from this), two potential differences should be highlighted: (i) the VAs specifically refer to humans, whereas moral standing and status need not, and refer to value distinctions between humans and nonhumans, whereas standing and status could apply to groups mixed with both. (ii) Moral status’ equation with the Sole VA is not entirely accurate as unless the status rejects value outside of the set of beings the Greater VA reflects the meaning of moral status more accurately (i.e. those with the status have a higher value (and are termed to have a ‘status’) than those outside). Goodpaster notes this possibility also (Goodpaster, 1978:p.323). Second, not all nonhuman ethicists (or ethicists in general) differentiate between status and standing, and others use ‘moral considerability’ to refer to one or both, and vice versa (Jaworska & Tannenbaum, 2013). As such it is often unclear whether a theorist is intending the distinction or not due to equivocation.

<sup>11</sup> Or human chauvinist

Despite VAs being evident when speciesism or human chauvinism occurs, the former is not synonymous with either of the latter for two reasons. First, the VA is only one of two principles that makes something a prejudice and speciesist/chauvinist; the other being whether or not there are justifiable reasons for the VA (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.223).<sup>12</sup> Thus if a VA is present but justified, it is not speciesism. Second, analogous VAs hold a similar place in regards to racism and sexism, as each holds that a certain group is of higher/lower value to another for unjustifiable reasons.<sup>13</sup> Thus value assumptions are not specific to speciesism or human chauvinism themselves. Rather they are types of assumptions regarding (moral) value that can be applied to any group, and when unjustified form a prejudice in regards to that being or group. VAs then need not be focused on nonhumans and humans, and can be justified or unjustified. Thus while VAs may be *part of* speciesism and human chauvinism, they are not synonymous. More importantly, while in this chapter speciesism and human chauvinism will be shown to *require* a value assumption of some form, the relationship of the VA to anthropocentrism is not so simple.

In sum, a value assumption is inherent to speciesism or human chauvinism as it is one of the two requirements for any view to be a form of prejudice. While VAs could apply to any biased view, by ‘the VA’ I mean the assumption of a difference of (moral) value, of whatever strength, generally in favour of humans, between human and nonhuman animals. By the VA I do not mean speciesism or human chauvinism, as the former does not require either of the latter.

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<sup>12</sup> This shall be shown in the sections that follow on speciesism, human chauvinism, and anthropocentrism.

<sup>13</sup> This claim seems uncontroversial, however I provide the following as supplementary support: It has been noted that Plato and Aristotle’s view of non-Greeks involved assumptions of their inferiority (Rowe, in Singer, 2009:p.130). Mary Ann Warren notes how racists hold views of the inferiority of other races that they have not been able to prove (Warren, in Singer, 2009:p.307). Kwame Anthony Appiah argues for how racists and sexists hold beliefs of different moral values of their group from other groups that result in preferential treatment whether these are attempted to be justified or not (Appiah, in LaFollete, 2003:p.391). The Oxford Dictionary’s definition of racism (which arguably represents a common understanding of the term) is “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one’s own race is superior”, which clearly involves a VA. Ann Cudd and Leslie Jones make similar observations of inferiority being involved in sexism (Cudd & Jones, in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005:p.75).

## **§1.2 Speciesism**

In this section I clarify speciesism. I outline the most used meanings of the term before clarifying what is intended by speciesism. I conclude, as some recent scholars have, that this is human chauvinism and that speciesism has a broader meaning of which human chauvinism is a type.

Speciesism is more widely used than the VA, human chauvinism and anthropocentrism. However in the literature speciesism has been increasingly used interchangeably with the latter terms and is often thought to be synonymous with both (Cavalieri, 2001:p.70; Horta, 2010:p.258). This, I argue, is mistaken, as while the three terms share similarities and relate to each other each has distinct characteristics, implying that the terms ought to be considered as separate, yet related.

Despite its wide use, few theorists clearly explain what they mean by speciesism. Instead most rely on colloquial usage via an analogy with sexism or racism (i.e. speciesism is the comparable term for the prejudicial view or treatment of nonhuman animals). This method has led to ambiguities as different theorists have applied the term in different ways. Some, for instance, apply thought experiments in a manner that results in potential differences in what the term means. For example, in addition to the analogy with sexism or racism, many also use examples of extra-terrestrial beings in opposition to humans which implies that the term is not specific to nonhuman animals but can apply to any bias based upon species. Others define a view as speciesist only if it endorses one of the value assumptions, whereas others require any such assumption to be based on arbitrary or unjustified reasons (Hayward, 1997:p.52). Still others have used the term to only refer to species-based differences for preferential treatment, others the attribution of rights (Pluhar, 1988:pp.84-85).

The most common understanding of ‘speciesism’ is due to Peter Singer. Singer uses the term to mean an arbitrary assumption that only interests of the human species matter (Singer, 1995:p.6). He illustrates this via an analogy with racism and sexism, claiming that speciesism is a similar arbitrary bias in favour of species that works in a similar way (*Ibid*). Singer claims that if we are being consistent speciesism is just as morally problematic as racism and sexism (Light & Rolston, in Light & Rolston, 2000:p.8).

Speciesism thus has three important elements: (i) speciesism involves a bias in favour of one’s own species, (ii) this bias is identical to how the biases work in racism and sexism, and (iii) speciesism involves some kind of value assumption via the favouring of one’s own species’ interests over those of other species. These raise two points that I will argue not only clarify the term but also distinguish speciesism from human chauvinism and anthropocentrism.

First, Singer’s use of speciesism refers to our favouring of the *human* species; and it is here, I argue, that an ambiguity creeps into the term. As Paola Cavalieri, amongst others, has pointed out speciesism *per se* does not mean a bias in favour of the human species, but rather a bias in favour of one’s own species or, as Cavalieri states, “any form of discrimination based on species” (Cavalieri, 2001:p.70). Essentially then the three elements above do not specifically refer to humans, and thus any species can be speciesist; humans, nonhuman animals, or extra-terrestrial nonhumans.<sup>14</sup>

Singer’s ambiguity however has led others to use, and define, speciesism specifically in reference to human bias over nonhumans. For instance, the common understanding of speciesism exemplified in the *Oxford Dictionary* definition is “[t]he assumption of human superiority leading to the exploitation of animals”. It is this understanding that is used most often in the literature (see, Cavalieri, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.31; Epstein, in

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<sup>14</sup> It is likely that Singer was aware of this and used the term only in reference to humans due to the aim of his position – i.e. in showing how humans were treating nonhumans unfairly due to a species bias – and thus that he did not intend to define the term in relation to humans (cf. Singer, 1993:p.58).

Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.601; Diamond, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:p.93; Rachels, 1991:p.181) and also amongst animal rights or welfare groups.<sup>15</sup> This use of the term however lacks clarity, as while a bias towards humans *qua* humans is speciesist, not all speciesism need involve humans. Thus many scholars have recently begun to distinguish between speciesism *per se* and, as Dale Jamieson puts it, *Homo Sapiens*-centric speciesism (Jamieson, 2008:pp.108-109). The former is just any arbitrary bias in favour of a species *just because* it is that species, whereas the latter is where the bias is towards the *human* species. Thus while all arbitrary bias towards humans is speciesist, speciesism itself is broader in scope.

When speciesism is used a more accurate expression of its intended meaning would be one that illustrates that the species-bias is toward humans. Increasingly within the literature ‘*Homo-Sapiens*-centric speciesism’, ‘anthropocentric speciesism’, ‘human speciesism’, ‘human-centric speciesism’, and ‘human chauvinism’ have been used to clarify this (Jamieson, 2008:pp.108-109; Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.223; Horta, 2010:p.258; Hayward, 1997:pp.50-54). It is via this intended meaning that speciesism overlaps ‘human chauvinism’ and ‘anthropocentrism’, and it is human chauvinism – not speciesism – that I will show below expresses the intended meaning more clearly.

Second, speciesism implicitly involves the VA as it favours one species interests over another. One may object that one may favour one species interests over another’s without thinking they are more valuable, however this would misunderstand what is meant by speciesism. Speciesism refers to an *arbitrary bias* in favour of one species over others. As Oscar Horta and Tim Hayward have each argued,<sup>16</sup> species is not a morally relevant characteristic – just as race and sex are not – and thus speciesism involves discrimination on the basis of this morally-irrelevant characteristic alone. Any such instance of favouring one species interests over another for a morally relevant reason would not be an instance of

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<sup>15</sup> Any internet search of ‘PETA’ and ‘Speciesism’ will reveal such uses, for example.

<sup>16</sup> And essentially every nonhuman ethicist since, and including, Peter Singer.

speciesism (Horta, 2010:p.247; Hayward, 1997:p.51).<sup>17</sup> However any instance that is speciesist must still have some reason why one species is being favoured, and this can plausibly only either be due to arbitrariness or some kind of value assumption. That it is the VA is supported by two considerations.

First, speciesism arose and is expressed via an analogy with racism and sexism. As noted in §1.1, both involve a VA in favour of the preferred group, and it would seem slightly peculiar to condemn someone as being racist or sexist if their favouring was purely arbitrary. What both prejudices assert is that one group is superior to another.

Second, when considering how speciesism is used the literature often discusses different types. For example, Cavalieri notes how species is used as the characteristic necessary for either any, or a higher, moral considerability (Cavalieri, 2001:pp.69-70). Evelyn Pluhar makes a similar observation (Pluhar, 1988:pp.84-85). Jamieson distinguishes between ‘absolute’ and ‘moderate’ speciesism, by which he means those views that hold humans as either of sole or higher moral value respectively (Jamieson, 2008:p.109). Horta makes a similar observation, but uses the terms ‘radical’, ‘extreme’, and ‘interest sensitive’ instead (Horta, 2010:pp.254-255). Despite the different terms used what is meant by each is some kind of VA. As this is how speciesism is used it is reasonable to conclude that speciesism involves a VA.

This demonstrates how speciesism overlaps with the VA, as while value assumptions need not involve speciesism, speciesism implicitly involves the VA. As I will argue below, this is important when considering the relation speciesism has with human chauvinism and anthropocentrism.

Two additional features of speciesism should also be noted. First, speciesism, along with human chauvinism, is something that we can avoid, whereas anthropocentrism is often argued to be necessary (Hayward, 1997:p.54). Hayward argues this by understanding

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<sup>17</sup> As, for example, is often argued by putting forward ‘if a being cannot suffer then it has no interest to be considered’

speciesism as equivalent to human chauvinism and contrasting it with anthropocentrism, which he considers to be inescapable as however we reason or act we are being anthropocentric (*Ibid*:pp.50-54). This claim, however, is debateable (as I argue in §2.5) and arises, as I show in §1.4.1.2 and §1.4.2, largely due to anthropocentrism being misunderstood and unclarified. Even so, Hayward's claim does have significance. If even one understanding of anthropocentrism is inescapable<sup>18</sup> then speciesism and human chauvinism are not synonymous with anthropocentrism. More importantly, even if dubious Hayward's feature does indicate that he understands *Homo Sapiens*-centric speciesism as the intended meaning behind speciesism, not the broader meaning of speciesism.

Second, as Hugh LaFollette and Niall Shanks note, one can be a speciesist 'directly' or 'indirectly' (LaFollette & Shanks, 1996:pp.42-43). Direct-speciesism is the outright claim that only species matters, whereas indirect-speciesism claims that species have different morally relevant characteristics, and it is those of the favoured species that are more morally relevant (*Ibid*). LaFollette and Shanks illustrate this distinction via sexism: direct-sexists claim that men should have certain jobs as they are men, whereas indirect-sexists claim that men should have certain jobs because they have certain characteristics that distinguish them from women (*Ibid*:p.43).

This is significant for it demonstrates that just because a position posits differing morally relevant characteristics among species does not mean that that position is justified and thus avoids speciesism, as these characteristics need to be justified in order to avoid indirect-speciesism. Moreover, those who are indirect-speciesists are likely to be harder to identify as the position may claim to be justified in its species discrimination.<sup>19</sup> Thus while some positions openly acknowledge their speciesism, the vast majority attempt to justify practices *without*

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<sup>18</sup> Even if this understanding is not anthropocentrism *per se* when the term is clarified, the understanding could still be human-centred in some benign sense. See below and §2.5.

<sup>19</sup> Such difficulties and hidden biases are commonly identified regarding racism and sexism.

appealing to any species bias (Pluhar, 1991:p.121; Jamieson, 2002:p.168; Mayo, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.339). For the majority of positions speciesism may be indirect and thus even positions that do not realize they are speciesist may be shown to be.

In sum, speciesism is the unjustified discrimination, or the favouring of interests of, one or more species over another. It does not specifically refer to humans. What is most often meant by speciesism is *Homo Sapiens*-centric speciesism. Speciesism also implicitly involves a VA. Finally, speciesism involves an unjustified or arbitrary bias, whether this is directly or indirectly demonstrable. Clearly speciesism and the VA differ, yet are related.

### **§1.3 Human Chauvinism**

In this section I clarify human chauvinism. I look at definitions of chauvinisms and the use of human chauvinism in the literature to draw out the central elements of the term. I consider a contrasting use of human chauvinism and argue that this still fits these elements. I conclude by outlining how human chauvinism and speciesism relate.

Within the literature human chauvinism is defined via analogy with other chauvinisms, most often male chauvinism. Richard and Val Routley define chauvinism in general as “substantially differential, discriminating, and inferior treatment...of items outside the class, for which there is not sufficient justification” (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.104). This definition is exemplified by male chauvinism. The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary defines this latter as: “an attitude of superiority toward members of the opposite sex; also: behavior expressive of such an attitude” and the *Oxford Dictionary* as: “[m]ale prejudice against women; the belief that men are superior in terms of ability, intelligence, etc.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> I cite the dictionary definitions here as (i) they represent the common understanding of the term, and (ii) there is little explicit defining of male chauvinism within the literature as most rely on the common understanding given in these dictionary definitions without clarification.

From these definitions we can extrapolate three elements necessary for a view to be a form of chauvinism. First, there is a bias in favour of a privileged group against any not belonging to that group. Second, this bias is unjustified.<sup>21</sup> Third, this bias involves a belief that the privileged group is superior to the non-privileged groups; i.e. the VA. Any definition of human chauvinism must therefore involve these three elements.

Unlike speciesism and other chauvinisms, there are no clear definitions of human chauvinism within the literature. Usually the term is either explained (i) via the claim that it is analogous with other chauvinisms, (ii) by unclarified use as a term denoting positions that do not consider nonhuman animals, or (iii) via illustrating how human chauvinism actually occurs in society and morality. As the second method is a statement rather than a clarification, I consider the other two to clarify human chauvinism.

The first method claims that human chauvinism fits the three elements of chauvinism above, with humans being privileged and nonhumans disadvantaged. I can therefore use these three elements to define human chauvinism (HC): (i) HC involves a bias in favour of humans and against nonhumans, (ii) this human bias is unjustified, and (iii) HC involves a belief that humans are superior to nonhumans (i.e. the VA).

This definition coincides with the more common third method. The most prominent use of this, that of Richard and Val Routley, begins by claiming that human chauvinism is similar to other chauvinisms before explaining that by human chauvinism what is meant is that value and morality are ultimately reducible to matters of interest or concern to humans and that one defines who counts morally in ways that necessarily favour capacities found only, or most paradigmatically, in humans (Light & Rolston, in Light & Rolston, 2000:pp.8-9). The Routley's claim that human chauvinism comes in a strong or a weak form (Routley & Routley,

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<sup>21</sup> In addition to the support for this explicit in the definition above, note that the final definition also states that male chauvinism involves a prejudice. This was noted in §1.1 as being partially consisted of a belief that is unjustified.

in Elliot, 2004:p.104). By the former they mean that “value and morality [are] ultimately concerned entirely with humans, and non-human items [are seen] as having value or creating constraints on human action only in so far as these items serve human interests or purposes” (*Ibid*). By the weaker form the Routley’s mean “the allocation of greater value or preference, on the basis of species, to humans, while not however entirely excluding non-humans from moral consideration and claims” (*Ibid*).

Two points are raised by the Routley’s definition. First, the strong and weak forms of human chauvinism are essentially the Sole and Greater value assumptions noted in §1.1. Moreover, the value assumptions are one of the three most defining aspects of human chauvinism.<sup>22</sup> This supports the definition reached via the three elements of chauvinisms. Second, human chauvinism is concerned with more than just predicating (moral) value, but also involves the claim that one defines value or morality (or anything else) in ways that favour humans. Tim Hayward clarifies this:

“...Human chauvinism is appropriately predicated of attempts to specify relevant differences in ways that invariably favour humans...a human chauvinist could...consistently accept that the moral arbitrariness of speciesism is always wrong and yet persist in denying claims of relevant similarities between humans and other species...Such denials, in themselves, need not be objectionable if the factual claims about the animals’ capacities and the normative assumptions about worthiness of respect are well-supported. But if, when evidence is produced that...undermine these claims and assumptions, the response is to seek to refine the definition...[so] as to exclude nonhumans once more, then there is a case for thinking this is a human chauvinist response...Human chauvinism,

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<sup>22</sup> The others being ‘humans’ as the privileged group and the belief being unjustified.

then, is essentially a disposition, and as such requires a kind of hermeneutic to uncover...” (Hayward, 1997:pp.53-54)

Essentially, Hayward claims that human chauvinism involves attitudes that result in acting in ways that favour humans over nonhumans. This behaviour largely occurs in relation to morality and value and works as a means to privilege humans.

This conception of human chauvinism appears to differ slightly from the definition arrived at via analogy with other chauvinisms. That definition was similar to speciesism and could be something that is just held without action, i.e. human chauvinism is just a view that preferences humans due to some unjustified value assumption. Hayward’s clarification, and the Routley’s use of human chauvinism, however imply that human chauvinism also involves some behaviour. For human chauvinism is predicated of “*attempts to specify* relevant differences in ways that invariably favour humans” (*Ibid*) and *attempts to define* morality or value in ways that favour humans (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.104). This implies that human chauvinism involves *acting* in ways that favour humans. This implication is similarly exemplified in the definition of male chauvinism, which includes “behavior expressive of such an attitude”. Thus the two methods of defining human chauvinism appear to provide two related, yet slightly different definitions.

This is only a *prima facie* difference when one reflects on Hayward’s final claim. Hayward claims that it is the *attitude* that is revealed by continuously trying to favour humans when one’s position has been shown unjustified that makes one a human chauvinist. Favouring humans, for Hayward, can be done by the human chauvinist or those who are not human chauvinists. Both appeal to what they consider to be justifiable reasons to distinguish humans and nonhumans, however only the former will continuously attempt to keep their position favouring humans once their reasons are shown unjustified. For Hayward, I argue, it is the

attitudes that are the motivation and these attitudes must involve a bias towards humans that is not justified, a bias that involves a value assumption.<sup>23</sup> Hayward accepts that only if the attempted favouring of humans is done on unjustified grounds is this case morally objectionable. Yet his attribution of human chauvinism is based on the attitudes which guides one's actions to continually try to favour humans.

This focus on the attitudes explains how the two apparently different understandings of human chauvinism relate. The attitudes, and behaviour, (for Hayward and the Routley's<sup>24</sup>) are human-chauvinistic because they are performed due to the underlying beliefs made of the first explanations' three elements that the agent holds. Thus what makes something human chauvinistic is the fulfilling of the three elements any chauvinism has, not the behaviour that *shows* one is chauvinistic.<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that according to Hayward without these elements a position is not necessarily objectionable if well-supported.

In sum, human chauvinism can be defined as involving an unjustifiable bias in favour of humans over nonhumans that involves a belief that humans are superior (i.e. the VA). Actions performed due to this are human chauvinistic, including attempting to define value or morality in ways that favour humans. Finally, the endorsing of a VA is indispensable to human chauvinism.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> This is made clear in the above quote. Hayward claims that human chauvinism is rightly predicated "of attempts to specify relevant differences in ways that invariably favour humans". These, Hayward claims, are objectionable if "the factual claims about the animals' capacities and the normative assumptions about worthiness of respect are [not] well-supported" and one who continues to seek to favour humans despite this are human chauvinists. The reasonable explanation for this is a value assumption in favour of humans. (This is further supported by the fact that Hayward considers the unjustified denial of consideration for beings with dignity and who are worthy of respect to be speciesist, and that judging which beings have dignity and are worthy of respect is a value judgement (Hayward, 1997:p.53). Such denials thus clearly involve a VA, and as Hayward draws on similar claims in the above quote, it seems reasonable to conclude the bias in the attitudes involves a VA also).

<sup>24</sup> And a similar explanation also clarifies the male chauvinist example also.

<sup>25</sup> Given his claim regarding justified differential treatment, Hayward would agree that those who had no human chauvinistic attitudes at all could still attempt to fix a theory – not because of any human bias or VA, but simply because of logic, for instance. While it would be difficult to tell who was chauvinistic and who not, this is why Hayward calls the attitudes 'deeper and murkier' and in need of a hermeneutic to uncover (Hayward, 1997:p.54). The behaviour thus exemplifies human chauvinism, but what human chauvinism is, is the three core elements.

<sup>26</sup> The importance of flagging this last point up will become clear in the next section.

From this definition it can now be seen how human chauvinism and speciesism differ yet are related. In §1.2 it was concluded that speciesism does not refer to humans, though the intended meaning of speciesism is a *Homo Sapiens*-centric speciesism. The three elements of chauvinism above are identical to the three components of speciesism, only with the addition of humans being the focus. Human chauvinism therefore is just the type of speciesism that focuses on humans, and thus represents what is meant when speciesism is used. Cavalieri supports this, stating that, “the concept [of speciesism] has come to be seen as practically interchangeable with the notion of human chauvinism” (Cavalieri, 2001:p.70). Thus speciesism and human chauvinism are related, but not synonymous.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, human chauvinism requires the VA, but the converse is not true.

#### **§1.4 Anthropocentrism**

In this section I clarify anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism is the least clearly defined of the four terms. Consequently, to define anthropocentrism I first look at dictionary definitions as these represent the common understandings of the term. In §1.4.1-§1.4.1.4 I look at uses within the literature in order to show that there are conflicting conceptions of anthropocentrism that rely on different parts of this common understanding. In §1.4.2-§1.4.3 I propose that clarifying anthropocentrism via analogy with androcentrism provides a clearer, unified definition, covers all intended uses, and reveals new insights, including how anthropocentrism is related to, yet different from, speciesism and human chauvinism.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines being anthropocentric as “[r]egarding humankind as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to God or animals”. The

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<sup>27</sup> This same relation is reflected in the relationship of male chauvinism to sexism. Male chauvinism is a form of sexism, however the latter has a broader view (and can apply to any sex-based bias) despite colloquial usage having made the two seem interchangeable.

example to illustrate this is: “when we assess animal intelligence we tend to take a very anthropocentric view”. Essentially, when looking at nonhuman intelligence we define what intelligence is from a human stand point. This forms the norm for assessing intelligence in humans and nonhumans alike. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* provides a similar definition, “interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values and experiences”, but also adds: “considering human beings as the most significant entity of the universe”. Both of these elements are implied by the *Oxford* definition, however their separation is helpful when considering the literature.

Simply put then, the common understanding of anthropocentrism can be summarized as, (i) interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, and (ii) considering humans as the most important, significant, or central entity that exists.

Two points should be noted here. First, (i) or (ii) alone are sufficient for something to be anthropocentric. Second, (ii) clearly implies the VA. This definition already raises an important point. As noted above anthropocentrism is often considered synonymous to speciesism (Horta, 2010:p.258) and human chauvinism (Benson, 2000:p.18). I have argued that speciesism and human chauvinism are not synonymous, therefore anthropocentrism cannot be equivalent to both. Moreover anthropocentrism cannot be synonymous with speciesism, as (i) and (ii) refer to humans and the ‘human centeredness’ of (i) is not part of speciesism at all. This latter is also why anthropocentrism cannot be synonymous with human chauvinism, as while (ii) represents the meaning of human chauvinism, interpreting the world via human thought and values was not included. In §1.4.2 I argue that clarifying anthropocentrism via analogy with androcentrism supports this distinction.

### **§1.4.1 The Uses of Anthropocentrism**

Despite the common understanding, there is little agreement within the literature on what anthropocentrism means. There are three competing uses of anthropocentrism within the literature: (a) as a means to talk about value and distinctions in value, (b) in terms of human modus operandi and understanding, or (c) as a term referring to both (a) and (b). My aim in the next four sub-sections is to show that these contrary understandings of anthropocentrism rely on (i) or (ii).

I will draw upon this conclusion to support my clarified definition of anthropocentrism in §1.4.2, by showing that my definition can account for (i) and (ii) and explain their relation. My definition will thus not only account for (a)-(c), but also explain why they are anthropocentric and how the apparently conflicting interpretations relate.

#### **§1.4.1.1 Use (a): Distinctions of Value**

In this section I consider use (a) of anthropocentrism. I highlight examples in the literature and argue that these fall under (ii) of the definition in §1.4. I argue that this use also often involves (i). I conclude that while (ii) is sufficient for anthropocentrism, this does not show that this is all that anthropocentrism means.

Many use anthropocentrism to express a charge of human chauvinism (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:p.1) or to claim that value is related to humans by positing the Greater or Sole VA (Fox, in Light & Rolston, 2008:p.257). This latter is also cashed out in terms of the nonhuman world having value only insofar as it/they serve(s) human interests (McShane, 2007:p.170). Clearly each of these uses fall under (ii), i.e. considering humans as the most important, significant, or central entity that exists.

Those that make these claims often imply that these uses alone are what anthropocentrism means. However these uses often rely on or relate to (i) (i.e. interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts), whether directly or indirectly. For example, the claim that value is related to humans by positing a VA, Warwick Fox notes, makes the further claim that it is not humans that are the source of this value but something independent of them (e.g. sentience, nervous systems that are like humans, etc.) (Fox, in Light & Rolston, 2008:p.257). This involves (i) as it relies on defining what is morally relevant by (a) looking at what humans possess, deciding that this is what makes something morally considerable, and then extending this outwards, (i.e. our type of sentience or nervous system is required for what is morally considerable), and (b) ultimately comparing nonhumans to humans when deciding their moral value (i.e. if their nervous system is like ours, or if they are sentient in the way that we are sentient, etc.).<sup>28</sup> This indicates that uses of anthropocentrism that purport only (ii) of the definition in §1.4 often involve (i) also. That this is necessary, I will argue is revealed by clarifying anthropocentrism with androcentrism, as well as in §1.4.1.3.

What is important to note is that use (a) of anthropocentrism is equivalent to (ii). Tony Milligan's investigation into speciesism and anthropocentrism supports this, as Milligan argues that a prejudice or belief is a form of anthropocentrism if it endorses either the Sole or Greater value assumption (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.226). As such Milligan is claiming that at least some anthropocentrism involves a value assumption. It is reasonable to conclude then that any example of use (a) falls under (ii) of the definition of anthropocentrism, and thus that (ii)/use (a) is sufficient for anthropocentrism. What is *not* clear is that this is *all* that is meant by

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<sup>28</sup> To clarify: we look at what we find morally relevant/valuable with ourselves. This is based upon looking at ourselves and asking why *we* are taken into account morally, such as by answering that '*we* suffer and *this* should be considered'. We then look at why, and find say sentience or the nervous system as the source of this valued capacity. We then consider other beings who have these and thus must have this valued capacity. But it is not because *they* possess this capacity or that this capacity is valuable in itself that the capacity is valuable at first, but because it is valuable to us and how we conceive of morality. Finally, it is important to recall that, just as with speciesism and human chauvinism, this can be done directly or indirectly.

anthropocentrism and thus that it is either necessary or the intended meaning behind every use of the term.

#### **§1.4.1.2 Use (b): Human Modus Operandi or Understanding**

In this section I consider use (b) of anthropocentrism (i.e. using anthropocentrism in terms of human modus operandi and understanding). I highlight examples in the literature and argue that these fall under (i) of the definition in §1.4. I then outline a competing understanding of use (b) termed ‘benign anthropocentrism’ before arguing that this derives from a misunderstanding of (i) and is not what is meant by anthropocentrism or (i) in the literature. I conclude that (i) covers all instances of use (b).

The second use of anthropocentrism is usually expressed by one of the following: (1) “an acknowledgement of human ontological boundaries” (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:p.1), (2) a claim that humans are the centre of everything (or a specific thing) or of central concern (Horta, 2010:p.259; Hayward, 1997:p.50), or (3) an assumption that humans or human views are the *modus operandi* for looking at value, morality, understanding, or the world (Smith, 2008:p.4) or that moral theory (etc.) uses humans or human views as the standard, from which everything else is then defined (e.g. defining what morality or moral considerability is via looking at the essence of humans) (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:p.33).

The second and third of these claims are clearly what is meant by (i) in the definition in §1.4, i.e. interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, and that humans are the central entity (in the sense of everything revolves around humans, rather than in the sense of most valuable).

While the first claim may also fall into this definition it is most often interpreted as meaning that humans *qua* being human cannot but see the world through human eyes and

interpret it this way (Hayward, 1997:pp.50-51). Rob Boddice terms this ‘benign anthropocentrism’, claiming that this type of anthropocentrism is necessary and inescapable, and therefore is of no ethical concern (hence ‘benign’) (Boddice, in Boddice 2011:pp.1-18). Boddice argues that this type of anthropocentrism is not necessarily connected to what he terms ‘valuational anthropocentrism’, or (ii) of the definition (*Ibid*:p.7). ‘Benign anthropocentrism’, then, does not seem to fit into the definition in §1.4. This is because that definition does not refer to the *nature* of human beings, nor does it imply anthropocentrism is inescapable. I argue that ‘benign anthropocentrism’ is either not anthropocentrism at all or it is not what is intended by uses of the term.

For instance, we are necessarily and inescapably stuck in our own minds but it does not follow that we must necessarily interpret and see the world in our own way: we can learn to see the world in a different way. Moreover we are more necessarily stuck in our own mind than in a human mind, in the sense that what is meant by a ‘human’ mind is an abstraction from general human minds, however what it is to be ‘human’ is defined varyingly among theorists. Yet this type of inescapability does not intuitively warrant the use of egocentrism or even ‘benign egocentrism’, even if we consider that it may be more inescapable.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the definition in §1.4 represents the intuitive use of anthropocentrism. If we consider other analogous terms and their usage, such as ‘egocentrism’, ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘androcentrism’, we can see whether a ‘benign’ application intuitively reflects their usage also. In each of these centrisms there is a sense that we are inescapably stuck in our own mind – be it individually, racially, or sexually. However ‘benign ethnocentrism’ and ‘benign androcentrism’ – in the sense that we are necessarily only able to see and interpret the world via our biological sex or ‘race’, etc. – does not reflect any intuitive part of the definition of

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<sup>29</sup> Egocentrism intuitively, and in its definitions, refers to being centred on the self in a way that ignores others’ feelings and perspectives. This does not imply egocentrism is inescapable, but in fact when used normatively is usually intended to imply the individual should change.

either of these terms, nor would we likely concede that either makes sense of what we mean when we use those terms. Nor do we accept that we are necessarily stuck in interpreting the world in such ways. We may necessarily be a certain sex/gender or race, but this does not warrant applying the label ethnocentrism or androcentrism.<sup>30</sup> Similarly even if we are necessarily human this does not warrant the label anthropocentrism, nor would such a use of the term seem intuitive.

‘Benign anthropocentrism’ seems intuitive due to a misunderstanding of what is meant by (i) in the definition. This is often cashed out as ‘seeing the world from a human perspective’ rather than ‘seeing humans as central’ or ‘using, giving preference to, or relying on human perspectives when looking at, defining or understanding the world, morality, and so on’. This leads to misunderstanding that anthropocentrism refers to a literal, descriptive sense shorn of normativity. While there may be a biological sense of anthropocentrism that fits this, and hence the ‘benign’ sense, this would equally be true of ethnocentrism, androcentrism, and certainly egocentrism. This is not the sense that is intended by these latter terms, nor their definitions, and similarly for anthropocentrism.

This conclusion is supported, not only by the uses outlined at the beginning of this section, but also by Kevin DeLapp’s definition of anthropocentrism use (b) as “a normative concept that embodies or expresses...a set of beliefs or attitudes that privilege some aspect(s) of human experience, perspective or valuation” (DeLapp, in Boddice, 2011:p.37). Thus ‘benign anthropocentrism’ arises due to a misunderstanding of (i). As a result, ‘benign anthropocentrism’ is either not anthropocentrism at all (i.e. what is meant by the term) or it is not the kind of anthropocentrism that is (intuitively) being used. This conclusion is further

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<sup>30</sup> Similarly, if sexual preference is biological, and this has some (however minor) effect on how we perceive and react to the world and learn, being ‘stuck’ in this mind also does not seem to intuitively warrant a centrism label here. We would still find it understandable to say that one should not view the world only in heterosexual terms, via heterosexual norms, or take being heterosexual as the norm.

supported in §1.4.2 by clarifying anthropocentrism via analogy with androcentrism.<sup>31</sup> Setting aside ‘benign anthropocentrism’ then, I conclude that (i) of the definition in §1.4 covers use (b) of anthropocentrism.

### **§1.4.1.3 Anomalous Uses**

Before considering use (c), in this section I will clarify three occurrences of anthropocentrism that do not appear to fit either uses (a) or (b). Upon closer reflection, I shall argue, these instances fit one or both.

First, Milligan presents an alternative definition of anthropocentrism as ‘the preferring of humans over anything whatsoever’ and claims that speciesism within the literature is anthropocentric (and a form of anthropocentrism) as it refers to a prejudicial favouring of humans over nonhumans’ (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:pp.223-227). While this seems to challenge the definition in §1.4, I argue that what Milligan is referring to in this definition is (ii), i.e. considering humans as the most important, significant, or central entity that exists. The confusion arises for two reasons. First, the claim that anthropocentrism is ‘the preferring of humans over anything whatsoever’ involves both (i) and (ii). This causes a lack of clarification as to what the term means, and an apparent conflict with the definition in §1.4. Second, Milligan claims, as I have, that speciesism does not inherently refer to any species, including humans (*Ibid*:p.223). Despite this he uses the term to stand in for what I have argued is correctly represented by human chauvinism. Once these two confusions are clarified Milligan’s

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<sup>31</sup> This will relate back to Hayward’s distinction between how something can be human centred but not human chauvinist (by being justified), as Hayward considers anthropocentrism to be inescapable (unlike human chauvinism). Thus while Hayward touches on the difference between anthropocentrism and human chauvinism (i.e. that the former can exist, *qua* use (b) without use (a), without human chauvinism), Hayward misunderstands use (b) as ‘benign’ anthropocentrism, rather than the perspective conception I discuss below, and thus does not question whether this understanding of anthropocentrism is justifiable or problematic (which, when looking at other centrisms and in the chapters that follow, will be argued to be the case – and hence that anthropocentrism is not synonymous with human chauvinism, but is also not justifiable).

definition reduces to the claim that anthropocentrism is either both elements or the second element of the definition, that human chauvinism is the intended meaning behind uses of speciesism within the literature, and that human chauvinism is a form of anthropocentrism. This fits exactly with this chapter's conclusions thus far.<sup>32</sup>

Second, Tim Hayward argues that anthropocentrism is separate to human chauvinism, as anthropocentrism is just 'seeing things from a human perspective'. With speciesism/human chauvinism we can assess that two entities are similar and thus one is being discriminated against, but with anthropocentrism it would be impossible to tell whether any similarities exist, therefore speciesism/human chauvinism and anthropocentrism cannot be the same thing. Hayward concludes that (ii) could not be anthropocentrism.

I have already argued against the first of Hayward's claims in the discussion on 'benign anthropocentrism' where it was concluded that this is either not anthropocentrism at all or not what is meant when anthropocentrism is used. As such, Hayward's understanding of what anthropocentrism is in the second claim is called into question. Hayward's claim is further questionable as even if we only have (ii) then (i) must also be included. For instance, it seems counterintuitive that one could be a human chauvinist and not 'interpret or regard the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts'. If the latter is part of what makes the former possible then it seems by definition human chauvinism would be anthropocentric.<sup>33</sup> This is supported by considering that it would be equally counterintuitive for one to be a male chauvinist but not interpret or regard the world in terms of male values, experiences, or thoughts, i.e. be androcentric. The only means to avoid this conclusion would be if Hayward also rejects (ii), but this is counterintuitive, at odds with how the term is used in the literature, and leaves only 'benign anthropocentrism' as a definition – which has already been shown

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<sup>32</sup> As noted earlier I shall return to the relation of human chauvinism to the definition of anthropocentrism below. Ultimately however I will show that human chauvinism is anthropocentric. Here, it only needs to be recalled that it was noted in §1.4 that (ii) of the definition represented the meaning of human chauvinism.

<sup>33</sup> This supports the claim made in §1.4.1.1 of how use (a) involves (i) as well as (ii).

flawed as an explanation of what anthropocentrism means. As such, Hayward's definition does not challenge the definition I outlined in §1.4.

Third, DeLapp claims that within ethics anthropocentrism is divided into a metaethical and an ethical interpretation (DeLapp, in Boddice, 2011:pp.37-38). The former is "the view that conceptions of morality are constructed by human perspectives and sensibilities" (*Ibid*:p.37), whereas the latter makes no claim as to the foundation of morality but rather claims that moral considerability "is only properly granted to humans" (*Ibid*). DeLapp explains that the ethical use of anthropocentrism has largely been endorsed by Western traditions, while the metaethical has largely been rejected (*qua* many accepting moral realism, etc.) (*Ibid*).

This distinction may imply that the definition in §1.4 needs clarifying, however this is not the case upon reflection. Both the metaethical and ethical interpretations can fit into the definition in §1.4, as the ethical interpretation clearly involves (ii) and the metaethical involves (i) or both. As for DeLapp's point about the rejection of the metaethical interpretation by Western traditions, this does not cause any problems. First, just because we think we have rejected a bias does not mean we actually have (i.e. morality could still be a construction even if we do not think it is). Second, even if moral realism were correct, if we did not know this (or could not prove it) then anthropocentrism was how we reached our conclusions, and if we did know then all this would mean was that morality was independently justifiable and so not anthropocentric or human chauvinist; again, this presents no problem for the definition.

In sum, all of these anomalous uses of anthropocentrism can still be shown to fit with (i) and (ii).

#### **§1.4.1.4 Use (c): Both Understanding and Value**

In this section I consider use (c) of anthropocentrism (i.e. anthropocentrism involves both value and understanding). I highlight examples in the literature and argue that this explains why there is confusion over anthropocentrism. I conclude that between (i) and (ii) of the definition in §1.4 all uses of anthropocentrism are covered, however the confusion over the term requires a clarified understanding of anthropocentrism.

While use (a) (i.e. anthropocentrism is about value) relies on (ii), i.e. considering humans as the most important, significant, or central entity that exists, and use (b) (i.e. anthropocentrism is about understanding) relies on (i), i.e. interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, use (c) is the idea that (i) and (ii) are both anthropocentrism, and thus anything that is one or both is anthropocentric.

For example, Boddice notes how anthropocentrism can be expressed as either (i) or (ii) (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:p.1), DeLapp's definition outlined in §1.4.1.2 involves both (i) and (ii) (DeLapp, in Boddice, 2011:p.37), and as we saw in §1.4.1.3 DeLapp's distinction between metaethical and ethical anthropocentrism also involves both. Milligan's equation of speciesism as a form of anthropocentrism, and his additional claim that rejecting anthropocentrism and speciesism would mean accepting a major upheaval in our understanding of who we are (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.37) implies anthropocentrism is both (i) and (ii). Finally, Deep Ecology, Eccy de Jonge explains, regards anthropocentrism "not merely in the literal sense as 'human centeredness' but as the view that humanity has been conditioned to regard itself as a superior species" (de Jonge, in Boddice, 2011:p.307). This clearly uses both (i) and (ii).

Importantly, none of these uses claim that both elements must be present for something to be anthropocentric. All that is claimed is that the term refers to instances that fall under either or both. This explains not only why each use of the term thus far is anthropocentric, but also

why there is confusion over the meaning of anthropocentrism. For if anthropocentrism can be one or both of the elements, then each use of the term has a specific connotation depending on whether one is using (i), (ii), or both as the meaning. The lack of a clear, unified meaning of anthropocentrism results in participants in discussions using the same word but interpreting the meaning differently, as one or both (hence the different uses), and thus results in equivocation.

Further, many shift between the meanings that their use of the term relies on. This adds to the confusion in the same way as the interchanging use, and lack of clear defining, of speciesism, human chauvinism, and anthropocentrism does. This same shifting in meaning is also arguably why confusion over whether these terms are synonymous arises, for (ii) involves a value assumption in favour of humans which reflects the meaning behind human chauvinism. As we have seen that human chauvinism relates to speciesism, a confusion arises over how anthropocentrism relates to both, especially if one's use of anthropocentrism is only use (a) rather than (b) or (c).

In sum, (i) and (ii) cover all uses of anthropocentrism within the literature. There is little agreement as to whether anthropocentrism means (i), (ii), or both, and examples of using the term in all three ways have been shown. This results in a confusion over what anthropocentrism means, which is deepened by its conflation with speciesism and human chauvinism. A clear understanding of anthropocentrism and its relation to the other terms is required, and I argue that such reveals new insights and problems.

#### **§1.4.2 Anthropocentrism as a Centrism**

In this section I clarify anthropocentrism by defining it via analogy with androcentrism. I relate this clarified definition to the uses in the literature and the arguments of the previous sections. I argue that this clarification illuminates the meaning of the term, reveals how anthropocentrism

can be direct or indirect, clarifies how the term relates to human chauvinism and speciesism, explains how the value and understanding meanings of the term relate and are not as separate as first appear, and reveals how anthropocentrism relates to the anthroparchy. I conclude by claiming that not only is anthropocentrism distinct from human chauvinism/speciesism, but that this clarified definition reveals problems for nonhuman ethics in the next two chapters.

I have shown that anthropocentrism is used to mean (i) interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, or (ii) considering humans as the most important, significant, or central entity that exists, or both (i) and (ii). I argued that these different uses lead to confusion and the idea that anthropocentrism is synonymous with human chauvinism and speciesism. I propose that by considering anthropocentrism as similar in definitional structure to other centrisms, such as androcentrism, that a clearer understanding of the term is achieved. I support this proposal by noting that speciesism and human chauvinism, unlike the uses of anthropocentrism, were both defined by analogy.

Androcentrism has been defined in a way that includes equivalent definitions of both anthropocentric elements. For instance, Sandra Lipsitz Bem writes:

“...[A]ndrocentrism, or male-centeredness. This is not just the historically crude perception that men are inherently superior to women but a more treacherous underpinning of that perception: a definition of males and male experience as a neutral standard or norm, and females and female experience as a sex-specific deviation from that norm. It is thus not that man is treated as superior and woman as inferior but that man is treated as human and woman as 'other'...” (Bem, 1993:p.2)

And Elizabeth Anderson claims:

“...Androcentrism occurs when theories take males, men's lives, or "masculinity" to set the norm for humans or animals generally, with female differences either ignored or represented as deviant; when phenomena are viewed from the perspective of men's lives, without regard to how women see them differently; and when male activities or predicaments are represented as the primary causes or sites of important changes, without regard to the roles of females in initiating or facilitating changes or the ways the situation of females has been crucial to determining structural constraints and potentials for change...[or] in describing or defining phenomena from the perspective of men or typically male lives, without paying attention to how they would be described differently if examined from the point of view of women's lives.”

(Anderson, 1995:pp.57-58)

Bem notes other writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Simone de Beauvoir have used androcentrism similarly (Bem, 1993:pp.39-44).

Simply put, androcentrism is when one intentionally or unintentionally views something or everything in a way that assumes the male (or a male viewpoint) as default, superior, common sense, the evaluative norm (or as how things should be seen), or with an attitude of dismissiveness towards anything non-male.

Clarifying anthropocentrism along similar lines would give the following definition: anthropocentrism is when humans intentionally or unintentionally view something or everything in a way that assumes the human (or a human viewpoint) as default, superior, common sense, the evaluative norm (or as how things should be seen), or with an attitude of dismissiveness towards anything nonhuman.

This definition clearly contains both interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, and considering humans as the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists. Moreover, the definition of androcentrism does not contain a ‘benign’ sense, i.e. that ‘men cannot help but see things from a male perspective as they are male’. In fact, a central argument against androcentrism is how it is not necessary and can be changed, and that it arises from, and is ingrained and perpetuated by, patriarchy, society, culture, behaviour, etc., and often operates invisibly. Similarly, clarifying anthropocentrism via this analogy supports my rejection of ‘benign’ anthropocentrism as being part of the intended meaning of the term. Thus what is meant by anthropocentrism is:

A(i): Interpreting or regarding the world (or something or everything) in terms of human values, experiences, norms, or thoughts, or in a way that assumes the human as default, common sense, or in a way that is dismissive of anything non-human

A(ii): Considering humans as more or the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists

Given the disjunctive definition of androcentrism, something can be anthropocentric if it fulfils A(i), A(ii), or both. Thus both (i) and (ii) of the definition in §1.4 are anthropocentric, as are the respective uses, and therefore this definition covers all uses within the literature.

The analogy with androcentrism, however, provides further elucidations which the definition of §1.4 and the uses of anthropocentrism have not. For instance, the analogy clarifies the meaning of A(i) and A(ii) in a way that explains anthropocentrism’s relation to human

chauvinism and speciesism.<sup>34</sup> For A(i), the androcentric parallel is: the taking of the male as central, taking male norms or values as the norm by which everything is judged, the taking of the male as the perspective from which everything is viewed, the male as that from which change is judged and everything is judged from, and as the neutral standard or norm. Thus A(i) has a similar *perspective-based* meaning where ‘the human’ replaces ‘the male’, supporting the arguments made in §1.4.1.2. A(i) is therefore to be interpreted as the intentional or unintentional taking of a human perspective as neutral, central, or the norm, or the using or giving preference to, or relying on, the human perspective, norms, or values, when looking at, defining, or understanding the world, morality, and so on, none of which is inescapable or inevitable. Just as with androcentrism A(i) therefore includes world-views and systems of belief.

This understanding of A(i) shows how anthropocentrism can be direct or indirect in the same way as speciesism was argued to be in §1.2. For it is often argued that androcentrism (like all centrisms) arises from, and is ingrained and perpetuated by, patriarchy, society, culture, behaviour, etc., and often operates invisibly in a way that oppresses and makes itself invisible due to appearing to be the norm while Othering the female perspective (Plumwood, 1996:p.134). With androcentrism this affects theories and practices in a way that only upon critical reflection can the androcentrism be seen (Anderson, 1995:pp.70-79). Understanding A(i) via androcentrism therefore provides a reason to consider that A(i) can be applied in an indirect way via similar means.

A(ii), on the other hand, reflects the intended intuition behind the use of speciesism and human chauvinism; i.e. that humans are superior to or more valuable than nonhumans. In the definition of androcentrism there is also a conception of men being superior to women that

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<sup>34</sup> While I have argued for this above, this clarified definition of anthropocentrism shows this reasoning to be correct as both A(i) and A(ii) are part of what anthropocentrism is, in a way that is related (as I argue below in §1.4.2.1), unlike in the definition in §1.4 where (i) and (ii) could be used to describe anthropocentrism but were not connected.

reflects its corresponding analogue of A(ii). This conception in androcentrism is intended to represent the aspect of sexism or male chauvinism that relies on a VA. As A(ii) is the anthropocentric analogue of this conception, and further reflects the core intuition behind human chauvinism, it seems reasonable to claim that A(ii) can account for what is being objected to when human chauvinism<sup>35</sup> is posited.<sup>36</sup> Thus anthropocentrism relates to speciesism/human chauvinism via A(ii), hence the idea they are synonymous, but goes beyond these terms due to A(i). This shows how anthropocentrism differs from, yet is related to, speciesism and human chauvinism. How A(i) and A(ii) relate further distinguishes these terms, and this clarified definition from that in §1.4.

#### **§1.4.2.1 The Relation of A(i) and A(ii)**

The most important insight that the clarified definition provides is the relationship between A(i) and A(ii) and why anthropocentrism can mean either or both. First, A(ii) implies (or involves) A(i) as it is unclear how one could consider humans as more important, or more valuable, without also regarding the world in terms of human values and via human interpretation. This was supported in §1.4.1.3 by illustrating that the same relation holds between androcentrism and male chauvinism. The definitions of androcentrism offered by the *Oxford Dictionary* and *Merriam-Webster*<sup>37</sup> are, respectively: (a) “Focused or centred on men”, and (b) “dominated by or emphasizing masculine interests or a masculine point of view”. Male

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<sup>35</sup> Speciesism, in the literature.

<sup>36</sup> As noted in §1.1 and as can be seen from this clarification of A(ii), I reject the distinction of moral standing and moral status on the grounds that both VAs fulfil the definition of A(ii) – i.e. there is a value distinction between humans and nonhumans, with humans being the higher. As anthropocentrism (including A(ii)) has been clarified via analogy with other centrisms, and such centrisms have their own A(ii)-analogues, endorsing any value distinction would be as problematic for anthropocentrism as it would be for androcentrism and ethnocentrism. While I will argue for this throughout chapters two and three, I note this here as this highlights a definitional insight into the rejection of this important distinction that may be illuminating.

<sup>37</sup> As with the previous terms throughout this chapter, I offer the dictionary definitions here in addition to the definitions above in order to appeal to the common understanding of the term.

chauvinism is defined as: “Male prejudice against women; the belief that men are superior in terms of ability, intelligence, etc.”. Reflection on these definitions shows that the definition of male chauvinism requires the definitions of androcentrism. In other words, male chauvinism involves or implies androcentrism.

Second, the analogy also reveals a relation from A(i) to A(ii). While this may not be a necessary connection, the reasons below suggest that adopting A(i) means that one is more likely to, and usually does, adopt A(ii); especially if A(i) is adopted unreflectively, such as through social or cultural influence. The relation is that interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, experiences, or thoughts, often does, and is most likely to, lead to considering humans as the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists. While this is a bold claim there is significant evidence for it.

For instance, Boddice points out that “the process of acquiring these [i.e. A(i)] world perspectives is to us invisible, and we therefore operate with and within them, unaware that we overlay cosmology with ideology at every step” (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:p.7). In other words, by interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values, etc., we then begin to apply this interpretation to the world. An identical explanation is given for androcentrism, in that this interpreting of the world with the male as the norm, by being applied to the world, then leads to anything that differs from that norm being considered Other, deviant or inferior (Bem, 1993:pp.2-3). Thus with androcentrism, the A(i)/perspective equivalent often leads to the A(ii)/value equivalent. While neither necessary nor inevitable, this relation is a common feminist argument that taking the male as the norm, the centre, or adopting male norms/values is likely to lead to, or at least often leads to, a devaluing of the female – both in terms of norms/values and thus as an Other that is not male, and as being inferior to men that satisfy those norms/values. If this is acceptable for androcentrism, and it has been strongly argued in feminist literature, then as androcentrism is analogous with anthropocentrism it is reasonable

that the same connection occurs with anthropocentrism, and thus that A(i) leads to, or makes more probable, A(ii).

Four additional claims add further support to this relation. First, Val Plumwood observes how androcentrism leads to male chauvinism, ethnocentrism to racism, and A(i) to A(ii) (Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-137). Second, Plumwood adds that in Western views nature is sharply discontinuous or ontologically divided from human reason, and that this perspective on what is human and what is nature “leads to a view of humans as apart from or ‘outside of’ nature, usually as masters or external controllers of it” (Plumwood, 1991:p.10). Third, Deep Ecologists commonly argue that it is A(i) that has led humans to treat nature instrumentally (i.e. without value). Fourth, viewing the world from a single perspective is often causally connected to holding views of superiority, as evidenced by ethnocentric or nationalistic thinking, and the adage that ‘broadening one’s horizons’ leads to different values and beliefs.

This relation between A(i) and A(ii) explains why both are used individually and together when predicating anthropocentrism. This relation also explains why (i) is cited more often than (ii) as what anthropocentrism means, as A(i) may be the cause of A(ii) and required for it. This lends weight to anthropocentrism being both A(i) and A(ii), rather than one or the other.

### **§1.4.3 Anthroparchy**

One final clarification must be made. Increasingly within the literature a new term, anthroparchy, is being used and its relation to anthropocentrism ought briefly to be noted. Anthroparchy is essentially analogous to patriarchy. The latter is defined as a hierarchical system of male rule perpetuated, instantiated and maintained by social, political, ideological, and perhaps economic systems (Tong, 1992:pp.2-5&180). Anthroparchy should be similarly

understood as the hierarchical system of human rule perpetuated, instantiated, and maintained by social, political, ideological, and perhaps economic systems. Both systems are expressive of attitudes and practices that allow the domination, exploitation, and abuse of the respective Other (Henning, 2013:pp.224-226).

As with patriarchy and androcentrism, anthroparchy originates from, and as a system perpetuates, anthropocentrism and is largely an unseen 'problem with no name', to paraphrase Betty Friedan (Bem, 1993:p.39), in the sense that it is subtle, pervasive, in-grained, and largely goes unnoticed. This was touched on when noting how A(i) arises and can be invisible.

Anthroparchy is important to distinguish from the other terms for two reasons. First, as noted androcentrism leads to male chauvinism, and due to this Bem (and the feminist authors she cites) and Plumwood argue that androcentrism's perspective aspect is important in perpetuating patriarchy (Bem, 1993:pp.39-44; Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-137). Likewise then, as A(i) was also shown to involve a similar relation to A(ii), it follows that A(i) is important in perpetuating anthroparchy.

Second, sometimes anthropocentrism is confused with anthroparchy, especially when theories argue for rejecting anthropocentrism. This is likely due to anthropocentrism causing and in turn being perpetuated by the anthroparchy. However anthroparchy refers to the hierarchical system, what it causes practically, and how it is perpetuated and maintained. Anthropocentrism refers only to A(i) and A(ii). Thus while the anthroparchy is anthropocentric, and the two are related, they are not synonymous and therefore must be distinguished. This relation I argue in chapter three presents a problem for nonhuman ethics.

## **§1.5 Conclusion**

In sum, having looked at value assumptions, speciesism, human chauvinism, and anthropocentrism, I have argued for how each term relates to, yet is distinct from, the others. I have clarified anthropocentrism via analogy with other centrisms, namely androcentrism. It is this meaning of anthropocentrism I use throughout this thesis, and thus it should not be confused with speciesism or human chauvinism.

What I mean by anthropocentrism is: A(i): interpreting or regarding the world (or something or everything) in terms of human values, experiences, norms, or thoughts, or in a way that assumes the human as default, common sense, or in a way that is dismissive of anything non-human, and A(ii): considering humans as more or the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists.

Each is sufficient for anthropocentrism, though there is a relation between the two so that it is unlikely that one occurs without, or results in, the other. When using the term anthropocentrism I mean both, and thus I refer to A(i) or A(ii) when meaning each individually. This clarified definition accounts for every use of anthropocentrism within the literature, the common understanding, and fits anthropocentrism into the same definitional structure as other centrisms.

Finally, A(ii) reflects the intuition behind human chauvinism and involves the VA. A(i) does neither. As a result, anthropocentrism is not synonymous with human chauvinism or speciesism. The terms are confused as human chauvinism is represented by A(ii) and A(ii) involves a bias in favour of species. The most significant difference between anthropocentrism and the other terms is that there is more involved in anthropocentrism due to the inclusion of A(i). This difference, I argue in the next chapters, raises previously unconsidered problems and

has an important impact for nonhuman ethics. I therefore argue that anthropocentrism should be avoided as much as possible, and addressed, by nonhuman ethics theories.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**IS ANTHROPOCENTRISM JUSTIFIED?**

Having clarified anthropocentrism, in this chapter I consider whether anthropocentrism is justifiable by examining the most important justifications put forward.<sup>38</sup> I argue that none are convincing, especially for a nonhuman ethic. This, I argue is a problem for any nonhuman ethic, especially due to anthropocentrism's relation to human chauvinism, and thus nonhuman ethics ought to address and avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible.

The most common means of justifying anthropocentrism is by claiming that there is either (a) something unique about humans that vindicates A(i) and/or A(ii), or (b) that there is something special, necessary, or common sense about anthropocentrism that makes it important to retain. Understanding whether any of these claims are convincing therefore is important in judging whether anthropocentrism is justified.

It is important to note that while I evaluate each justification, a comprehensive critique of justifying A(ii) via morally relevant characteristics, beyond the objections in §2.3, has not been considered necessary. While important, even in nonhuman ethics, my aim is to consider if anthropocentrism is justified. As A(i) would remain unjustified, so would anthropocentrism.<sup>39</sup> Thus even if appealing to such characteristics has some merit, the claims I put forward throughout this thesis would remain, as A(i) remains unjustified, results in unique

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<sup>38</sup> By this I mean the most dominant justifications and those put forward most commonly in defence of anthropocentrism. As noted in the previous chapter anthropocentrism is not addressed or used as much as speciesism or human chauvinism within the literature, however I have attempted to consider here the strongest justifications within this use that have not already been addressed in passing as a result of clarifying anthropocentrism. As it is not the aim of this thesis to engage in religious debate, I will not discuss justifications based on the soul, deities, or religious-based ontological statuses. Such justifications are unverifiable, controversial, conflicting, philosophically disputed, and also may justify other centric beliefs.

<sup>39</sup> Given, as outlined in the previous chapter, that (a) the definition of anthropocentrism is both A(i) and A(ii), (b) A(i) is the most commonly used meaning of anthropocentrism, and (c) the relation of A(i) to A(ii) and how important this relation was indicated to be in the previous chapter (both in regard to the anthroparchy and in how other centrisms work) and will be further detailed in §3.1.3. I also indicate this point at the end of §2.3.

problems,<sup>40</sup> is not addressed by other theories, is involved in each theory<sup>41</sup> and their A(ii), and as my position has less A(i), no A(ii), and can address A(i).<sup>42</sup>

### **§2.1. The Origin of Anthropocentrism**

In this section I consider the justification that anthropocentrism is common sense, or a fundamental or universal view. I argue that the origin of anthropocentrism undermines this justification and reveals that anthropocentrism is an acquired belief with questionable foundations.

Most (nonhuman) ethicists, academia, the scientific community (Sessions, in Sessions, 1995:pp.158-162) and society in general, simply assume anthropocentric views as a fundamental principle that lies behind most of our thoughts, beliefs, interactions with the world (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:p.1), or as a necessary axiom for morality (Hayward, 1997:p.55). Anthropocentrism is thus often understood as common sense or a fundamental or universal view.

I argue that its origin reveals that anthropocentrism is neither common sense nor has it ever been a universally held view. Further, the origin reveals that anthropocentrism is grounded in philosophical positions that are problematic and mostly rejected, and that anthropocentrism only contingently became a dominant view that has since been taken as common sense.

In an in-depth study, Gary Steiner shows that anthropocentrism, especially within ethics and regarding views on nonhuman animals, can be shown in Western thought as far back as Aristotle, and in weaker forms within Plato, some of the pre-Socratics, and classical texts such as Hesiod<sup>43</sup> (Steiner, 2005:p.37). Steiner claims that:

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<sup>40</sup> In §3.1.4 as well as throughout chapter three.

<sup>41</sup> In chapters four and five.

<sup>42</sup> As argued in chapters six to eight.

<sup>43</sup> Such works were both ethical guides for, and exemplify the ethical thought of, the populace at the time.

“...Anthropocentric arguments have long exercised their influence on thinking about animals in the history of Western philosophy. These arguments have their roots in Aristotle, and particularly in the thoughts of the Stoics, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, and Kant. These philosophers’ views about animals are linked by an underlying logic: that all and only human beings are worthy of moral consideration...” (*Ibid*:p.2)<sup>44</sup>

Yet:

“...Alongside this dominant view...there are a number of heterodox thinkers who seek to vindicate the moral status of animals. But in most cases, philosophers will acknowledge the fundamental continuity or kinship

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<sup>44</sup> Given the distinction between status and standing outlined in §1.1, and Steiner’s use of the term ‘moral considerability’ (which was noted in §1.1 as often being used interchangeably with either or both terms), it may seem unclear which Steiner means here and why. To clarify, given the passage that immediately follows as well as the use of ‘only’, Steiner clearly intends that no moral standing was granted outside of the moral status of humans. This conclusion is similarly made with the investigations cited further in this section, as well as traditional interpretations of the claims that the theorists Steiner cites make (e.g. Wise, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:p.24; Singer, 1995:p.202). Descartes, for instance, is well-known for rejecting any moral consideration of nonhuman animals given, he claims, that they do not possess mind or a soul and only these would enable them to be anything other than machines (Hursthouse, 2000:pp.66-69; Singer, 1995:p.202). Kant’s conception of moral considerability has similarly been thought exclusionary (Goodpaster, 1978:p.314; Nussbaum, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:p.300). This is implied in Kant’s claims that we have no direct duties towards nonhuman animals and the only moral significance of our behaviour towards them are indirect duties to humans (e.g. by not developing a cruel disposition) (Nussbaum, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:p.300). Whether such an interpretation is correct is unclear. For instance, given the equivocal usage of the terms and the tendency to focus on only those fitting criteria the theorists are putting forward, it is possible for such theorists to have allowed some degree of moral standing – as one may argue that Aristotle, Aquinas, and Kant may allow some consideration for nonhumans even if they are not morally required to (i.e. we may have indirect duties or custodial duties, and so on). Theorists traditionally, however, have taken these positions as Steiner has. Moreover, this could be interpreted either as granting standing (i.e. they are considerable, even if less) or not (i.e. like slaves that need tending but have no value). Even so, two points remain even if Steiner is incorrect. First, this would not entail the positing of moral status with standing for those outside. Rather, as noted in §1.1, this could mean the Greater VA is endorsed (hence all are considerable yet to greater and lesser extents). This meaning of ‘considerability’ is common (*Ibid*). Second, and more importantly, as A(ii) covers any value distinction Steiner’s claim would remain regardless of whether the Greater or Sole VA were being posited by the theorists. As it is a common interpretation of these theorists’ positions, however, and given the confusion over the meaning of standing, status, and considerability outlined in §1.1 (Jaworska & Tannenbaum, 2013), as well as how this does not impact mine or Steiner’s claims overall, while it is possible that ‘consideration’ here means ‘status’ while allowing standing, I defer to Steiner’s usage.

between human[s]...and animals, only to conclude that human[s]...nonetheless enjoy priority over animals in considerations of moral worth..." (*Ibid*)

Steiner's claims reveal two important points. First, anthropocentrism within the history of Western thought is often expressed as A(ii) (i.e. considering humans as more or the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists) when applied to ethical considerations. Despite this, Steiner shows that it is the conception of humans, the human place in the world or universe, and the use of human perspectives, that led to these claims:

"...Philosophers in the West conceptualize[d] the human condition as a middle station between animality and divinity and maintain[ed] that of all earthly beings, human beings are closest to the gods...[and] Standing in close proximity to the gods gives human beings license to exercise lordship over animals and other created beings...[Further] the fact that we picture the gods in human form shows the influence of anthropocentric thinking..." (*Ibid*:pp.1-2)

Steiner notes that the philosophers mentioned above posited the greater value of humans *because of* how humans were defined and what was considered important to being human, and that by lacking such nonhumans were less valuable (*Ibid*:p.2). Thus despite A(ii) being how anthropocentrism has largely been expressed throughout history, A(i) (i.e. interpreting or regarding the world (or something or everything) in terms of human values, experiences, norms, or thoughts, or in a way that assumes the human as default, common sense, or in a way

that is dismissive of anything non-human) is not only involved but according to Steiner is why A(ii) arises.

Second, Steiner's claims show (i) that while anthropocentric thought has been the dominant view it has never been all pervasive, and (ii) anthropocentrism as a dominant view has its roots in certain philosophical positions. By considering the philosophers named and the influence they have had on Western thought, it is plausible to infer that the progression of anthropocentrism to a common sense ideal resulted from the influence these thinkers have had on society and each other.

This is borne out by the historical evidence. For prior to Athenian philosophy, Steiner claims that: "...texts bearing on animals exhibit sensitivity to the fundamental kinship between humans and animals" (*Ibid*:p.37). Although anthropocentrism remained this was to a much lesser degree as human-nonhuman value relations were made "against the background of a sense of the underlying likeness of the two" (*Ibid*:p.39). Steiner, citing J. A. Philips' investigation into Pythagoras, notes that the shift towards a greater value difference occurred due to "the manner in which the human person was conceived [e.g. towards notions of the soul rather than body]...This shift affect[ed] not only the conceptualization of humanity, but inevitably the conceptualization of animals and the boundary between the two" (*Ibid*).<sup>45</sup>

From the establishment of Athenian philosophy into the Roman period, Steiner notes that there was "...a fundamental shift in thinking about animals, away from a sense of kinship and toward a capacity-based approach according to which animals were denigrated in relation to human[s]" (*Ibid*:p.37). From this "[s]ubsequent thinkers...adhered to and progressively modified the capacities approach, first under the influence of Christianity and later under the influence of Cartesian Dualism" (*Ibid*). Steiner concludes that: "[t]his entire trajectory of

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<sup>45</sup> It should be noted here, and throughout this study of anthropocentrism's origin, how this further supports the relation from A(i) to A(ii) argued for in §1.4.2.1.

thinking culminates in the confusions and misconceptions that characterize contemporary debates about animals” (*Ibid*).

Other investigations make similar observations (Light & Rolston, in Light & Rolston, 2008:p.9). For instance, George Sessions<sup>46</sup> states that: “...based on recent scholarship...the cultures of most primal...societies throughout the world were permeated with Nature-oriented religions that expressed the ecocentric perspective” (Sessions, in Sessions, 1995:p.158). It was only with ‘civilization’ and agriculture that such perspectives became more anthropocentric within the West (*Ibid*:pp.158-159). Like Steiner, Sessions attributes the major anthropocentric shift to Athenian philosophers – namely Aristotle (*Ibid*:p.159) – and goes on to chart the same anthropocentric ‘trajectory of thinking’ (*Ibid*:pp.160-177).

Essentially then, prior to Athenian philosophy anthropocentrism does not seem to be the dominant view, and only grew as humanity distanced itself from, and developed increasing control of, the more-than-human world. In brief, while some debate how anthropocentric Plato was (Carone, in Jamieson, 2001:p.71), Plato’s hierarchy of the rational versus the nonhuman animal non-rational marks the first major anthropocentric step in Western thought (Hursthouse, 2000:p.61). The main turn came from Aristotle’s concept that nature is a hierarchy, with humanity only one step below the divine (*Ibid*). The Stoics intensified Aristotle’s hierarchy by making it a ‘cosmic principle’ that humans and nonhumans were radically different in capacities and “attribute[ing] to human beings a status of superiority over all nonrational beings in the cosmic scheme of things” (Steiner, 2005:p.77).

Augustine and Aquinas developed their philosophies from Aristotle and the Stoics (Steiner, 2005:p.117&126; Hursthouse, 2000:pp.61-62). From this, Christianity placed humans at the centre of creation, endorsed a hierarchy of nature, and claimed that everything existed

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<sup>46</sup> Who, in addition to his own research, cites anthropologists, historians, and others that have worked on the history of philosophy, such as Bertrand Russell.

for human use (Smith, 2008:p.6).<sup>47</sup> These teachings influenced philosophers, scientists, and theologians, in the medieval and Renaissance periods and through the scientific revolution (Sessions, in Sessions, 1995:p.160; Steiner, 2005:pp.132-201; Hursthouse, 2000:p.68). Modern Western views, science, and philosophy have thus all been conceived and influenced by anthropocentric thinking (Sessions, in Sessions, 1995:pp.161-166).

This basis for anthropocentrism within Western thought is strengthened by considering that non-Christian thoughts – such as Taoism – are less anthropocentric (*Ibid*:pp.158-159). Similarly, certain anthropocentric ethical standards often considered absolute or common sense are not shared in other non-Western beliefs – such as Buddha’s sacrificing himself so starving nonhuman animals could eat (Bailey, 2009:pp.130-131).<sup>48</sup>

The origin of anthropocentrism thus reveals that anthropocentrism is not – nor has ever been – a universally held view, and is therefore not common sense but rather a long-standing, developed, socially-ingrained belief.<sup>49</sup> Further, the positions that have given rise to anthropocentrism are not only questionable but neither are they universally accepted. Moreover, such accounts have influenced subsequent positions in ways that many would now not accept. Anthropocentrism thus became common sense via the influence these accounts had upon subsequent positions, intellectual thought, and society, despite less anthropocentric alternatives remaining,

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<sup>47</sup> While Plato first introduced rationality as the justification for his anthropocentrism, it was the Stoics, and later Christian teachings that used the justification that humanity possess traits that nonhumans lack in order to justify both anthropocentrism in general and A(ii) (Smith, 2008:p.6). I shall discuss this more below.

<sup>48</sup> Catherine Bailey points out that she does not think that Buddha’s aim was to teach people to lay down their lives for nonhumans. However, she says, “that so many Western ethical discussions about animals take the very possibility of doing so as evidence that an ethical (and rational) limit has been reached, tells us much that is interesting about how we regard animals, ourselves and ethical theory” (Bailey, 2009:p.131). She attributes this difference to a fundamental difference in metaphysical and ethical views on the relationship of humans to nature (*Ibid*:p.130).

<sup>49</sup> It should also be noted that if one attempts to use the time-frame of anthropocentrism’s predominance within human society as a justification, that: “[d]espite the present five to six billion people on Earth, some anthropologists argue that the majority of humans who have lived on Earth over the two to four million years of human history have been hunters and gatherers. If so, this means that ecocentrism has been the dominant human religious/philosophical perspective throughout time” (Sessions, in Sessions, 1995:p.158).

As a result, the origin of anthropocentrism reveals that anthropocentrism only seems to be a fundamental, common sense belief and an axiom for our ethical theories because this belief and axiom are based on foundations that are anthropocentric, Western, and contested. Not only is this ethnocentric, but anthropocentrism cannot be justified on these grounds alone without being question-begging. Anthropocentrism's intuitiveness therefore is due to being a socially-ingrained belief that has been repeatedly given authority throughout history only contingently due to the influence of positions on each other and society. As such, anthropocentrism has no universal or necessary foundation, nor is it necessarily intuitive or well-grounded in an uncontroversial position. Appealing to such a belief system as justified additionally allows as justified other traditional 'common sense' views that have been disregarded as morally problematic; such as views on women and race (*Ibid*:p.131).

This is further supported by noting that the above investigation supports my clarified definition of anthropocentrism and my claim that, like androcentrism, it is an acquired belief. This can be seen in three ways. First, anthropocentrism developed over time and due to the influence of certain positions. Second, both A(i) and A(ii) were involved in this development, and the investigations make no reference to a 'benign' or 'necessary' anthropocentrism. Third, the studies demonstrated the relation of A(i) to A(ii), as when views on the value difference of humans and nonhumans altered this was preceded by, or involved, an alteration in the perspective of humans' place or the use of criteria to judge nonhumans based on a comparison with humans.

In sum, appeals to anthropocentrism as common sense or a fundamental or universal view are unsupported and unconvincing, and thus offer no justification for anthropocentrism.

## **§2.2 Species Membership**

In this section I consider the justification for anthropocentrism of species membership. I outline the defence and its merits before arguing that this justification is unconvincing. I consider the response that ‘being human’ is justified via kinship, but argue that this is unpersuasive. I conclude that this justification does not support anthropocentrism.

The most common means of justifying anthropocentrism is that there is something unique about humans that vindicates A(i) and/or A(ii). To be defensible, Tony Milligan states, this “favouring of *all* humans over *all* non-humans must depend upon the identification of some morally relevant property that *all* humans have and that *all* non-humans lack” or at least that *all* humans have to a greater degree than *all* nonhumans. (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.226). To do otherwise would mean that some group(s) of humans would be set above others due to the proposed property – something most wish to avoid.

The most obvious property that fulfils this requirement is that of being human. Some, such as Cora Diamond, have defended anthropocentrism by appealing to ‘species membership’ and claiming that being human is this morally relevant property (Horta, 2010:p.251). This claim has some merit as it would fulfil Milligan’s criteria and is also a property used to challenge many prejudices – racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, etc. (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.234). As Milligan states, such challenges involve appeals to “the humanity that is held in common by slave owner and slave, gentile and Jew, man and woman” (*Ibid*). As such, ‘being human’ or ‘being a member of the human species’ is claimed to be at least *a* morally relevant property and thus at least some anthropocentrism may be justifiable.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> As noted in §1.1, this does not necessarily entail a commitment to excluding all non-human beings from any moral standing at all, even if they are excluded from moral status. Even so, as A(ii) regards any value distinction between humans and nonhumans (as noted in chapter §1.4.2, and §1.1) such would still be anthropocentric.

I argue that this justification is flawed for three reasons. First, it is not clear what is meant by ‘being human’ or ‘being a member of the human species’. As Milligan points out, “[t]here are surprisingly few properties that we absolutely need in order to be human” (*Ibid*:p.232) as there are always cases where we class some being as human even when they lack properties usually considered necessary (*Ibid*:p.233). The commonly used ‘Species Overlap’ argument exemplifies this.<sup>51</sup> Further, any property (or bundle of properties) used to explain what is meant by ‘being human’ would then be the morally relevant property (or properties) used to justify anthropocentrism, rather than ‘being human’ itself.

It is also unclear what definition ought to be used. For instance, scientific definitions of ‘human’ (e.g. possessing the ‘human genome’ or DNA) and the ‘human species’ (e.g., being able to interbreed with other creatures successfully) are problematic (*Ibid*). First, it is unclear why either would be morally relevant. Second, drawing the line of consideration here is arbitrary, for it is unclear, as Hugh LaFollette and Niall Shanks ask, why we should use “our species rather than biological class (animals), biological order (primates), sub-species distinctions (race), or cross-species distinctions (gender)” (LaFollette & Shanks, 1996:p.43).

Using a social or cultural understanding of human rather than a biological one is similarly problematic. For if ‘human’ is not biological, but rather something that we have come to define and understand culturally or socially then this involves A(i). Attempting to justify anthropocentrism (especially A(ii)) on the grounds that one does not fit into a category that has been arrived at by anthropocentrism is at minimum questionable, likely question-begging, and ethically suspect. Using similar reasoning to define who has the right to vote, or who is a

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<sup>51</sup> As this argument is commonly used, and likely even a basic foundational argument, in nonhuman ethics, and as I am not using the argument itself but merely noting it for illustration, I have not outlined this here. It should be noted that traditionally this argument is referred to as the ‘argument from marginal cases’. However disability theorists have rightly objected to this name, and increasingly within the literature it is being referred to as the ‘species overlap argument’.

citizen, on the basis of race or sex, then using this to defend who has the right to vote or who is a citizen, would be and was ethnocentric/androcentric and of ethical concern.

Second, even if we understood what it meant to 'be human' it is not clear why this is morally relevant. For instance, it is unclear how the gap is bridged, without relying on anthropocentrism, from the ontological fact of 'being human' to the normative claim that 'being human is morally relevant'. It cannot simply be because we *do* use 'being human' as a morally relevant property as this reasoning is flawed and leads to unpalatable consequences. First, this reasoning would be just as valid for claims that a certain race or sex is a morally relevant property as it *is used* that way by racists or sexists (Jamieson, 2008:p.106). Second, the claim either just tells us *what* we do, not whether this is justified, or it begs the question by assuming that *our use* of being human *is* morally relevant in order to justify the claim that our use of 'being human' shows that it is a morally relevant property.

Without appealing to other characteristics that humans possess it is not clear what else could justify 'being human' as a morally relevant property. This claim therefore seems ungrounded, possibly question-begging, and problematic, as 'being human' is as justified as 'being white' or 'being male', and no reason has been given to choose one over the others (*Ibid*). Thus if 'being human' can justify anthropocentrism (both in the form of A(i) and A(ii)) then it is unclear why ethnocentrism and racism, and androcentrism and sexism are also not justifiable. As Milligan notes, "it is by no means obvious that this [justification] is anything other than a prejudice" (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.233).

This is illustrated by considering this justification in light of extra-terrestrial beings. Such beings would (a) be ethically wrong for not seeing and judging the world from a human perspective, (b) have to admit – solely on the basis that they are not human – that they are less (morally) valuable and that humans are superior, and (c) have to willingly sacrifice themselves

for humans and human interests (above their own) (Jamieson, 2008:pp.108-109). This not only seems peculiar but most would find it ethically questionable.

Third, as Oscar Horta notes, to justify anthropocentrism by appeal to ‘being human’, or the assumption that humans have more (moral) value than nonhumans by using ‘humanity’ as the criterion for moral value, begs the question (Horta, 2010:p.262). As a result ‘being human’ cannot plausibly vindicate anthropocentrism.

In response, one may argue that what is morally special about ‘being human’ or ‘being a member of the human species’ is not some specific property, but that humans are more important to humans (*Ibid*:p.251), that most naturally feel that they owe more to humans than nonhumans, and that there is a justifiable reason for this (Jamieson, 2008:p.109). If so then anthropocentrism can be vindicated. The reason often cited, notably by Mary Midgley, is that of kinship with other humans; i.e. relationships have special ethical status and we have moral duties towards those with whom we have a special relationship, bond, or kinship (Pluhar, 1988:p.90). This seems compelling as such relationships expand outwards and thus explain the intuition that we have ethical duties towards family, then friends, then society, the world, and so on. Further, this reasoning does not claim that relationships stop short of including nonhumans – only that we have greater duties towards humans due to our kinship with them. As a result, ‘being human’ is morally relevant because humans share a morally relevant kinship with other humans.

While *prima facie* compelling this response is unacceptable for three reasons. First, it is not true that all humans share this kinship, nor that it is shared with the same entities or in the same way by all humans. For instance, some feel less kinship with other humans than nonhumans, others feel no kinship for any other being, and others have no one that shares kinship with them. Thus one cannot justify anthropocentrism on this basis as not all humans share or have this kinship (Horta, 2010:p.262). Doing so would be taking one group’s partiality

as correct and would base the justification solely on the fact that one group of humans has this preference. This is suspect and moreover, as an attempt to justify anthropocentrism implies anthropocentrism is its motivation.

Second, it is unclear why such partialities should be permitted morally. First, naturally possessing a tendency, or partiality, does not automatically make something morally correct. Many human leanings are not considered justified; such as aggression, territoriality, or tendencies to have sex at socially-considered inappropriate times (LaFollette & Shanks, 1996:p.44). Thus partialities cannot simply be accepted without justification, and as none have been given anthropocentrism's justification remains unsupported. Second, if kinship provides justification for human-bias then it equally justifies other forms of bias based on 'shared kinship' or tendencies to feel that we owe more to a specific group than others. Thus androcentrism and ethnocentrism, racism, xenophobic forms of nationalism, homophobia, and sexism, are equally justifiable, as many feel closer ties to their race, social group, sex, sexual orientation, etc., than all humanity. Similarly, as Evelyn Pluhar highlights, humans – like other animals – often have a tendency to favour 'normal' or 'paradigm' examples of their species and shun 'abnormal' members (Pluhar, 1988:p.93). Thus if used to support anthropocentrism, this response also vindicates views that claim lesser moral status for many humans.

Third, granting this response would mean that those that are outside the boundaries of kinship would automatically deserve either no, or less, consideration. Thus, as noted above, an extra-terrestrial species, or a previously undiscovered terrestrial species that is anatomically and zoologically distinct from humans, but is intelligent, sentient, purposive, and social (LaFollette & Shanks, 1996:p.44; Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.107), would have less moral status simply because they are not human and we do not share a kinship bond with them. Such beings would thus have to adopt human perspectives, norms, or values just on this basis. That this is ethically suspect is strengthened by considering that white humans discovering a

black society would be analogous with either example. While each society may *feel* a kinship with its members this provides no reason that (a) the other society ought to be considered of a lesser value, and (b) that the other society ought to accept the first society's perspectives, norms, or values. Doing so would ultimately be an unreflective prejudice that ought to be overcome. Similarly then the same ought to be concluded regarding species. If so, then the claim of kinship is morally unconvincing, nor does it establish anthropocentrism without relying on anthropocentrism.

In sum, species membership and simply 'being human' is unconvincing as a justification for anthropocentrism. Moreover, a nonhuman ethic could not support this claim without endorsing speciesism/human chauvinism.

### **§2.3 Morally Relevant Characteristics**

In this section I consider the justification for anthropocentrism that appeals to morally relevant characteristics. I outline the defence and its merits before providing three arguments that this justification is unconvincing.<sup>52</sup>

As noted in §2.2, the most appealed to justification for anthropocentrism is that there is/are some morally relevant characteristic(s) that humans possess that nonhumans lack.<sup>53</sup> As

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<sup>52</sup> As noted at the beginning of this chapter, while in this section I offer a reasoned critique of this justification (in both forms), and while the appeal to morally relevant characteristics to posit criteria for moral considerability and justify distinctions in moral value is common, even within nonhuman ethics, a thoroughly in-depth critique is not necessary for my purposes. As this justification would only support A(ii), and the importance of A(i) to anthropocentrism and throughout this thesis, in conjunction with the objections made throughout this section, such a comprehensive analysis is both unnecessary for my purposes and beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus even if an appeal to morally relevant characteristics has some merit this would not undermine my claims throughout this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> Morally relevant characteristics, for instance, have been relied upon by many theorists in nonhuman ethics (both initially and within contemporary debates) as well as those attempting to object to nonhuman ethics positions. For example, Singer's position on suffering/sentience (1995) and Regan's account of rights based on being a subject-of-a-life (2004) both rely on appealing to one or more characteristic to justify including (and excluding) nonhuman animals. I outline this in chapter four (§4.1 and §4.2) as well as showing, as I similarly argue below, anthropocentric problems with this (§4.3). Similarly, David DeGrazia appeals to cognitive characteristics to establish moral value that nonhumans share with humans (1996). R. G. Frey objects to nonhuman ethics' inclusion of nonhuman animals morally (in the form of Singer's position) on similar grounds (1980). Jeff McMahan argues

species membership is unconvincing, other characteristics have been put forward to justify A(ii) in one of two ways.<sup>54</sup>

The first form of this justification commonly appeals to the following characteristics: (i) rationality or reason, (ii) the ability to make political judgements or hold an opinion or religious belief, (iii) the ability to use tools or engage in science, (iv) language or linguistic capabilities, (v) self-consciousness or sentience, (vi) the ability to do maths or logic, and (vii) being a person (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.109; Pluhar, 1988:pp.85-86; Sztybel, 2000:pp.185-187; Singer, 1995; Regan, 2004; DeGrazia, 1996; Frey, 1980; McMahan, 2002; Garner, 2013; Horta, 2010; Rachels, 1991).

It is then claimed that one (or a set) of these characteristics is relevant to moral value (*Ibid*). For example, ‘reason’ is justified by arguing that it is necessary to be a moral agent and thus for morality to exist. It is then claimed that only rational beings have moral value as those that lack reason cannot participate in, nor have any preference regarding, morality. Similarly, being self-conscious<sup>55</sup> is argued to be necessary for morality (or at least for a higher moral value) as it is necessary to be able to be harmed at all or one that possesses this characteristic can be harmed in ways other beings cannot (e.g. by being aware of their worth or the harm they suffer).<sup>56</sup>

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for differences in the wrongness of killing different beings based on cognitive characteristics (2002). And Robert Garner, while including nonhuman animals in the scope of justice also distinguishes those beings who are outside of justice both based on grounds of sentience (2013). Numerous other scholars, such as Paola Cavalieri, Martha Nussbaum, James Rachels, and Tony Milligan, also rely on this justification via appealing to some (set of) characteristic(s) that they argue is morally relevant.

<sup>54</sup> The two ways that this justification is put forward both refer to characteristics that are claimed to be relevant to moral value. However how these ‘morally relevant characteristics’ justify a difference in moral value, i.e. how they are used to justify A(ii), is slightly different. The first claims that the characteristics themselves relate to and affect moral value. The second that the characteristics are what makes life good for a being and it is this (i.e. how good a life is or can be and this relation) that relates to and affects moral value, rather than *just* the characteristics in-and-of-themselves. How each form works, and thus this subtle difference and why I treat the two forms as related variant forms of this justification, is explained in the outlines of both in the following four paragraphs.

<sup>55</sup> In the sense of possessing a complex awareness of the self.

<sup>56</sup> This is a common characteristic appealed to in nonhuman ethics theories, whether arguing for equal moral value or by those arguing against such. Singer, McMahan, Horta, Garner, Rachels, and others all rely on such a claim in their positions. Singer’s well-known appeal to stones not possessing interests unlike sentient beings and his hierarchy of the value of lives both rely on this characteristic, for instance. (I discuss these in chapter four). Additionally, this justification has been used to either exclude all nonhumans from moral considerability or to

Whichever characteristic(s) is/are posited, it is then claimed: (i) *only* humans possess this characteristic (or set), and thus nonhumans are excluded from moral value, or (ii) humans possess this characteristic (or set) *to a greater extent*, and thus nonhumans are either excluded from moral value or included to a lesser degree (*Ibid*). Whichever assertion is made anthropocentrism, in the form of A(ii), is argued to be justifiable.<sup>57</sup>

The second form of the justification, put forward by David Sztybel, argues that understanding what characteristics make life ‘good’ justifies A(ii)<sup>58</sup> (Sztybel, 2000:pp.187-188). Sztybel outlines a list of anything that enriches or impoverishes life – such as autonomy, self-awareness, creativity/appreciation, relationships, freedom, health, thought, language, playing, fun, sentience, sociability, spirituality, physical prowess, etc. (*Ibid*:p.188).<sup>59</sup> Sztybel then argues that anything possessing some of the list has moral value (*Ibid*:p.189), as each item makes life better or worse. It follows, he claims, that anything possessing more of the list will have a greater moral claim than those with less (*Ibid*:p.190). This, he argues, is intuitive as although no items are necessary for a good life, they all add to or reduce whether one’s life is good. Thus, possessing more or less means one’s life is better or worse. Many nonhumans

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posit moral status, either for a set of beings that allows those outside that set to have some moral standing still or simply as a means of endorsing the Greater VA (i.e. all beings are included in a hierarchy based on the justification). Thus it is not always the case that the justification is used to exclude those without the characteristic(s) from moral standing as well as moral status. Thus it does not necessarily follow from this justification, within nonhuman ethics, that nonhuman animals – even if excluded from moral status – would have no moral standing. Even so, A(ii) regards any value distinction between humans and nonhumans (as noted in chapter §1.4.2, and §1.1) and thus such would still be anthropocentric.

<sup>57</sup> It is this form of the justification, rather than the second, that is most commonly used by nonhuman ethics theories. By appealing to various characteristics such as personhood, reason, sentience, and self-awareness/consciousness, many nonhuman ethics theories (and those who argue against such positions) determine which beings are morally considerable and to what extent. Such a move has been made by both Singer (1993, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2011) and Regan (1980, 1982, 1983, 2003, 2004) (as I discuss throughout chapter four) as well as other important nonhuman ethicists and their critics, such as David DeGrazia (1996, 2007, 2014), R. G. Frey (1980, 1983), Jeff McMahan (2002), Robert Garner (2004, 2008, 2013), Oscar Horta (2010), James Rachels (1991), and others. Thus this is not only a common justification for A(ii), but also an approach that is relied upon to a large extent by both sides of the debate in nonhuman ethics.

<sup>58</sup> Sztybel terms the kind of anthropocentrism justified as ‘obligatory anthropocentrism’ as he argues that it is necessarily justified (Sztybel, 2000:pp.187-188).

<sup>59</sup> It must be noted here that Sztybel is not positing morally relevant traits such as those in the first form of this justification. Nor is he claiming that his list is exhaustive or that anything on the list is necessary. Rather all that is being claimed is that the characteristics on the list represent things that are thought to enrich a being’s life

therefore have moral value, though less than humans due to possessing less of the list (*Ibid*). Consequently, A(ii) is justifiable.

It should be noted that this justification (in either form) is only made to support A(ii), i.e. considering humans as more or the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists, and has currently not been made regarding A(i).

This justification has several merits. For instance, every item in the second form seems to affect the good life of a being. Further no item is necessary, and thus Sztybel avoids obvious question begging. With the first form, the characteristics cited do not seem arbitrary and the reasons given are often intuitive. For example, sentience, self-consciousness, and personhood are used to reject partiality towards humans. Similarly, Singer's claim that stones have no moral value because they cannot care what happens to them is intuitive to most.<sup>60</sup> Finally, most of the characteristics seem to provide a dividing line between humans and nonhumans. Despite these strengths, I argue that three problems question this justification.

First, some characteristics in the first form of the justification are untenable. For instance, 'personhood' is problematic as no consensus has been reached on what the term means (Pluhar, 1988:p.85) and thus which entities it encompasses or whether it is correct. Moreover, whatever interpretation one gives, such as 'being autonomous and possessing moral agency' or 'having self-consciousness and rudimentary agency' (*Ibid*:pp.85-86), refers back to other characteristics. Thus it is these characteristics being used, not 'personhood'. With other characteristics it is unclear why they should be accepted. For example, being able to hold religious beliefs is questionable unless one of two options are taken. First, relying on a specific metaphysical position. This however would be controversial, and thus provide no consensus to

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<sup>60</sup> As I discuss in chapter four, Singer and Regan both rely on morally relevant characteristics in their approaches to which beings are to be considered morally and to what degree, especially in relation to humans. This claim forms the basis for how both theories work. In both characteristics are appealed to establish moral considerability and/or rights for nonhuman animals, as well as being appealed to explain and justify which beings are to be considered over others in a hierarchy and within conflict cases.

support A(ii), and may also justify other problematic ethical claims (e.g. anti-homosexual assertions). Second, the trait, like being able to make political judgements, could be cashed out as exemplifying complex cognition that is required for morality. Once more, therefore, the cited characteristics are not what is used, and thus become redundant. Consequently, only certain traits are viable, namely those that are connected to some form of cognition that is argued to be morally relevant.

Second, it is unclear whether the characteristics in both forms *are* morally relevant, or at least in a way that justifies A(ii), or whether the justification itself vindicates A(ii). Six reasons support this.

First, regarding the first form, Tom Regan argues that complex cognitive capacities such as reason, autonomy, self-consciousness, and linguistic ability, are required for morality to exist, and thus necessary for moral agency.<sup>61</sup> However it does *not* follow that moral value is limited to such agents (Regan, 2004:pp.151-156). Regan argues that many beings that are not moral agents are considered to have moral value (e.g. the mentally ill and children) and such beings are not seen as having less value than moral agents (*Ibid*).<sup>62</sup> Consequently, even if such characteristics are required for morality to exist it does not follow that this impacts the amount of moral value a being has. Thus, A(ii) does not follow from these characteristics.

However, it is not even clear that these characteristics *are* necessary for moral value, morality, or moral agency, even within traditional ethics. For example, ‘being alive’ has been posited as what is necessary for moral value (Schweitzer, 1987:p.317), whereas moral sentiments, the ability to care, and even just the ability to recognize another and intentionally regulate behaviour (*without* rational reflection) have all been posited as what constitutes

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<sup>61</sup> There are grounds for objecting to even this claim, however this debate would not impact on the point at hand and so I shall set this aside for now.

<sup>62</sup> In fact, children are often considered to have more moral value than adult humans.

morality and moral agency<sup>63</sup> (Shapiro, 2006:p.361; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.20; Aaltola, 2013:pp.86-87; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.3; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:pp.127-128). Thus the link between the characteristics and morality used to justify A(ii) is not uncontroversial.

This raises the question of why these characteristics are cited rather than others, especially as the alternatives may not lead to A(ii).<sup>64</sup> At minimum the characteristics require further justification. On a less charitable interpretation, the characteristics are chosen to favour humans,<sup>65</sup> rely only on characteristics that are favoured by humans as important morally, or use those characteristics that have been used in certain traditional ethical theories (which, as noted in §2.1, were built on anthropocentric ideas). If so, this means anthropocentrism is being used to justify A(ii), which undermines the justification.

Second, concerning the first form again, Oscar Horta argues that “in order to be benefited or harmed it is (ontically) irrelevant to have any trait that does not determine as that we be benefited or harmed” (Horta, 2010:p.262). If what is meant by a characteristic being ‘morally relevant’ is that it is ‘ontically relevant’,<sup>66</sup> then the only morally relevant characteristic is the capacity to be benefited or harmed (*Ibid*). This is the reasoning behind the ‘sentience’ or ‘self-consciousness’ characteristics. If correct, this does not vindicate A(ii) as many nonhumans are sentient and can be benefited or harmed. Furthermore, from Horta’s argument sentience may also be too limited, as some environmental ethicists, like Kenneth Goodpaster, argue that many non-sentient organisms may also be benefited or harmed via being aided or

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<sup>63</sup> The importance, here, is that these interpretations of moral agency need not require complex cognitive capacities on some theories. I shall return to this in much more detail in chapters six and seven. Here the only important point is that it is therefore controversial whether such complex cognitive capacities *are* actually required for morality or moral considerability, even in traditional human-focused ethical theories.

<sup>64</sup> Given that nonhumans may possess them. Again, I shall cover this in more detail in chapters six and seven.

<sup>65</sup> This is reminiscent of Hayward’s claim in §1.3 regarding the human chauvinist attitude being displayed via behaviour.

<sup>66</sup> Which Horta claims most would find acceptable, especially as, for example, this seems to be the reasoning behind rejections of differential moral treatment based on race

restricted in their flourishing<sup>67</sup> (Jamieson, 2008:p.146). Wherever the line is drawn, these characteristics do not establish A(ii).

A third response to the first form is, as Dale Jamieson notes, that we reject the idea that the less rational exist to serve the more rational (*Ibid*:p.419). In other words, we reject the idea that if a being has less rationality or reason<sup>68</sup> that they are of less value and thus do not count as much as those with more of these characteristics. This is exemplified with the mentally-disabled and children. In the latter's case we do not even use this characteristic to consider value and often sacrifice ourselves to save children from harm. Consequently the characteristics do not justify positing A(ii).

Fourth, the justification (in both forms) entails an *internal* hierarchy of moral value. For instance, with the first form, if reason or rationality establishes A(ii), it is unclear why those possessing greater degrees of either do not possess greater value. For if possessing reason or rationality is the source of value, it is unclear why the further claim is rejected that beings just over that boundary are less valuable than those far beyond it. Similarly, then, it is unclear what justifies rejecting the further claim that any difference in the amount of the characteristic possessed alters the value a being has. Thus it is unclear how one would avoid an *internal* hierarchy amongst humans. Consequently either this characteristic does not justify value distinctions, and thus A(ii), or this unpalatable consequence must be accepted.

The second form also entails this hierarchy, not only *qua* each human, i.e. by how much of the list is possessed, but also *qua* social and economic opportunities, (i.e. those with more money or living in certain areas have more opportunity to fulfil the list and thus would, *because of* their social or economic status, have more value). Neither of these consequences are palatable. Evelyn Pluhar emphasises this by arguing that if endorsed Sztybel's society would be justified in prioritizing healthcare for those with more of the list (Pluhar, 2000:pp.333-334).

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<sup>67</sup> Such as plants being harmed by lack of water or light, or by being pulled apart.

<sup>68</sup> I.e. less of the characteristic being posited as morally relevant for moral value.

Moreover, given the importance of socio-economic opportunities to any such quality of life, this prioritizing would then favour rich countries or people, and rank minority groups and countries around the world lower than Western, non-minorities. Further, Pluhar notes that other items that enhance one's richness of life could be added, such as that 'ideal body mass' or 'wealth' (*Ibid*:p.331).<sup>69</sup> Such items further the internal hierarchy and strengthen the objection. These consequences challenge the justification and its claim that value distinctions follow from the characteristics.

Pluhar's latter point, however, raises a further problem by demonstrating that the items, while possibly enriching a life, have no relation to what is *ethically* a good life, for the question remains whether having a certain body type is something that *should* be aspired to rather than something that has been socially ingrained into us. Thus it does not follow that what may enrich one's life is what one *should* seek. This calls into question the move from positing items that benefit our lives to the claim that this is in any way moral, and thus the plausibility of the justification. Consequently, the internal hierarchy and this move shows that this form of the justification also does not justify A(ii), or at best has unpalatable consequences.

Fifth, Pluhar argues that Sztybel's form of this justification moves from 'the items are what makes a good life' to claiming that 'as ethics is concerned with establishing the good life those with more items have more value'. Pluhar argues that the latter does not follow from the former due to a change in meaning (*Ibid*). Essentially, Pluhar claims that ethics' aim at providing the best possible life means that any moral agent or moral theory aims at dedicating themselves or itself to excellence in life (*Ibid*). It does not follow from this that value is attributed to anything in lieu of exemplifying more or less of the items that make life better for moral agents (*Ibid*). In short, ethics aims at 'aspiring to be the best or most excellent' and it does not follow from that moral value is assigned to anything (*Ibid*). If so, Sztybel has not

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<sup>69</sup> Sztybel even acknowledges this, as Pluhar notes (Pluhar, 2000:p.331) and I mentioned when outlining his form of this justification.

shown that A(ii) follows from possessing more or less items, and thus that anthropocentrism is justified.

Sixth, both forms encounter the Species Overlap argument.<sup>70</sup> For instance, by positing reason or rationality as the relevant characteristic, the first form encounters the argument as not all humans possess either while many nonhumans possess both (Horta, 2010:p.262; Pluhar, 1988:pp.84&93-94). Thus A(ii) would not follow. That not all humans possess these characteristics is undeniable, yet few would grant that such humans have less value than ‘paradigmatic’ humans. The latter is more contested, however four points support this claim.

First, it is implausible that *all* nonhumans should lack a characteristic that has developed within humans via evolution (Pigliucci, 2009:p.133; Shapiro, 2006:p.359; Bekoff, 2004:p.491; de Waal, 2006:p.171). Second, it is unconvincing that many nonhumans lack reason or rationality yet new-born humans possesses it, or alternatively to reject such new-borns as having equal value. Third, current zoological and scientific studies indicate that at least some nonhumans exhibit signs of reason,<sup>71</sup> most notably great apes and nonhumans that use tools and solve problems (e.g. some birds, elephants, squirrels, dogs, and pigs) (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.2; Bekoff, 2007:p.22; Stone, 2006:p.58; Putz, 2009:p.615; Shapiro, 2006:p.357; Bekoff & Pierce, 2010:pp.39&51-52&81-83&145). Rejecting the Species Overlap argument without rebutting this evidence, or providing empirical support, is problematic. Fourth, even those that endorse A(ii) admit that within current literature there is a lack of argumentation or evidence for the claim that nonhumans lack reason (Szybel, 2000:p.187).<sup>72</sup> Consequently, even if the characteristic is morally relevant, A(ii) has not been justified.

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<sup>70</sup> This argument was noted in §2.2.

<sup>71</sup> At the very least the evidence is equally as convincing as the evidence we have for attributing similar consciousness, reason, etc., to other human beings (*qua* the ‘Problem of Other Minds’).

<sup>72</sup> It is interesting to note here that when it comes to nonhumans the burden of proof is placed on showing that they fulfil relevant categories – a move often used in racist or sexist groups – yet when it comes to liberal views of humans the burden of proof is on why a being should be excluded, not included.

These responses apply equally to the other characteristics (Jamieson, 2008:p.104; Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.107; Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:p.226). Consequently all are questionable as relating to moral value and none justify A(ii).

The second form similarly encounters the Species Overlap argument, as some humans would have less of the list, and thus less value, than other humans and nonhumans and thus we could treat them with less consideration. Sztybel replies that this difficulty can be side-stepped as most would not harm such humans and would care for them (Sztybel, 2000:p.197). The problem with this is twofold. First, while possibly true, those that do not care could not be wrong for their treatment of such humans and there would be no obligation to treat such humans in any way other than what reflects their lesser value. This is an unpalatable concession. Second, it is unclear why such humans could be treated equally despite their lesser value when Sztybel does not claim the same for nonhumans. If this is granted then Sztybel's argument has no purpose, however if it is not anthropocentrism lies behind the discrimination. This anthropocentrism would not have been justified, and thus is not only ethically suspect but also undermines an attempt to justify anthropocentrism on this basis. Consequently A(ii) has not been shown justified.

The third response to the justification is that the characteristics favour humans and thus the justification involves anthropocentrism. For instance, regarding the first form, it is unclear why the characteristics cited are *the* characteristics that are morally relevant in establishing value, rather than others that nonhumans can also fulfil. As noted above, that cognitive capacities are necessary for morality at most establishes moral agency, not A(ii).<sup>73</sup> Yet the characteristics *are* used to justify A(ii) and thus the question of why *these* traits establish value remains. Why not 'flourishing', 'being alive', or another characteristic nonhumans possess?<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Though even this was disputed

<sup>74</sup> The latter can be defined in a zoological sense, as well as various others. Here I do not intend to defend this, only to point out that the former could be used.

That the answer is a bias towards humans and our characteristics, whether in the sense of a prejudicial bias or that such are the default/norm, is illustrated by considering that centrism stress distinguishing points between the privileged class (i.e. the Centre) and those outside of it (Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-137). Such points are insufficiently justified, appeal to criteria that the privileged class typically share, and over-evaluate these criteria while under-evaluating the non-privileged class's traits (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:pp.104-109). Similarly, the justification stresses differences between humans and nonhumans, such differences are insufficiently justified, the characteristics are what 'typical' humans possess, and it is human (not nonhuman) traits<sup>75</sup> which are considered valuable. Without further justification it is difficult to see how the preferring of the cited traits in establishing what is of value is anything other than anthropocentrism.

To support this one only need consider that the same justification has been made regarding race and women. Some feminist theorists, for instance, argue that focusing on rationality or reason is androcentric as these have traditionally justified male dominance over women, the patriarchy, the view that women are inferior, and the exclusion of views, norms, and values outside of the male, and thus that other characteristics – such as emotion – have been ignored (Baier, in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005:p.247; Lloyd, in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005:pp.177-186; Tong, 1994:p.132). While other feminists reject the reason/emotion dichotomy and women being emotion-based and men being reason-based (Tong, 1994:pp.131-133), the point that 'traditionally considered male characteristics' were/are used to distinguish men from women, silence their perspectives/values, consider them inferior, and Other them would remain. Similarly, reason and rationality have also been traditionally used to explain why cultures are primitive and inferior to colonizing white 'civilized' groups.

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<sup>75</sup> Or more accurately, traits considered to be typical to humans and not nonhumans

The similarity of how this centric thinking is proposed, especially when alternative characteristics are available in the Othered groups, implies that anthropocentrism is involved, and entails that endorsing this justification raises problematic implications for its use in intra-human instances. This is an unpalatable consequence, and calls into question the use of this reasoning to justify A(ii).

The second form of the justification is similarly questionable. It is unclear, for instance, that a being who impartially reflects on life will agree that having more sentience-based interests increases the value of one's life. Nor is it clear that nonhumans should be judged on criteria that favour what humans consider to be goods for *their* type of life. While Sztybel claims that his list is not exhaustive, and nonhuman 'goods' can be added, doing so could weigh the list in favour of a nonhuman. More importantly, it is not clear why one type of life can be considered 'more good' than another. For instance, why is the life of the perfectly happy monk less of a good life than the pro-active, adventure-seeking, art-loving, socialite, connoisseur novelist with a family, high-paid job and countless holidays? It is unclear, beyond subjective preference, that the sum of one life is 'more good' than the sum of the other, or that 'an impartial being' would conclude such. Moreover, some 'goods' seem unable to be compared. For instance, how does one compare the 'good' that running free, sniffing what humans cannot sense, play-fighting, and other characteristics that wolves enjoy compares with having a discussion about art while drinking wine?

The previous objections to Sztybel's justification revealed that the list is subjective and these points strengthen this claim. While Sztybel avoids the problem that the list is not representative of *the* good life due to being subjective by conceding that no item is necessary, a little reflection illustrates that the items claimed to be enriching are those which a rational, self-aware agent would/may find enriching. Missing are items that enrich nonhuman lives – such as flight or the effect that a heightened sense of smell may evoke. If Sztybel grants these,

then it is unclear why humans as a whole would have a higher value. If not, the only reason to omit them is because *we* do not see how they enrich a life or that they enrich life as much as items *we* prefer. Sztybel thus seems guilty of creating a list that is implicitly biased towards humans; which provides no objective support for anthropocentrism. Either way, anthropocentrism is not established.

Simply put, Sztybel's list favours the types of being that humans are and thus this attempt to justify anthropocentrism is question-begging or at least not objective. Considering the last two responses together strengthens this – for nonhumans are judged not for the sum of *their* life to them, based on traits that make *their* type of life good for them, but based on traits that greatly favour humans and are considered as adding to a good life for humans. This is clearly A(i) leading to a justification for A(ii).

Relatedly, Pluhar observes that what the 'good life' is for any being is specific to that type of being – and arguably, that actual beings as types of beings vary in what is best for them. Thus what is the good life for a rational agent will not be the same as a non-rational being, and applying one list to all is problematic (Pluhar, 2000:p.331). As noted with the first form, this is ethically dubious *qua* feminist claims that male ideals of the good life may not fit female ideals. The justification therefore attempts to support A(ii) via being anthropocentric.

As a result of all three responses, this justification does not demonstrate that the characteristics are relevant to moral value, that if they are that all humans are included and all nonhumans excluded, that A(ii) follows from the characteristics, or that they are not the result of anthropocentrism.

However, even if this justification did support A(ii), A(i) remains unjustified. As A(i) was noted in §1.4.2 to be cited more often than A(ii) as anthropocentrism's meaning, and as A(i) alone results in problems for nonhuman ethics and nonhuman animals (as I argue in the next chapter), without justifying A(i) anthropocentrism has not been shown justified. Finally,

a nonhuman ethic could not support this justification without endorsing speciesism/human chauvinism as this justification is used to support both in the literature.<sup>76</sup>

Consequently, it can be concluded that this justification is unconvincing and unacceptable.

## **§2.4 The Necessity of Anthropocentrism for Ethics**

The previous justifications largely focus on justifying A(ii). The following four justifications also attempt to support A(ii), however these focus mostly on justifying either A(i) or both A(i) and A(ii). In this section I consider the justification that anthropocentrism is inescapable and therefore it is mistaken to attempt to reject anthropocentrism even within nonhuman ethics. I outline the justification before arguing that contemporary research and the clarified definition of anthropocentrism undermines the claim.

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<sup>76</sup> As has been noted throughout this section, approaching moral considerability via an appeal to characteristics is common and relied upon by many nonhuman ethicists and their critics. Despite this, the lack of justifying A(i), and thus anthropocentrism, and the problem of justifying A(ii) – i.e. a value distinction involving humans – for theories that reject human chauvinism, provide sufficient support for my claims throughout this thesis. While this was briefly detailed at the beginning of this chapter, in short the claims and conclusion of this thesis remain because: (i) the appeal to morally relevant characteristics – for nonhuman ethics, especially – is intended to (and must) not rely on humans or involve species bias (this was noted in the introduction, and will be in chapter three, in the aim of nonhuman ethics), and thus characteristic could not be relied on if they involve A(i) or humans (as the A(ii) in those theories I consider in chapters four and five does), and thus they would not establish A(ii), (ii) the characteristics themselves must not involve A(i) (due to (i), A(i) not being justified on this justification (or in this chapter), and involving A(i) would entail anthropocentric characteristics justifying anthropocentrism). Further to be used by nonhuman ethics they must: resolve the internal hierarchy, the Species Overlap argument (which nonhuman ethics theories rely on to establish themselves (Singer, 1995; Rachels, 1991; McMahan, 2002; DeGrazia, 1996; Regan, 2004)), provide an explanation for why value distinctions follow in some instances and not others (e.g. human new-borns), and – given anthropocentrism has been defined via analogy with other centrisms – accept that the same appeal can be made (if possible) regarding women and race (and given nonhuman ethics reliance on sexism and racism, this is an important consequence). Finally, (iii) even without the other reasons A(i) remains unjustified, thus so do its problems, and as I focus significantly on A(i) in this thesis and my claims, and as A(i) is involved in each theory I consider, is not addressed by these theories (or at minimum that my theory addresses this more), is involved in the A(ii) of each theory, and as chapter eight would still present a position that is less A(i), has no A(ii), and addresses A(i) (far more), the claims made throughout would remain. For all of these reasons even if, despite my arguments, an appeal to characteristics as morally relevant has some merit, as I claim here anthropocentrism would not be shown justified, nonhuman ethics could not appeal to this easily, and my claims throughout this thesis remain.

This justification argues that everything we do or think is necessarily from a human perspective. Our understanding of the world and how we think about it are necessarily based on how we inescapably see things from within our human self. In other words, we experience and know the world only *as* a human. This influences our thoughts, our understanding, and as a consequence everything that follows from these. As a result, our epistemologies, ethics, politics, even our sciences are all inevitably based upon and bound by the fact that we are human and understand things as humans (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:pp.1-6).

For example, Rob Boddice points out that rights (both legal and moral) “are inescapably a human concept”, as are conceptions of ‘sovereignty’, ‘intrinsic value’, ‘sanctity of life’, and so on (*Ibid*:p.7). Similarly, many argue that values are determined through the preference rankings of valuers via consideration of their own interests, and valuers are human, thus values are inescapably human (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.106; Hayward, 1997:p.56).<sup>77</sup> For ethics, Richard and Val Routley note how anthropocentrism is argued to be “a restriction dictated by the logic of evaluative and moral concepts...[and thus] there is no coherent, possible, or viable alternative to the human chauvinism of standard ethical theories” (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:p.105). Thus ethics is necessarily anthropocentric.

Even science has been argued by Tim Hayward to make anthropocentrism more inescapable rather than less. For while science may undermine most justifications put forward for A(ii), Hayward argues that the fact that humans are able to be objective sets us apart from nonhumans and the more-than-human world (Hayward, 1997:p.50).

Moreover, species egalitarianism and nonhuman ethics themselves are argued to be inescapably human. First, such theories start from humans and work outwards to nonhumans and are based on human criteria (or what humans see as morally important). Second, any

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<sup>77</sup> Many add to this that any rejection of this claim requires the endorsement of ‘moral realism’, which, it is argued, is untenable and thus that this claim is the only viable (or rational) option (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004:pp.111-126).

nonhuman ethic put forward is done so by the ‘only’ animal capable of advocating and following such a position of consideration for species equality. (*Ibid*:pp.1-6). Finally, as Thomas Nagel has illustrated, we can never truly imagine what it is like to be any entity other than human as any attempt to do so is *our* imagining what *we* would think or feel as that nonhuman. Thus, in Eric Silverman’s words, “[s]ince our own human experience shapes what we can imagine, any attempt to imagine the subjective experience of a non-human animal is necessarily anthropocentric” (Silverman, in Boddice, 2011:p.120). Consequently any nonhuman ethic that takes into consideration the subjective experience of nonhumans<sup>78</sup> is necessarily anthropocentric.

Essentially everything that we think is bound by our being human, and we can never get outside to understand how things really are (Boddice, in Boddice, 2011:p.1). To truly reject anthropocentrism one must find an understanding of the world that is not made from within a human perspective. This is claimed to be implausible and thus anthropocentrism is necessary.<sup>79</sup>

A merit of this justification is that it only focuses on A(i) and does not claim that the necessity of A(i) entails the necessity of A(ii). It is argued that while anthropocentrism is inescapable claims to human moral superiority or higher (moral) value are not necessary and require defence. This is posited to make this justification more compelling – especially for nonhuman ethics positions. As a result, this justification conceives of anthropocentrism only as some form of A(i) rather than the clarified definition I propose. It is from this misunderstanding of anthropocentrism’s meaning that the justification is undermined.

Three replies may be made. First, the claim that the predication of value is necessarily human is questionable. It was noted in §2.3 that moral agents can be nonhuman, such as extra-terrestrial beings and, depending on the criteria for moral agency, so could nonhuman animals

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<sup>78</sup> As any theory that bases moral consideration on suffering or the possession of certain cognitive traits (or sentience) do, for instance

<sup>79</sup> This claim is strengthened by the further claim that rejecting anthropocentrism is unnecessary or undesirable as we can have a nonhuman ethic that is anthropocentric. I shall defer consideration of this further point until §2.6

(Bekoff, 2001:p.81; Bekoff & Pierce, 2010:p.xi).<sup>80</sup> Contemporary studies by evolutionary biologists, ethologists, and zoologists show that nonhuman animals value things, such as their young, affection, items, and certain societal structures, norms, rules, and behaviours (and thus political structures that are at least similar to certain human structures that are less complex (e.g. anarchism, hierarchical)) (de Waal, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.52; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:pp.127-131; Bekoff, 2001:pp.84-85). Moreover, such studies show that nonhuman animals display behaviour that indicates the predication of ethical values (especially when moral agency requires something such as moral sentiments or intentionality, as noted in §2.3) (Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.78; Sachs, 2010:p.625; Rowlands, 2012:pp.4-7).<sup>81</sup> As such it is questionable that humans are the only animal that predicate value or have socio-political structure and interaction,<sup>82</sup> and thus the attempt to justify anthropocentrism on this ground is flawed.

Second, these studies further show that the claim that ethical, political, and social ideas are ‘all inherently human’ and have ‘developed from human-based conceptions’ is at minimum dubious. Research into the evolutionary origin and development of human morality indicates that while *complex* ideas or ethical systems and ethical reflection are currently likely only to be found in humans, this (a) is only a recent phenomenon (Shapiro, 2006:p.362), and (b) developed over time from ethical and socio-political behaviour, norms, and values that social nonhuman animals share (Shapiro, 2006:p.362; Allchin, 2009:pp.592-597; Baumard, André & Sperber, 2013:p.66; de Waal, 1996:pp.21-23; Bekoff & Pierce, 2010:pp.57-59; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130). Such research shows how three major ethical theories – deontological,

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<sup>80</sup> I shall return to arguing for this in much greater depth in chapter seven.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Further, it would be an unpalatable (perhaps questionable) move to argue that human political structures are more advanced/better, etc., even though they are likely more complex, in order to justify anthropocentrism as the exact same reasoning is used to justify ethnocentrism and imperial colonialism.

utilitarian, and contract theory – developed from, and can be found to different degrees of complexity within, animal behaviour – and that both human and nonhuman animals show evidence of this (*Ibid*). Consequently, it is dubious to claim that such ideas are *inherently* human or *developed from* or *based on* human conceptions.<sup>83</sup> As a result, this claim does not establish the necessity of anthropocentrism either.

Third, the above noted research also shows that the claim that only humans consider moral behaviour beyond species may be dubious. For while the complex reflection on the principle of species egalitarianism may require the kind of ethical reflection that humans may currently have alone, many instances show nonhuman animals extending their concern beyond group, societal, and species boundaries (de Waal, 2006:p.28; de Waal, 1996:pp.53-58). Thus, even if the derivation or understanding of a clarified and ethically and rationally reflected upon principle is human, the actual acceptance of, use of, and moral sentiment of, species egalitarianism – or at least the beginnings of an evolutionary development of such a sentiment – is not. This is supported by the previous points regarding nonhuman values and the evolution of morality. It is therefore contestable to claim that anthropocentrism is necessary to ethics, value, or political or social norms/ideas, and that it is absurd to attempt to reject it.

Second, this justification is undermined when the clarified definition of anthropocentrism is understood. It will be recalled that anthropocentrism, as with androcentrism, was shown to neither be necessary nor involve any ‘benign’ meaning. Rather it was the adopting, using, or possessing of a certain centric way of thought biased towards humans. Anthropocentrism was clarified as: when humans intentionally or unintentionally view something or everything in a way that assumes the human (or a human viewpoint) as default, superior, common sense, the evaluative norm (or as how things should be seen), or

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*. Also, I shall return to this in more detail in chapters six and seven.

with an attitude of dismissiveness towards anything nonhuman. From this clarified definition this justification can be shown unconvincing.

The justification breaks down to the claim that ‘we are trapped in our own human mind, and thus everything we do or think is necessarily human’. As argued in the previous chapter, this is not what is intended by any definition of a centrism, the clarified definition of anthropocentrism, or the uses of anthropocentrism within the literature. Further, an identical claim could be made in regards to sex, race,<sup>84</sup> and one’s own mind. In each of these instances one is stuck in the relevant kind of mind and can only act or think along those lines and thus it is impossible to get out of, and consequently absurd to suggest trying. This is unconvincing and unpalatable when applied to these centrisms. For example, the former have of course been used in regard to women and other races, often in support of dismissing equality claims, whereas the latter is true by default if the original justification is true, yet it is unconvincing – and morally questionable – that we should (or can) not attempt to think outside of our individual limited viewpoint, ethics, understanding of politics, and so on. In cases of sex, culture, race, and ourselves we do learn to think outside of our mind set, usually via consideration of others’ input. It is similarly possible for anthropocentrism then. Alone this challenges the justification.

Relatedly, the justification implies that one must also endorse the claim that we cannot access the outside world as it actually is, as if everything we understand or think is necessarily human then it follows that we cannot conclude that anything we think or understand regarding the world is objectively correct. While some may be willing to accept this, arguably many who would endorse this justification would not. Thus even without the former responses this justification ought to be endorsed cautiously.

In short, this justification is not referring to anthropocentrism at all, and thus does not justify A(i). For the definition is analogous to ‘androcentrism’, the A(i)-analogue of which is

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<sup>84</sup> Though more dubious, as there seems nothing that exists that is race, many may make this claim and thus it needs to be cited.

to be focused on men in discussion or positions or viewing everything from a male perspective. In the case of androcentrism ‘being male’ and consequently viewing the world from one’s necessarily-male viewpoint does not entail androcentrism. One is androcentric when a male-perspective is the focus/norm of understanding, the focus/norm of any discussion or position, or the view point from which something or everything is considered.

It follows that being human does not entail that one is necessarily anthropocentric in the relevant sense. Thus what this justification exemplifies is not anthropocentrism, or at least not the kind of anthropocentrism that is relevant. Either way the justification is undermined, for what is being considered is anthropocentrism in the clarified sense. This intentional or unintentional prioritizing biases and/or distorts any discussion or position in favour of its focal view in a way that often leads to A(ii) and problematic treatment, such as oppression or dismissal of interests, in the same way that all centrisms work (Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-137). In short, via assuming (or purporting) that position to be the default view, using human-defined norms, values, perspectives, etc., Othering those outside the human Centre (that is justified by human-criteria), and judging the human as common sense, which often and likely results in views of those not matching the Centre as being inferior, and thus humans (or what is human/fits human criteria) as superior. Thus this justification does not justify A(i) in the sense used.

Third, as noted above many nonhumans may behave morally and hold moral values – such as great apes, wolves, and elephants, (Sapontzis, 1987:p.27)<sup>85</sup> – and often such values may overlap values humans hold. For example, many nonhumans display compassion, fidelity, prohibitions against wanton violence or killing, respect, and love and mourning (Sapontzis, 1987:p.27; Bekoff & Pierce, 2010:p.ix). Others, such as coming to the aid of others (and not

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<sup>85</sup> I shall provide a much more full consideration and defence of this in chapters six and seven. A thorough summary of the empirical research on this (which is too numerous to cite here) can be found in Bekoff, Marc & Pierce, Jessica, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010).

necessarily of their ‘own kind’/species) or self-sacrifice have been documented. For instance, elephants have rescued captive antelopes by freeing them from their enclosure, and rats and monkeys have suffered themselves rather than push a lever that prevents their own suffering but harms another (*Ibid*). Numerous other examples can be given. Given evolution it should not be surprising that (social) nonhumans have also developed ethical value behaviour. The importance of this is that values nonhumans’ exhibit overlap those held by humans.<sup>86</sup> This means, given the clarified definition of anthropocentrism, that we can look at ethical values that do overlap and consider these as non-anthropocentric values or at the very least as a means to devise some moral code that is less anthropocentric. That this latter is a *possibility* means that we are not *necessarily* bound to anthropocentrism in ethics.

In sum, when considering anthropocentrism on the clarified definition, and also considering the claims that this justification makes in comparison to contemporary research, this justification does not demonstrate that anthropocentrism is necessary, and thus that A(i) is justified.

### **§2.5 One Property among Many**

In this section I consider the justification that A(i) is a moral property, and thus while most anthropocentrism should be rejected some A(i) is justified. I outline the justification and argue that three problems undermine its claims.

Tony Milligan’s justification for anthropocentrism begins by acknowledging that most A(i) and all forms of A(ii) are problematic. Milligan considers anthropocentrism to involve both A(i) and A(ii) and argues that as no form of A(ii) can be shown justified and thus A(ii) is

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<sup>86</sup> In a similar way to how cultural values often overlap despite such cultures originally developing independent of each other (cf. well-known responses to Cultural Relativism, for instance).

a prejudicial favouring of humans (Milligan, in Boddice, 2011:pp.223-227). These forms of anthropocentrism are claimed to be unjustifiable and should be rejected (*Ibid*:p.226).

Milligan argues that this does not entail that all anthropocentrism is unjustifiable, and that rejecting all anthropocentrism would not only challenge deeply held intuitions, but require us "...to accept a major upheaval in our understanding of who we are" (*Ibid*:p.231). This is because, Milligan argues, not all anthropocentrism is a prejudice as some appeals to humanity *are* morally relevant (*Ibid*:pp.239-230). For example, we use the term 'humane' and 'inhumane' morally, often interchangeably with 'cruel' or 'kind'. We even use these terms in nonhuman ethics when speaking of how nonhumans ought to be treated (*Ibid*:p.229). Milligan argues that these uses appeal to humanity in a moral, non-prejudicial sense, and as such even though anthropocentric these uses should not be rejected (*Ibid*:p.233).

This claim seems intuitive, and is strengthened by Milligan's clarification that such moral uses of humanity are only *one* morally relevant property that we use out of many, and thus do not confer any instance of A(ii). They do show, however, that *at least some* anthropocentrism is not only justifiable, but desirable; both in ethics and to avoid any upheaval in our self-identity (*Ibid*).

While *prima facie* convincing this justification is problematic for three reasons. First, even if a position requires 'a major upheaval in our understanding of who we are', this does not entail either that the position is incorrect or that for this reason we should not alter our views. Many positions have done just this – notably anti racial and sexist views and Darwinian evolution. Any challenge to intuition requires justification, yet intuition holds no sacred ground that is beyond critical reflection. Thus if anthropocentrism is unjustified, major upheaval or no, this would not be a reason to reject it.

Second, Milligan's argument is morally problematic as it equally applies to race, sex, culture, or ideology. For instance, many feminists have argued that appeals to certain moral

terms are problematic *precisely because* they are androcentric, and terms such as ‘manly’ were used morally (and as virtues) by ancient Greeks and other societies up until the present day (Bederman, 1996:p.18). Consequently, unless one wishes to endorse these uses as morally relevant and non-prejudicial it is unclear how one can also endorse Milligan’s justification.

Third, the previous response’s uses are problematic precisely because the terms gained their usage from centric viewpoints that were not justifiable, such as sexism and racism. For instance, the moral use of the term ‘manly’ gained its moral use precisely because of the androcentrism within the societies it arose in. Similarly, ‘humane’ and ‘inhumane’ gained their meaning because of the anthropocentrism within society, i.e. humans could transcend their animal nature and be moral, more divine, or civilised. This anthropocentrism, like the androcentrism of the former terms, *did* involve A(ii). This can be demonstrated by the fact that we often substitute ‘inhumane’ with ‘bestial’, ‘brutish’, ‘savage’, ‘inhuman’, ‘carnal’, and ‘bestly’. It is important to note that it is *only* the *negative* moral term that is synonymous with the nonhuman world, implying that something is not good if it is not human, and good if it is more like humans.<sup>87</sup> As a result, ‘humane’ and ‘inhumane’ are moral terms because of an anthropocentric viewpoint that looked down on the nonhuman world and elevated the human; i.e. an anthropocentrism that included both A(i) and A(ii). Consequently, Milligan’s claim that such uses are non-prejudicial is incorrect, and more importantly so is the claim that these uses do not endorse A(ii). They may not directly, but they do indirectly, and through this – just as androcentric terms do – this anthropocentrism implicitly endorses such an assumption.

This undermines the justification, but is also problematic for Milligan<sup>88</sup> *qua* his claims that anything that does involve A(ii) is a prejudice. Milligan’s claim that this limited type of

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<sup>87</sup> This is supported by the origin and development of anthropocentrism. Humans distanced themselves from the more-than-human world and as mastery of this world and the nonhumans increased, spurred on by philosophical and religious ideas, what was human was considered to be better/good/moral and what was nonhuman/nature to be less pure/less or non-moral, and so on.

<sup>88</sup> This further illustrates implicit, and problematic, anthropocentrism and commitments to anthropocentrism within nonhuman ethics theories.

anthropocentrism, and its being one amongst many morally relevant traits, is therefore called into question.

## **§2.6 Rejecting Anthropocentrism is Unnecessary**

In this section I consider the justification that rejecting anthropocentrism is unnecessary. I outline the justification before arguing that two responses undermine this claim.

This justification argues that as anthropocentric theories lead to the same results as non-anthropocentric theories, there is no need to reject A(i) (McShane, 2007:p.170). This justification is strengthened by the additional claims that ethical theories are anthropocentric and so are policy-makers. Thus not rejecting anthropocentrism is more practical, especially as anthropocentric ethics achieve the same end as non-anthropocentric ethics (*Ibid*:p.172).

The merits of this justification are clear. Even so I argue that two responses undermine this justification. First, the claim that A(i) should not be rejected due to the anthropocentrism of ethical theories is unconvincing. Some feminists have challenged traditional theories as being patriarchal and androcentric and have strived to develop theories that are either gender-neutral or less male-focused. If this justification is convincing it therefore applies equally to attempts to create non-androcentric moral theories. However, the assertion that one should not devise a non-androcentric theory as ethical theories are androcentric is unconvincing. It is unclear why it is any more compelling in the case of anthropocentrism. The claim regarding policy-makers is similarly unconvincing, for if the same claim was made regarding sex or race<sup>89</sup> it would hardly seem convincing or be the ethically correct decision to make, practical or not.

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<sup>89</sup> For example, 'most policy makers are sexists or racists, and thus it is more constructive not to reject racism or sexism'

Moreover, it is not clear that all ethical theories *are* necessarily anthropocentric. The ‘Golden Rule’ for example need not specify what is meant by ‘others’, and the ‘Principle of Utility’ could easily be taken to consider ‘interests’ rather than anything specific to humans, or even sentient entities. Moreover there is evidence in the studies cited in §2.4 that nonhumans may have ethical behaviour and norms at least akin to the aforementioned principles (Shapiro, 2006:p.364; Allchin, 2009:pp.590-600). Thus, that A(i) should not be rejected due to the anthropocentrism of ethical theories is unconvincing.

The plausibility of this justification rests with the initial claim that an anthropocentric ethic leads to the same results as a non-anthropocentric theory. This can be shown dubious in five ways.

First, anthropocentric theories may exclude nonhuman animals that non-anthropocentric theories would include. Singer, for example, draws the line of his theory at (i.e. excluding) molluscs, and his theory is considered the most egalitarian nonhuman ethic. A non-anthropocentric nonhuman ethic *may* include molluscs, other invertebrates, plants, and so on, due to positing criteria for moral value that would include such entities by not being judged via a human paradigm.

Second, unlike non-anthropocentric positions, anthropocentric theories need not consider nonhumans as being good-in-themselves, in the same way that anthropocentric environmental ethic theories need not consider nature to be good-in-itself. Even those nonhuman ethic theories that ascribe value to nonhumans withhold value from those beyond the theory; again, a non-anthropocentric nonhuman ethic need not do this.

Third, a non-anthropocentric ethic requires that its claims and ethical assumptions, and the norms, values, and perspectives used, are shown as justifiable and non-prejudicial, in the same manner as non-androcentric ethics are devised. Thus far this has not been shown for an anthropocentric nonhuman ethic. The principles arrived at and the effect these have on the

Othered group would likely, as with feminist non-androcentric positions, be different to those arrived at via a centric ethic.

Fourth, anthropocentric theories consider value, interests, preferences, and value of lives, *from the human perspective*, rather than giving fair weight to *all* nonhuman capacities, interests, preferences and lives. This could easily lead to a hierarchy of value and thus some form of A(ii) (e.g. via more complex beings being considered more valuable), all of which non-anthropocentric nonhuman ethics would reject.

Fifth, no matter how well-intentioned a theory is, if it is based upon a partiality-centred belief then it runs the risk of inadvertently endorsing implicit views or results in favour of the class of entities that it is partial towards and against any Other class. This is a familiar concern of many feminists and it is a concern for non-anthropocentric theories. For instance, removing inequality – while a positive step – may not solve all problems women face in a patriarchal society due to remaining norms and Othering. Similar arguments have been given regarding ethnocentrism. For example, opponents to both have argued that enacting equality would still involve many incorrect beliefs that limit the group that is not part of the Centre and that lead to political, social, moral, and economic situations that hamper the Other group. Similarly, with an anthropocentric theory nonhumans could still be subjected to views that are problematic or have their lives, values, norms, preferences, and perspectives considered less (if at all). Reasons based on this latter often lie behind why nonhumans can be kept in zoos and that freedom, or the capacity to engage in their natural activities, is not necessary for their ‘good life’ (DeGrazia, 1996:pp.294-295).

Consideration of feminist arguments regarding androcentrism reveals an abundance of examples of how women can still face difficulties even if equal, and given the analogy with androcentrism it would not be difficult to find additional problems nonhumans could similarly

face from anthropocentrism.<sup>90</sup> One example would be how differential treatment is given to ‘domestic’ and ‘wild’ nonhumans based on ‘what they are’ or ‘how natural they are’. Such involves A(i) (i.e. what humans consider ‘their nature’ to be or require), and whether this is or is not a problem would differ on an anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric nonhuman ethic.<sup>91</sup>

As a result, it is dubious that an anthropocentric theory would provide the same results as a non-anthropocentric position, and it is unconvincing that A(i) should not be rejected as current ethical theories are anthropocentric. Consequently this justification is unconvincing.

## **§2.7 Conclusion**

After considering the justifications for anthropocentrism I have argued that each is unconvincing. Neither A(i) nor A(ii) have been shown to be based on convincing reasoning or to cohere with our actual experiences and moral beliefs. As a result, anthropocentrism has not been shown justified. Given the analogy with androcentrism, anthropocentrism can be concluded to be only supported by socially-ingrained opinion. This provides one reason why it is important to understand anthropocentrism using my clarified definition.

As a result, anthropocentrism is problematic for any theory involving it. This is reinforced by considering problems that anthropocentrism causes or perpetuates both for nonhuman animals and nonhuman ethics. I turn to these now. As unjustified and problematic, anthropocentrism would be something nonhuman ethics ought to avoid as much as possible and address.

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<sup>90</sup> I shall show several in chapter three.

<sup>91</sup> I shall return to a more in-depth consideration of this in the next chapter. Here it suffices not to show whether this is a problem for nonhuman animals, but that an anthropocentric ethic would not provide all that a non-anthropocentric ethic would.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE PROBLEMS OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM**

In this chapter I consider problematic implications of anthropocentrism and indicate their importance for nonhuman ethics.<sup>92</sup> I conclude that by being both unjustified and problematic anthropocentrism ought to be avoided as much as possible by nonhuman ethic theories. Further, as anthropocentrism accounts for the intuition behind human chauvinism and presents new issues that nonhumans suffer any nonhuman ethic ought to address anthropocentrism. Together, I argue, these claims entail that the less anthropocentric a plausible theory the more advantageous it is.<sup>93</sup>

#### **§3.1 Problems of Anthropocentrism**

I have already argued that the justifications for anthropocentrism are unconvincing. This alone is a concern for theories that rely on anthropocentrism. However anthropocentrism also results

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<sup>92</sup> It should be noted that anthropocentrism as clarified also has implications that are problematic for humans. For instance, Eddy de Jonge argues that much intra-human violence, such as in some wars, slavery, ethnocentrism, and ethnic cleansing, involve and rely on anthropocentrism (e.g. what makes one human and who is human and who is not is used to justify the group's actions towards another group) (de Jonge, in Boddice, 2011:pp.309-312). Others have argued that anthropocentrism adversely affects, and in some cases is argued to be contrary to, science (e.g. that humans are the centre of the universe, that humans possess characteristics that are unique to the human species, or that humans are the most valuable entity in a way that is objective (rather than being simply a subjective prejudice)) and affects our behaviour toward the environment in ways that affect humans (Fox, in Benson, 2000:pp.255-6; Hayward, 1997:p.50). While these are important problems caused by anthropocentrism and another reason for ethical theories (even beyond nonhuman ethics: i.e. in all ethical theory) to avoid it as much as possible, my focus in this thesis is on anthropocentrism within nonhuman ethics and thus I shall not consider these here. It is noted that such impacts of anthropocentrism are indicative of the wider import, and new research, that may be investigated from the claims I have made throughout this thesis.

<sup>93</sup> I acknowledge here that there are, of course, other factors that alter how favourable a theory may be; one such example being pragmatism and the Ideal/Nonideal theory debate. However given nonhuman ethics' aim and its focus on speciesism/human chauvinism, and given that anthropocentrism is unjustified, allows for the intuition of speciesism/human chauvinism as well as highlighting additional problems nonhuman animals and nonhuman ethics face (as I conclude below), the weight of anthropocentrism as a reason in favour, or as a factor in criticism, of a position is significant. For clarification: if a nonhuman ethic were speciesist most theorists within the field would find this sufficient reason to either reject the position or look for a non-speciesist alternative. This was noted in the introduction by Tom Regan and Steven Sapontzis, and will be further highlighted in §3.1.5

in additional problems for nonhuman animals and nonhuman ethics, namely: (i) by leading to counterintuitive implications, (ii) by being a centrism, (iii) resulting from the relation between A(i) (i.e. interpreting or regarding the world (or something or everything) in terms of human values, experiences, norms, or thoughts, or in a way that assumes the human as default, common sense, or in a way that is dismissive of anything non-human) and A(ii) (i.e. considering humans as more or the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists), (iv) the effects of A(i) on nonhuman animals, (v) its tension with the aim of nonhuman ethics, and (vi) its role within nonhuman ethic debates. I consider each in turn.

### **§3.1.1 A Counterintuitive Problem**

In this section I consider the problem that anthropocentrism has counterintuitive and ethically questionable implications. I argue that this provides one reason to reduce anthropocentrism as much as possible within nonhuman ethics.

Dale Jamieson argues that speciesism (as outlined in §1.2 (Jamieson, 2008:pp.108-109)) implies that other species' members (including extra-terrestrials) should not care whether they harm any other species, including humans (*Ibid*), whereas human chauvinism or A(ii) (as A(ii) represents the intuition behind human chauvinism<sup>94</sup>) implies that nonhumans (including extra-terrestrials) should sacrifice themselves for humans (*Ibid*). Jamieson claims that neither implication is intuitive; for it is unclear why nonhumans should not care about harming humans *just because* they are a different species or why those same nonhumans should submit to human

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<sup>94</sup> Further, as anthropocentrism has been shown to lack justification, and as human chauvinism was defined as favouring humans without justification, A(ii) clearly fully represents what is meant by human chauvinism – and thus what is meant by speciesism within the nonhuman ethics literature.

interests *just because* they are human interests (*Ibid*). Thus Jamieson argues speciesism and A(ii) are counterintuitive.<sup>95</sup>

This argument can also be applied to A(i). For it is unclear why one group should not care about or include the norms, values, experiences, thoughts, or perspectives of other groups, and why the Othered groups should submit their views, etc., in favour of those of the Centre group. While views may be rejected upon reflection, due to being implausible, unjustified, or morally unacceptable, the automatic dismissing or prioritizing of certain views that anthropocentrism (and any centrism) entails is counterintuitive and ethically questionable. For instance, this is precisely what is objected to by those rejecting centric thinking within ethics and social issues, such as by some feminists (especially postcolonial feminism) and those rejecting ethno- and euro-centrism (Anderson, 1995:pp.70-75). Thus with A(i) this implication is similarly questionable.

Jamieson's argument therefore highlights a problem for A(i) and A(ii) when they are considered beyond the privileged class. When considered by those who already accept them (i.e. the Centre) both seem intuitive. However when we move from the Centre, the Centre's ignoring of others is not intuitive and neither is the idea that the Othered should submit themselves to and for those at the Centre. Similarly, both are ethically problematic. Consider the following: white males should not consider any other sex/race morally or consider their perspectives/values, etc. Further, any non-white non-male should submit themselves and their perspectives/values, etc., to (those of) white males'. In these instances this reasoning is not only counterintuitive, but also unacceptable and prejudicial.

Jamieson's argument thus reveals that anthropocentrism entails that nonhumans (including extra-terrestrials) should willingly sacrifice themselves for humans (and would be

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<sup>95</sup> This argument would equally apply should one grant that non-human beings (terrestrial or extra-terrestrial) have some moral standing even if they do not share in moral status (as outlined in §1.1). Similarly for my A(i) application of this reasoning.

morally wrong for not doing so) and also alter (or have disregarded) all of their views, norms, values, and perspectives in favour of humans', *just because* they are a different species. Spelled out, this not only seems counterintuitive, but is similarly questionable – especially as anthropocentrism lacks justification, and by accepting this reasoning for one centrism it is unclear how (beyond anthropocentrism/speciesism) one can consistently maintain its rejection for others. This highlights a problem with anthropocentrism as it has counterintuitive and ethically questionable implications. While not a knockdown problem, this provides *one* reason why nonhuman ethics ought to avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible, especially as such positions attempt to avoid unjustified species biases (Regan, 2004:p.xxxiii) and seek to represent nonhuman animals in a justified, ethically consistent manner.<sup>96</sup>

### **§3.1.2 Anthropocentrism as a Centrism**

In this section I consider issues deriving from anthropocentrism's relation to other centrisms. I present three problems this causes and conclude that these are challenging for nonhuman ethics.

My clarification of anthropocentrism via analogy with androcentrism is supported by ecofeminist claims that each centrism has a similar structure and not only perpetuates this structure but also has connections to other centrisms. This is supported by arguing that all centrisms share connections in their underlying logic (Plumwood, 1996:p.120) or that the domination of women and nonhuman animals, as well as the means and hierarchies that cause these, have parallels, overlap (MacKinnon, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:pp.263-267), and have important connections (Curtin, in Donovan & Adams, 2007:p.87). Such ecofeminists conclude that the domination of all groups<sup>97</sup> are linked (Adams, 1991:p.125; Deckha,

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<sup>96</sup> This was noted as the aim of nonhuman ethics in the introduction. I shall further address anthropocentrism and this aim in §3.1.5 below.

<sup>97</sup> E.g. women, races, nonhuman animals, and nature.

2012:pp.531-532) and thus to object to the structure of oppression in androcentrism and ethnocentrism one must also reject the oppression of nonhumans (Hawkins, 1998:p.158; Adams, 1991:p.125). Some, such as Mary Anne Warren, argue that failing to recognize this intimate relation “risks reproducing not only the oppression of women, but of nature as well” (Lee-Lampshire, 1996:p.92).

This relation of centrisms raises three problems. First, androcentrism, ethnocentrism, and egocentrism are all problematic beliefs – especially in ethics – and are at minimum subject to suspicion and require support. I have argued that anthropocentrism’s justifications are unconvincing. As an unjustified centrist anthropocentrism must thus be considered similar to these other centrisms. As these are ethically-troubling and involve oppression and dismissal of interests (Plumwood, 1996:pp.133-134), one must conclude that anthropocentrism is similarly problematic.

This conclusion is supported by a second concern in that centrisms are rejected due to being prejudicial. Prejudices involve judgements made before considering facts based on previous experiences or decisions (Newman, 1979:pp.47-48). Such judgements are prejudices only if unjustifiable or ungrounded. Thus, prejudices can involve socially-ingrained beliefs or judgements held prior to considering the facts that are unjustifiable. Prejudices can thus not only be specific beliefs but also frameworks of beliefs that influence one’s judgements. This fits with the common assumption of political and social prejudices and by feminist thought on androcentrism and patriarchy (Bem, 1993:pp.39-44). Given this, anthropocentrism as an unjustified centric belief fits the description of a prejudice, especially when one recalls that in §1.4.2 and §1.4.3 it was shown how A(i) leads to A(ii) and that anthropocentrism sustains the anthroparchy – just as its analogies do regarding sex and race. This supports the conclusion that by being an unjustified centrist anthropocentrism, like other centrisms, is of concern.

Moreover, any anthropocentric theory would be prejudicial; a consequence few theories should embrace.

These two issues are not only problems for anthropocentrism, but for nonhuman ethics as such relies on analogies with, claiming solidarity in rejecting, and uses as support the rejection of, sex and race related prejudices, while further arguing for the rejection of species prejudice and species bias. Anthropocentrism as a prejudice, as similar to sex/race prejudices, and as a prejudice involving a species bias, ought to be a concern for any nonhuman ethic and at least avoided as much as possible.

If ecofeminist claims are correct and centrism are not just similar but connected, a third problem arises. By being connected, any singular centrism is problematic if any other centrism is, rejecting one centrism means one must reject all,<sup>98</sup> and endorsing one centrism means that one enables, or at least hinders resistance against, any others. To show these connections the logic of centric thinking is broken down, by considering androcentrism and ethnocentrism, into the elements of what is necessary for a centrism. Such conditions, as Val Plumwood (Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-137; Plumwood, 2008:pp.100-106) demonstrates, are:

1. Exclusion of the Other:

- a. Seeing the Other as inferior due to their actual or supposed nature or interests
- b. Seeing the Other as radically different
- c. This separation defines the dominant identity against or in opposition to the subordinated identity
- d. This separation justifies dominance over the Other

2. Stereotyping and Homogenizing of the Other:

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<sup>98</sup> It is this claim that ecofeminists, especially Plumwood and Adams, make.

- a. Simplifying the nature of the Other
3. The denial of being essential:
- a. The lack of dependency of the Centre on the Other
  - b. Denying the essentialness of the Other to the Centre
4. Incorporation of the Other in relation to the Centre:
- a. The Centre is normal, the Other is measured in comparison to the Centre
  - b. The Other is outside the Centre
  - c. Differences in the Other are judged as deficiencies and grounds for inferiority
5. The Other's agency and value is downgraded and/or denied

All centrisms have these characteristics. Androcentrism as defined in §1.4.2 fits these,<sup>99</sup> and the same is argued for ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism (Plumwood, 1996:pp.133-134). Similarly, my clarified definition includes these characteristics.<sup>100</sup>

From this, one of two arguments is made. In the first, Plumwood argues that centrism and oppression are not just about the oppressed and any attempt to combat these by focusing solely on the oppressed is only half the battle (Plumwood, 1993:pp.67-68). Instead, it is the self-defined identity of the oppressor that is the real cause of problems (*Ibid*). What must be

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<sup>99</sup> While these characteristics are essential to any centrism, it should be noted that not everything characteristic of a centrism is included here. For instance, the taking of the Centre's norms, values, and thoughts as default or common sense are not mentioned here, yet (as shown in the clarifying of anthropocentrism) clearly are important to both androcentrism and ethnocentrism. This lack, I shall argue in chapter five, causes a problem for ecofeminist and environmental theories, as without including the use of/preferencing of the Centre's norms, values, thoughts, and perspectives – which are not clearly considered (as the elements here focus more on being Centred rather than considering perspectives) – this leads both sets of theories to make mistakes outlined in §3.1.4 below, and further not be able to address these problems. Even so, this absence does not undermine the claims made here, as these five characteristics *are* necessary.

<sup>100</sup> See previous footnote.

undertaken is re-thinking the Centre, challenging the ideas that the Centre takes as their identity and then uses to Other those outside. Plumwood argues, however, that the logic of centric thinking reveals that it is not simply the androcentric or ethnocentric identity that is the problem, but rather the 'Master Identity' (*Ibid*:pp.22-24). By this Plumwood means that the logical structure that all centrism share is what is problematic: the idea that whomever is at the Centre centres themselves and Others everyone else. Centrism thus all rely on the same reasoning and, as the logic is accepted, consequently rarely occur individually. For example, Western societies are androcentric, ethnocentric, and Eurocentric at minimum, and often the same reasons are given to justify each, e.g. rationality and comparing each Othered group to the white, male Centre's rationality (Plumwood, 2008:pp.17-22&101; Plumwood, 1993:pp.22-40&67-68). Plumwood argues therefore that it is this Master Identity that needs to be rejected to combat all centrism (Plumwood, 1996:p.147; Plumwood, 1993:pp.22-40&67-68&190-196). From this it follows that as anthropocentrism fits this same logic, it must be rejected (Plumwood, 1996:pp.147-148; Plumwood, 2008:pp.106-111).

The second argument is that the logic of centrism overlap, such as in the criteria used for Centring and Othering. For instance, 'nature', i.e. being close to nature or more body than mind, is used to Other women and other races, 'rationality' or 'reason' have been used to Centre the male and European 'civilized' countries, and the 'object'/'subject' dualism has similarly been used regarding different groups (Adams, 1991:pp.125-129; Curtin, 1991:pp.60-61; Deckha, 2012:pp.528-529; MacKinnon, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:pp.264-265).<sup>101</sup> Those that have been oppressed this way, it is argued, ought to be concerned about those oppressed in similar ways – especially when no justification can be shown (Adams, 1991:pp.125-129). As this applies to anthropocentrism, those concerned with, and oppressed by, androcentrism or

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<sup>101</sup> This relates to §2.1 where the origin of anthropocentrism was discussed, as again the privileging of reason (or soul, or mind) as it makes one closer to the gods, rather than nature (via being more body, or 'animal'), has been considered the origin of such exclusion. Consider for instance Aristotle's defence of slavery and reasons for excluding non-Greeks and certain Greeks from politics.

ethnocentrism ought to be concerned with anthropocentrism (Adams, 1991:pp.125-129; Curtin, 1991:pp.60-61).

While not incontestable these arguments are plausible, and this is a problem. For if anthropocentrism *is* logically connected to other centrisms then anthropocentric positions perpetuate, or at least hamper resistance to, other centrisms. If anthropocentrism is related, and involves identical reasoning,<sup>102</sup> to other rejected centrisms then this raises concerns regarding ethical consistency and *how* one rejects these without rejecting anthropocentrism. More importantly, any nonhuman ethic that is ecofeminist or that challenges androcentrism or ethnocentrism (which most do) must find this relation/connection a concern. Further, human chauvinism<sup>103</sup> relies on sexism and racism, as definitional analogies and as a reason to reject human chauvinism, these connections and the problem of consequently being anthropocentric is thus more significant for nonhuman ethics (Hawkins, 1998:p.158; Adams, 1991:p.125; Lee-Lampshire, 1996:p.92). At the very minimum if a nonhuman ethic is less anthropocentric this should speak in its favour.

In sum, together these three problems that arise from anthropocentrism being a centrism are perturbing for nonhuman ethics' *qua* their rejection of bias, arguing against prejudice, and reliance on analogies with racism and sexism. Thus, in conjunction with the problem in §3.1.1 and anthropocentrism being unjustified these provide another reason to avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible.

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<sup>102</sup> Rather than being necessarily connected via logic/the Master Identity.

<sup>103</sup> And speciesism

### **§3.1.3 The Relation of A(i) and A(ii)**

In this section I consider issues arising from the relation of A(i) and A(ii). I argue that due to this relation and nonhuman ethics' rejection of human chauvinism, anthropocentrism is problematic for nonhuman ethics.

As argued in §1.4.2.1, A(ii) involves A(i) and A(i) leads to A(ii). This is a problem for nonhuman ethics as A(ii) represents the intuition behind human chauvinism. As the rejection of human chauvinism is an aim of nonhuman ethics, such theories *must* reject A(ii). However, as A(ii) involves A(i), and as A(i) leads to A(ii), any nonhuman ethic that does not also avoid and address A(i) encounters two problems. First, it is unclear if A(ii) *can* be properly addressed or understood without considering A(i). Second, if one does reject A(ii) but not A(i) then due to the relation A(ii) is likely to return, be inadequately removed, and likely to be caused, remain invisible, or be considered justified due to the remaining A(i).

For example, a theory that judges value based on what is important to humans may reject A(ii) yet find that nonhumans do not fulfil the human-derived criteria and thus view them as of less or no value. Similarly, as in §2.8, nonhuman lives may be considered less valuable or 'good' due to the evaluative criteria being based solely on, or weighted in favour of, human preferences/value.

As noted in §1.4.2.1 and §1.4.3, this relation and similar objections have been put forward by many feminist, ecofeminists, and postcolonial feminists (Bem, 1993:pp.2-3&39-44; Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-137; Plumwood, 1991:p.10). The idea of unequal treatment or persisting discrimination due to attitudes, social structures, etc., being biased is not unique to the problem outlined here. What is unique is that anthropocentrism shares this relation, and thus rejecting human chauvinism (A(ii)) requires that one must reject A(i). This applies both to what the theory argues against and how the theory works and is constructed, lest A(ii) be

perpetuated via how the theory considers nonhumans.<sup>104</sup> The assuming of the human perspective, norms, values, etc., may result in favouring humans and disfavouring nonhumans.<sup>105</sup> Being anthropocentric would therefore be problematic for any nonhuman ethic. At minimum a less anthropocentric position would be preferable on this basis, especially when this problem is taken in conjunction with the previous two.

### **§3.1.4 Problems Caused by A(i)**

In this section I consider the issues caused by A(i), and argue that these are a problem for anthropocentric nonhuman ethics'. Despite nonhuman ethics focusing on human chauvinism (A(ii)), this focus cannot address all problems for nonhuman animals as A(i) still results in many issues for nonhuman animals, and an anthropocentric position cannot resolve them.<sup>106</sup>

Numerous examples of the problems that A(i) causes for nonhuman animals can be given, here I shall discuss only seven. First, A(i), just as the androcentric/ethnocentric equivalents, may bias and will certainly affect (*qua* norms, perspectives, values, etc., being drawn on) theories, debates, deliberations, and society. This would implicitly skew each from objectively considering nonhumans fairly or representing nonhuman interests. The examples above regarding value show how nonhumans are judged in comparison to humans, in the same way that women and races are judged in comparison to white males. A(i) could bias a theory therefore into including nonhumans based on their similarity with humans and judged by criteria derived from, and partial towards, humans. Any nonhuman that does not resemble humans in this way would be dismissed on this basis alone.<sup>107</sup> This is a serious concern for any

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<sup>104</sup> As noted in the example above.

<sup>105</sup> That this does occur will be shown in chapters four and five.

<sup>106</sup> This was touched on above, however here I will consider specific issues for nonhuman animals and nonhuman ethics, rather than the general point made above that applies to all centrisms.

<sup>107</sup> Though as was noted in chapter one regarding how anthropocentrism is often indirect and invisible, like androcentrism, the exclusion would likely not be stated as clearly as this, yet with reflection this can be seen.

nonhuman ethic, especially as it results in theories not considering nonhumans as fairly as possible and on a basis that has been argued to lack justification.

Second, addressing inequality does not solve all of the problems a being faces in a centric society. For example, opponents to androcentrism and ethnocentrism argue that even with equality many incorrect beliefs can remain that limit the non-Centred group and lead to political, social, moral, and economic situations that hamper the Othered. Challenging only the A(ii)-equivalents of these biases leaves unchallenged the underlying norms, views, perspectives, systems of belief, and assumptions about the Othered. Many feminist arguments, for example, show how such lead to problems for women (say, by how women are defined, what is natural for women, how women should be, what women should value, treatment of women in relation to men, and what women can and cannot do) (Frye, in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005:p.85), and also even lead to biases amongst those who reject sexism. This is exemplified in how traditional feminist perspectives are challenged by other feminists as being ethnocentrically-focused on white Western women and does not consider the needs, norms, situation, etc., of other women (Hooks, in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005:pp.61-62).

Similarly, addressing A(ii) would not free nonhuman animals from problems due to A(i). Nonhumans could still be considered as living less valuable lives due to being evaluated in terms of what humans' value rather than what nonhumans value.<sup>108</sup> Similarly their preferences could still be seen as less than what any 'higher' being would prefer, or not given as much serious consideration for the well-being of their lives for them. This latter has often been used for why nonhumans can be kept in zoos and that freedom, or the capacity to engage in their natural activities, is not necessary for their 'good life' (DeGrazia, 1996:pp.294-295).<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka note: "[m]any humans think that their dog

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<sup>108</sup> The arguments made in §2.3 only need to be recalled here.

<sup>109</sup> Even large birds' abilities for flying long distances rather than short fluttering from branch to branch within an 'enclosure', for example, are not considered.

companions aren't fussy about what they eat, or that even if they are, it is up to humans to assert control over their diet" (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:p.109). Donaldson and Kymlicka point out that this is not true, that dogs have preferences and likes/dislikes, and that they choose food based on what *they* like (*Ibid*:pp.108-109). Humans, however, generally think that dogs will enjoy dog food, 'prefer meat', 'need meat', 'will eat what they are given', or do not think that taste matters to the dog. While some dogs (like humans) have a wide preference and eat almost anything, as Donaldson and Kymlicka note most have individual preferences. These A(i) ideas, and the need to include the dog's preferences, therefore impact how good that dog's life is for her. This is an issue caused by, and addressed via, A(i) not A(ii).

Third, A(i) perpetuates incorrect views of nonhumans and humans alike. As Anna Peterson shows (Peterson, 2013:pp.156-159), and Plumwood argues (Plumwood, 1993:p.25), humans and nonhumans are defined in opposition to each other in ways that impact both and the environment. What it is to be human, and what human society is, is defined as 'non-natural'. Humans are 'mind' or 'reason' rather than 'body' or 'animal' (Plumwood, 1991:p.10).<sup>110</sup> Such views have led to excluding nonhumans from reason entirely and even in contemporary debates similarities between humans and nonhumans are downplayed or claimed as far more unlike than they often are. Differences are sought to set humans aside, often to the detriment of the 'less rational, and more animal-like'. Human dependency on nature and the interdependency of life has only recently begun to be taken seriously. Similarly, as Peterson illustrates, while the impact humans had on domesticating nonhumans is rife throughout the literature, that humans were similarly domesticated by nonhumans is omitted (Peterson, 2013:pp.95-96). The impact this could have on views of the more-than-human world and human-nonhuman interactions by considering nonhumans as changing, active agents rather than static-natured, passive beings, is at least important to consider. These ideas lead to behaviour towards

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<sup>110</sup> This was discussed in §2.1, §1.4.2.1, and §3.1.2, and is also noted in chapter five. Noted throughout in: Plumwood, 1991; 1993; 1996; 2008 as well as all other ecofeminist arguments.

nonhumans and the more-than-human world that is problematic for nonhumans (e.g. how nonhumans or their territories are treated).

The perpetuation of erroneous ideas is as problematic for nonhumans as humans, as these impact behaviour. For example, how certain dogs are considered dangerous due to their breed and laws are then passed regarding their treatment – regardless of their individual personalities or temperament. Similarly, wolves are considered ruthless, dangerous killers, and shot, whereas ethological studies show these perceptions as false. While in some instances this results from inadequate scientific knowledge that could be remedied, in others – as with humans – this results from beliefs/preferences, prejudices, norms, traditions, etc., that are A(i). Foxes, for example, are seen as devious, not just because of their intelligence but as they inconvenience humans by killing chickens. Canine species that cause no harm to human interests are rarely perceived negatively, however wolves and foxes are.<sup>111</sup> Studies reveal that knowledge is only one factor to humans' treatment/perceptions of nonhumans, others include similarity to humans (physical, social, and behavioural), aesthetic value, utility, cultural significance, prior attitudes to nonhumans and the more-than-human world, previous experience and relationships, threat, and social/behavioural differences (Batt, 2009:pp.180-185). Thus social, cultural, behavioural, stereotyping, and preference factors impact behaviour (*Ibid*). As with ethnocentrism, these can involve A(i). In human instances, this behaviour would be considered 'profiling', where one group's ideas of another group is based on 'what they are' and leads to differential (prejudicial) treatment of profiled individuals. Similarly, then with

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<sup>111</sup> Examples of this are noted, for instance, by the Living with Wolves foundation regarding perceptions of wolves portrayed in the last Super Bowl commercials. The wolves here were portrayed as vicious killers, snarling and baring teeth, and LwW formed a protest regarding this, claiming that such perceptions are both currently detrimental to wolves and how humans treat them and part of the problematic perceptions throughout human history and culture that demonises wolves and makes them villains (<https://www.livingwithwolves.org/four-perceptions/>).

‘species-profiling’. In these instances A(i) ideas lead to these harms for these nonhumans, not A(ii), and thus it is A(i) that is problematic here also, not A(ii).<sup>112</sup>

Fourth, conceptions regarding the ‘place’ of nonhuman animals or ‘their nature’ rely on A(i). These views can still be taken for granted, rather than nonhumans being considered as evolving beings that share similarities and differences with humans and that have societies and norms of their own. The impact these views have remains. For instance, such beliefs result in how *we* think nonhumans should be treated being taken on specific issues. For example, humans and ‘domestic’ nonhumans may morally require protection, yet ‘wild’ nonhumans – because of ‘what they are’ – ought not. ‘Domestic’ nonhumans have their interests and preferences considered requisite with what humans deem acceptable for their ‘good life’, but may only express these within certain spaces humans allow and to certain degrees within human society based on what humans consider ‘their nature’ requires. Finally, nonhuman animals have no political power or legal recourse in-and-of-themselves and depend entirely upon human kindness and consideration. This is despite many nonhumans – e.g. dogs, cats, and primates – being social creatures, engaging in social systems with rules governing behaviour, expressing preferences, and initiating cooperative contact (Peterson, 2013:pp.66-70&77&156-159; Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:pp.108-116).<sup>113</sup> The impact underlying norms and views has on nonhuman lives is thus significant.

Fifth, A(i) conceptions cause, or justify, many issues that nonhumans face. For instance, eating nonhumans is often justified by arguing that ‘this is what those animals are for’, or that ‘humans are the top of the food chain – it is natural’, and so on. Such reasons involve ideas of

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<sup>112</sup> Again, here I am not claiming that *all* instances are profiling. All I wish – and need – to claim is that in *some* instances A(i) is the cause. This is enough to establish the claim that A(i), not A(ii), can be problematic in this way.

<sup>113</sup> Recent nonhuman ethic theories based more in political theory, such as that put forward by Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, have begun to show how our social and political systems can – realistically and practically – be changed to include nonhuman animals as political and social beings and citizens. I shall return to this point briefly below.

what nonhumans, and humans, are, what they are for, their place in the world, and what nature is. These depend not (entirely) on A(ii) but on A(i). Similarly, issues concerning how we should treat ‘wild’ and ‘domestic’ nonhumans differently, what laws should apply to which nonhuman animals and why, and whether we should intervene in nature, all involve human conceptions of what ‘wild’ and ‘domestic’ are (both of which are defined via proximity to humans and human control), human ideas of how nature *ought* to be, and only consider what humans think ought to be done. These impact real-world nonhuman animals and positions within nonhuman ethics debates.

For instance, some reject the prevention of predation and argue that we should leave nature and ‘wild’ nonhumans alone. This involves the idea that ‘wild nature’ is what is not human and only considers what humans think ought to be done rather than also including ‘hunter’ and ‘prey’ preferences. Many instances have been recorded of free-roaming nonhumans expressing gratitude/affection or anger/annoyance for human intervention in their lives, yet these perspectives are rarely considered due to the focus on what is ‘natural’ for ‘wild’ nonhumans to do. Such involves beliefs that these nonhumans are a certain way and that this is dissimilar to how humans behave.

Such beliefs involve, for example, the idea that humans and nonhumans are in separate societies that do not and should not interact. That nonhumans’ perspectives and desires not to be harmed are not to be considered because they are not our concern. That nonhumans do not have moral codes that could intersect with human moral codes, and thus that intervention can be a moral interaction between intentional beings rather than humans interfering.<sup>114</sup> In at least some instances of predation nonhumans may have preferences. As humans and nonhumans do not live in separate societies that have no impact on each other (Peterson, 2013:pp.66-

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<sup>114</sup> It should be noted that I am not claiming here that this is the case, only that such views are possible and not anthropocentric whereas the denial of nonhumans *to even possibly* be able to interact with humans, or have humans interact with them, in a way that humans interact with other humans on a moral level is anthropocentric.

70&77&156-159), and as nonhuman behaviour<sup>115</sup> includes reaching beyond group, social, and species' boundaries and considering those not within their group (*Ibid*:pp.77-78), this impact of anthropocentrism on intervention is important. For not intervening may be the result of A(i), i.e. ideas of humans, nonhumans, the more-than-human world, of how our intervening would be humans attempting to change nonhumans rather than that we are in a moral sphere with, and are not socially separate from, other animals, and so on. Intervening may not only involve less A(i) due to including more than human thoughts on what should be done, but also because of rejecting radical separation from nonhumans and that nonhuman and human moral and social codes may overlap.<sup>116</sup>

While it may be objected that intervention is anthropocentric, as nonhumans are considered 'like humans' or humans are intervening in nonhumans' lives, this is not entirely correct. Intervention *can* be anthropocentric, just as it can be ethnocentric with humans. However, as with humans not in *all* instances. Moreover, non-intervention can be just as anthropocentric. The determining factor is whether A(i) is involved.

For instance, nonhumans save other nonhumans outside their species and social group, likely due to empathy. That humans could not act similarly is anthropocentric. It is equally anthropocentric to consider nonhumans as radically different from humans and that some would not wish for intervention. Those being hunted do not wish to be, for instance, and nonhumans similarly have social rules<sup>117</sup> that reach beyond species with societies that are not always separate. Thus accepting humans are part of the more-than-human world, that all societies inter-relate, and that nonhumans have societies, rules, and perhaps moral behaviour that intersects with other nonhumans' and human morality, means that intervention *can* be non-anthropocentric via being similar to non-ethnocentric inter-community human intervention or

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<sup>115</sup> That is increasingly being considered moral by evolutionary biologists and ethologists

<sup>116</sup> Again, I do not claim this is correct here, only that A(i) clearly can be seen as important.

<sup>117</sup> And as I will show in chapter seven, moral behaviours

as one social, moral group, who is inter-related with others, aiding another in ways (and for reasons) that they aid others. As nonhuman animals act this way – e.g. the elephants rescuing antelopes from humans noted in §2.4 – humans can also, and the human intervening due to empathy would be as non-anthropocentric as the elephants are non-elephantcentric.<sup>118</sup>

Similarly, non-intervention due to viewing nonhumans as having no preferences, as dissimilar to humans, as separate, or as having no social/moral rules, or viewing humans as outside the more-than-human world, would be anthropocentric. Thus how humans and nonhumans are considered – i.e. A(i) – determines whether intervention is anthropocentric or not, just as it would with ethnocentrism.<sup>119</sup> Recognizing similarities and differences, inter-relation, considering all perspectives in deciding what to do, and changing our perspectives requires contesting A(i), not A(ii).

Sixth, nonhumans are homogenized and considered interchangeable. Such does not consider nonhumans as individuals, with individual quirks, personalities, and preferences, which many nonhumans – dogs, cats, apes, elephants, rats, and birds – possess (Bekoff, 2007:p.44; Bekoff & Pierce, 2010:pp.47-50). The importance of social interaction, that nonhumans have and enjoy relationships, that they grow bored, enjoy playing with their own and other species', and how nonhuman individuals differ in all of these within species and different social groups (*Ibid*), is all missed by homogenizing nonhumans and considering them as interchangeable. This affects their treatment – such as justifying zoos, behaviour towards 'domestic' nonhumans (e.g. whether a dog would like a nonhuman friend), and how nonhumans are kept for and used in experiments (usually in isolation and non-natural or stimulating environments). All of these stem from A(i).

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<sup>118</sup> For the same reasons as humans saving nonhumans from other humans can be done for anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric reasons.

<sup>119</sup> Both involve defining the Other in relation to the Centre

Seventh, A(i) reveals how ‘human’ societies that include nonhuman animals<sup>120</sup> are structured in a way that favours humans and results in harms for nonhumans, and shows a lack of considering what nonhuman animals value which humans do not. For instance, Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that human political systems do not represent nonhumans that share the space we have claimed, and how we have constructed cities, roads, buildings, etc., without considering the needs or preferences of nonhumans (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:pp.108-116). For instance, roads are constructed with human use and safety in consideration, rather than nonhuman. Laws regarding where dogs may go, similarly. Areas for nonhumans to wander freely, or engage in activities they enjoy – e.g. running without restraint – are not part of urban planning (*Ibid*). Similarly, laws that affect nonhumans are considered and passed only by considering human interests or with minimal focus on nonhuman interests (that can be trumped by human interests). Such issues rely on A(i) (even if A(ii) may be involved).

In sum, A(i) results in issues that a focus on A(ii) cannot address and influences positions in problematic ways for nonhuman animals. This reveals that the traditional focus of nonhuman ethics on human chauvinism is not adequate in aiding nonhuman animals, rather a focus on anthropocentrism is required. Consequently, this provides a strong reason nonhuman ethics should address anthropocentrism and avoid it as much as possible. This is only made stronger in conjunction with the previous problems.

### **§3.1.5 The Aim of Nonhuman Ethics**

In this section I consider the problem that anthropocentrism is in tension with the aim of nonhuman ethics for three reasons. I conclude that given nonhuman ethics must commit to this aim this provides a fifth reason to avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible.

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<sup>120</sup> Both ‘domestic’, such as dogs and cats, and ‘liminal’, such as pigeons and foxes, in Donaldson and Kymlicka’s terminology.

It was noted in the introduction that nonhuman ethics emphasizes the need to critically investigate unreflectively accepted moral standards to consider whether such are justified. Theories proceed from this to claim that our treatment of nonhumans is based on unjustifiable grounds and thus we must alter our behaviour (Bailey, 2009:p.141; Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.37; Singer, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.162; Jamieson, 2002:p.7; Warren, 2000:p.68). It was also noted that nonhuman ethics stresses the similarity of racism and sexism to define human chauvinism and to show how to move beyond this prejudice (*Ibid*). The aim of nonhuman ethics was stated as: to fairly and unbiasedly consider and represent nonhuman animals ethically, justifiably, and in the same way that we have approached other disadvantaged groups. Thus, to do the best we can for nonhumans, fairly and unbiasedly, by rejecting unjustifiable beliefs (Sapontzis, 1987:p.272).

For instance, liberating nonhuman animals, Steven Sapontzis writes, “would eliminate anthropocentric prejudice from morality” (*Ibid*). Sapontzis therefore thinks that nonhuman ethics aims at this end, likely regarding A(ii). Similarly, Tom Regan states: “How embarrassing to have the author of *The Case for Animal Rights* unmasked as a closet speciesist!” (Regan, 2004:p.xxxiii). Avoiding species-bias in nonhuman ethics is therefore important.

Nonhuman ethics theories therefore have this aim. Anthropocentrism however is in tension with this for three reasons. First, thus far I have argued that anthropocentrism’s justifications are unconvincing, anthropocentrism is related or connected to other centrisms and fits the definition of prejudice, A(i) leads to A(ii) – the belief nonhuman ethics rejects – while A(ii) involves A(i) and thus both must be rejected if one is to be, A(i) generates problems for, and biases positions against, nonhumans, and finally anthropocentrism is a species-bias. All of these are in tension with, and present difficulties in fulfilling, this aim of nonhuman ethics.

Second, in §1.4.3 it was shown how anthropocentrism relates to, and sustains, the anthroparchy – the hierarchical system of human rule that allows the domination, exploitation, and abuse of nonhuman animals. Fulfilling the aim of nonhuman ethics, which must combat the anthroparchy to aid nonhumans, while being anthropocentric therefore seems questionable.

Third, nonhuman animals can be excluded from consideration because they do not meet requirements derived from humans or human preferences. Thus, nonhuman animals are excluded because of a comparison with humans. This has been shown to be identical to how other centrisms work. Thus A(i) may result in nonhumans being excluded from ethics that they could otherwise be included in, and this is tension with unbiasedly aiding nonhumans.

Together, these issues cause tension with the aim to propose an *unbiased* ethic that *fairly* considers issues facing nonhumans *for the sake of nonhumans themselves*, and to advocate for nonhumans in their stead. For it is peculiar to aim at impartial reflection to devise a fair resolution while simultaneously taking *only one* perspective.<sup>121</sup> This perspective will influence any deliberations, and thus considering nonhumans from only a human-Centred perspective is troubling. The analogy with androcentrism clearly make this a concern.

As such, anthropocentrism is problematic for nonhuman ethics' aim. As it is unclear how a nonhuman ethic could avoid committing to this aim – given that it is the rejection of unjustified beliefs, on an analogy with racism and sexism, and the rejection of human chauvinism and species-bias, that *all* nonhuman ethics theories accept – this is a problem for nonhuman ethics, and thus provides another reason to avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible.

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<sup>121</sup> In human instances this is clearly ethically counterintuitive, or at least ethically questionable. Hence objections to egocentrism.

### **§3.1.6 Anthropocentrism in Nonhuman Ethics Debates**

In this section I consider anthropocentrism in nonhuman ethics debates. I argue that this provides a reason to avoid, and address, anthropocentrism as much as possible as a position would thus be more robust, but also as it is problematic for an ethic to rely on beliefs that limit/harm those one morally represents and which opponents draw on to defend beliefs one rejects.

Anthropocentrism plays a large role in nonhuman ethic debates underlying human chauvinist positions. I have argued that anthropocentrism is without convincing justification and raises issues for nonhumans and nonhuman ethics. A position in the debates would thus be more robust by not being anthropocentric and can consistently reject anthropocentrism to undermine human chauvinist positions. Alternately, being anthropocentric is problematic when these opposing positions nonhuman ethics' reject arise because of, or rely heavily upon, anthropocentrism. This at least undermines attempts to effectively respond in debates.

To show anthropocentrism's importance to the issues I shall focus on four debates: food, experimentation, hunting, and zoos. The former two are the most widespread and important (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.39; DeGrazia, 1996:p.281), whereas the latter two are growing in importance and public interest and by paralleling other debates have implications for these debates.<sup>122</sup>

While some positions are directly anthropocentric, others are indirectly, and even unintentionally, anthropocentric.<sup>123</sup> The former is exemplified in positions that dismiss nonhuman interests entirely or claim that such interests are less important than human interests. These reasons are given to justify hunting, experimentation, zoos, and meat-eating and are incontestably anthropocentric. Most positions however attempt to justify practices *without*

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<sup>122</sup> Debates such as using nonhuman animals for entertainment and fashion, for example.

<sup>123</sup> Direct and Indirect anthropocentrism was discussed in §1.4.2, similarly with speciesism in §1.2.

appealing to anthropocentrism (Pluhar, 1991:p.121; Jamieson, 2002:p.168; Mayo, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.339),<sup>124</sup> by arguing that there are non-anthropocentric reasons for or against the issues involved. For example, reasons appealing to science or tradition are given to exclude nonhumans from consideration for that issue (Hursthouse, 2000:pp.59-78), which upon reflection are shown to reduce to “less-than-equal consideration for [nonhuman] animals” (DeGrazia, 1996:p.45; Regan, 1982:p.61) and speciesism/anthropocentrism. Thus the anthropocentrism within these positions is indirect and often invisible. This is important for revealing anthropocentrism within the debates and nonhuman ethics, as most anthropocentrism is indirect – just like androcentrism. I turn now to each debate.

Most justifications for meat-eating in the debates are claimed to be non-anthropocentric. The most common claims are, for example, that: (i) if nonhuman animals live happily, do not suffer, and are killed painlessly, meat-eating is acceptable (Hursthouse, 2000:p.22), (ii) as ‘food animals’ would not exist otherwise it is better for them to have existed despite their deaths (Milligan, 2010:pp.30-35), (iii) some humans must consume nonhuman animals to survive (e.g. the elderly, pregnant women, and Inuits (Warren, 2000:pp.232-233; Paxton George, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.275-279), (iv) it is natural to eat meat and consistent with natural selection (Hursthouse, 2000:p.32), and (v) vegetarian farming involves the knowing (if unintentional) harm and deaths of millions of nonhumans, (e.g. mice, pheasants, and rabbits) due to farming techniques (Davis, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.243-246) and thus less suffering/death would occur on an omnivorous diet.

Each of these claims however involve anthropocentrism. For instance, (i)-(iv) would not be given as justifications for eating humans or for any practice involving humans; such as ‘breeding women’ for non-consensual sexual use or war (VanDeVeer, in Miller & Williams, 1983:pp.157-158; Milligan, 2010:p.34; Hursthouse, 2000:p.33). The only reason for this would

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<sup>124</sup> This method of presenting non-biased reasons for a hidden/assumed prejudice is akin to how differential racial treatment was justified (Diamond, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2006:pp.93-94).

be that humans and nonhumans differ in (moral) value<sup>125</sup> or human perspectives/values are being considered unlike those of nonhumans in the other instances, and these are clearly anthropocentric.

Additionally, as all nutrients can be provided via a varied plant-based diet, and at worst by supplements, only anthropocentrism could justify choosing convenience or our preferences over not harming nonhumans in (iii). Similarly, most groups have contact with industrialized societies and eat meat not out of strict necessity but because of cultural traditions (e.g., the Inuits and the Massai). As cultural tradition does not immediately grant justification for traditions that harm humans (e.g. slavery, sacrifice, cannibalism, and female genital mutilation (Rachels, 2007:pp.27-30)) only anthropocentrism could justify its application to nonhumans alone.

(v) involves anthropocentrism only indirectly, in that farming techniques have developed within societies that value human interests above nonhuman interests and have only considered human interests, ideas of space, and behaviour, and are designed to maximize output, regardless of nonhuman cost, without considering whether practices could be improved for the nonhumans', rather than human, sake. If human and nonhuman interests were considered equally it is likely that human ingenuity could devise alterations that could reduce nonhuman harm (Singer, 1995:p.233). Consider, for example, 'hydroponics', pheromone-

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<sup>125</sup> Tony Milligan may challenge this conclusion via an appeal to 'human disgust or repulsion towards cannibalism' rather than anthropocentrism. However, Milligan's explanation of what lies behind this reservation (i.e. that social animals must distinguish between companions and food) is unconvincing (as not all social animals (or cannibalistic societies) work this way, and 'enemy tribes' do not all cannibalize, nor feel no reluctance to cannibalize, each other.). What lies behind this reservation, then, could be religious, familial sentiments, human superiority, reasons – all of which would involve anthropocentrism. Cora Diamond (in '*Eating Meat and Eating People*' (in Sunstein and Nussbaum, 2004)) argues similarly, though via appeal to 'social conventions' having established within society what can or cannot be eaten, which it was noted in the first chapter can involve anthropocentrism, and likely does (Plumwood, 1996; Plumwood, 1993, and other ecofeminist writing), as Diamond appears to admit (at the conclusion of her article).

based pesticides, and ‘in-vitro meat’ debates.<sup>126</sup> Thus (v) only perpetuates current practices if nonhuman animals are not considered as humans are.

Finally, all five claims imply a readiness (or willingness) to view nonhuman animals as the *types* of being that *can* be considered ‘food’, unlike humans. This is clearly anthropocentrism.

Justifications for ‘nonhuman experimentation’ can similarly be shown to involve anthropocentrism. The most common claims are, for example, that: (i) the interests of stronger beings outweigh those of weaker beings (Jamieson, 2002:p.108), or ‘higher life’ should be preserved or enhanced, even at the cost of ‘lower life’ (Sapontzis, 1985:p.18), (ii) experimentation provides and increases knowledge (Mayo, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.339) and if not practically useful, research is the basis of civilization and progress (Rollin, 1981:p.92), (iii) experiments are necessary or useful for increasing “the health, safety, and comfort of humans” (Mayo, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.339), nonhuman animal life (Rollin, 1981:p.91), they reduce more suffering than they cause (Hursthouse, 2000:p.23), and what is not useful immediately could be in the future, and (iv) if experimenting on one nonhuman could save thousands, or thousands could save millions, this justifies experimentation (Hursthouse, 2000:p.23).

A(i) and A(ii) are both clearly involved in (i) by defining what interests matter and which count as more valuable,<sup>127</sup> and similarly for what criteria justifies the claim of ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ lives. The other three are not acceptable reasons for human experimentation (Rollin, 1981:pp.119-120). Nazi experiments (involving ‘basic’ and ‘medical’ research) on humans are considered morally abhorrent (*Ibid*), and few would immediately grant reason (iv) if ‘human’ were substituted for ‘nonhuman’. As humans would provide greater accuracy in

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<sup>126</sup> This latter is not without problems within the nonhuman ethics debates, nor clearly free of anthropocentrism. It is only stated here as an example of how human thought could find alternatives to farming practices.

<sup>127</sup> As discussed in §2.3.

results (Jamieson, 2002:p.112), if these justifications are acceptable then humans should be the preferred subjects (Rollin, 1981:p.119). Only endorsing A(ii) can avoid this conclusion.

Moreover, (ii) does not consider nonhuman perspectives, only humans', and considers the human interest in knowledge as more important<sup>128</sup> than the satisfaction of nonhuman values, preferences, etc. While (iii) seems to consider nonhuman preferences, it does not consider the perspectives of the nonhumans that would be involved and this would be unacceptable in the Nazi example.

In short, each reason only considers experimentation from a human Centre, with aid for nonhumans only being considered secondarily on a utilitarian basis that would not be applied to humans.

The same points reveal anthropocentrism in the hunting debate. For instance, common justifications for hunting are: (i) hunting is natural, pleasurable, or a natural instinct just like sex (Pluhar, 1991:p.122), (ii) hunting is of psychological value and fulfils human needs and well-being via a connection to nature, one's culture, and recreational benefits such as relaxation and excitement (Warren, 2000:pp.237-238; Pluhar, 1991:p.121), (iii) hunting removes 'nuisance' nonhumans that 'infest' areas and threaten human interests or property (Dunayer, 2001:p.57), and (iv) hunting is justifiable for population control, preserving biodiversity, and protecting ecosystems (Varner, 2002:p.100), including instances of overpopulation, where non-indigenous nonhumans have been introduced, and where nonhumans threaten ecosystem degradation (Warren, 2000:p.237; Dunayer, 2001:pp.51-52; Pluhar, 1991:p.121; Varner, 2002:p.100), so long as this is the aim how hunting is carried out is irrelevant (Warren, 2000:p.238).

Despite claims of species-neutrality, none of these justifications would be acceptable for hunting humans. Additionally, (i) and (ii) were raised regarding meat-eating and are

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<sup>128</sup> Likely due to 'reason' being more important.

anthropocentric for the same reasons. Further regarding (i), with humans instinct would not (automatically) grant permissibility, as Evelyn Pluhar and Daniel Dombrowski argue regarding rape urges (Dombrowski, 1991:p.128; Pluhar, 1991:pp.122-124).

Moreover, only human values and desires are considered not nonhuman perspectives. With humans, e.g. slavery, this would be racist/ethnocentrism. Similarly, the idea of what ‘nature’ is (e.g. as not human or human-influenced, as devoid of other moral or active agents whose values/norms/preferences need to be considered) involves the anthropocentric ideas discussed in §§1.4.2.1, 2.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.4.

Claim (ii) would also not be accepted for a hypothetical society that enjoyed hunting humans or watching live rape shows, or actual cultures with human sacrifice or female genital mutilation (Rachels, 2007:pp.27-30). Further, (iii) relies on human social norms and values, without considering nonhuman social norms or cultures in a way similar to how this has been used regarding other human cultures in an ethnocentric manner.

Similarly, (iii) would not be granted if the ‘nuisances’ were humans. Even claiming that this is because such humans could be reasoned with would not remove anthropocentrism. This assumes, for instance, a morally relevant difference between humans and nonhumans, i.e. A(ii), demonstrates that with humans we would look for alternatives whereas with nonhumans hunting is a viable initial choice, and if there were no alternatives (iii) would still not justify hunting these humans; unlike nonhumans. Additionally, the definition of ‘nuisance’ is that which conflicts or encroaches upon human interests or space – none of which considers the nonhuman side or that humans fit these criteria from nonhuman and other human (such as Native Americans) perspectives.

Finally, (iv) equally applies to humans; regarding overpopulation, negative effects on the ecosystem, and the similarity between ‘non-indigenous species introduction’ and human colonization (Regan, 2004:p.362). Few, even amongst environmentalists (Callicott,

1999:pp.59-76; Brennan & Lo, 2011), concede that (iv) justifies hunting humans (at least as readily as nonhumans). Moreover, this claim involves a conception of the more-than-human world as static or unchanging rather than as evolving, and relies on human preferences that areas remain as they are (e.g. for aesthetic reasons).<sup>129</sup> The only plausible explanation for these differences is anthropocentrism.

Regarding zoos the following justifications are most common: (i) captivity, a restriction of freedom, for nonhuman animals is acceptable if they live a good life (comparable to what they would live in the more-than-human world) (DeGrazia, 1996:p.294), preferable even as zoos provide protection, care, and food (*Ibid*:p.295), (ii) free-roaming nonhumans are as confined by natural, social, predator-based, and territorial boundaries as zoo nonhumans are by enclosures (Dunayer, 2001:p.75), (iii) zoos provide entertainment, education, and opportunities for research (Jamieson, 2002:pp.168-171), and (iv) zoos promote the protection of endangered species and prevent extinction via breeding endangered nonhuman animals (DeGrazia, 1996:p.292).

All of these claims involve anthropocentrism as none would be accepted for keeping humans in zoos. In (i), for instance, the trade-off is not morally appealing regarding humans. As Joan Dunayer notes: "...Two tigers confined in a cage have 'freedom' from enemies...[yet] with equal validity...a human locked inside a room has 'freedom' from muggers..." (Dunayer, 2001:p.75). This 'freedom' is considered oppressive regarding humans; unlike with nonhumans. Moreover, as argued in §2.3 and §3.1.4, (i) does not consider 'goods' from the nonhuman perspective and whether these are more important to the nonhumans. Many 'welfare' positions challenge whether captive nonhumans *can* live comparably good lives (e.g. birds in zoos cannot soar or fly long distances) (*Ibid*).

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<sup>129</sup> I will add here that this is also generally only applicable to areas that are not in the human-majority's interests to use.

This same point applies to (ii); for few would grant that a human locked in a room is no more restricted than a human bounded by natural, social, or national boundaries. Moreover, few would concede that as a justification for keeping humans confined this would be morally acceptable.<sup>130</sup>

Regarding (iii), few would grant these justifications as acceptable if they were made by an advanced extra-terrestrial race in regard to humans (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:pp.27-28).<sup>131</sup> This is emphasized, according to Dunayer, by noting that all three of the human-aimed benefits in this justification imply the anthropocentric message that “the zoogoer’s experience matters more than the inmates” (Dunayer, 2001:p.82).

This extra-terrestrial example also applies to (iv), as few would consider extra-terrestrials confining ‘rare humans’ in zoos to be morally permissible. Further, zoo breeding programs involve problems regarding ‘surplus animals’ (that are killed, ‘recycled’ (i.e. eaten by other zoo nonhumans), sold for hunting, used in circuses, or experimented on (DeGrazia, 1996:p.292; Jamieson, 2002:p.172; Dunayer, 2001:pp.87-88)). Considering this, it is even less plausible that (iv) would be a justification in the case of humans. Finally, it is the human idea of ‘rarities should be protected’ that justifies this treatment of nonhumans and overrides nonhuman preferences/perspectives. The only reason that each justification would not equally apply to humans is anthropocentrism (Jamieson, in Singer, 2008:p.133).

Thus, many positions that claim to justify practices within the debates involve anthropocentrism. The importance of this is not insignificant, for by challenging anthropocentrism the above positions become weaker. Moreover, by rejecting anthropocentrism a theory’s effect on the debate, and which/how many nonhumans are aided and in what way, is increased. Further, given that anthropocentrism causes problems for

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<sup>130</sup> Consider, for example, Truman in *The Truman Show* in regards to these points about anthropocentrism in (ii).

<sup>131</sup> One should note that this example applies to all of the debates, thus strengthening the claim that anthropocentrism can be seen to underlie the issues (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:pp.27-28).

nonhumans, by addressing anthropocentrism a theory can apply to more issues, and by avoiding anthropocentrism as much as possible, a theory is more justifiable and does not endorse the same problematic beliefs underlying claims one wishes to reject. This at least provides another reason to avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible in nonhuman ethics.

### **§3.2 Conclusion**

Each of the problems outlined in this chapter result from the clarified definition of anthropocentrism, and while there may be reasons to be concerned about one more than another each is undesirable. Taken together, and in conjunction with anthropocentrism's lack of justification, these problems provide good reason to avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible. As a result, I conclude that anthropocentrism is unjustified and problematic for nonhuman ethics and nonhuman animals, and thus nonhuman ethics should avoid anthropocentrism as much as possible and address it.

This shows that the clarified definition of anthropocentrism is important for nonhuman ethics given that it reveals new problems and causes problems that are not clearly understood, or even revealed, by human chauvinism alone. Anthropocentrism thus represents a larger issue than human chauvinism, by including the intuition behind human chauvinism (i.e. A(ii)), revealing new issues (via A(i)), and clarifying their relation. Anthropocentrism therefore not only needs to be addressed by nonhuman ethic theories, but also avoided. Any position that does so, and is at least as plausible as others, will involve less bias, be more justifiable, fit better with the aim of nonhuman ethics, and address more (and not perpetuate as many) problems facing nonhuman animals. This would provide any theory with advantages.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **NONHUMAN ETHICS THEORIES: SINGER AND REGAN**

I have argued that nonhuman ethics should address anthropocentrism and avoid being anthropocentric as much as possible. In the next two chapters I will argue that important nonhuman ethics theories involve, and do not address, anthropocentrism.

In this chapter I consider Peter Singer and Tom Regan's theories. Both are important in nonhuman ethics and have had a significant impact on the social movement. For instance, pre-1970 only ninety-four works on nonhuman animals and ethics existed in any field. From 1970-1988 this rises to two-hundred and forty, and has since become thousands (Singer, in Singer, 2008:p.2). This change can be traced to Singer and Regan (Hursthouse, 2000:p.2), with both theorists' seminal works marking the beginning of serious academic consideration and popular concern (Armstrong & Botzler, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.8-9). Singer's position is considered the definitive interest-based nonhuman ethic, whereas Regan's is claimed to be the definitive and "most systematic and explicitly worked-out" rights theory (DeGrazia, 1996:p.5; Warren, 1986:p.163).

Accordingly these theories are important to consider in relation to anthropocentrism, more so as both typify the methodology, focus and conclusions that most nonhuman ethics theories use. As there are too many positions to cover adequately, in the next chapter I shall briefly explain how the findings in this chapter can be applied to other theories. I shall then consider contemporary theories that seem less anthropocentric; namely environmental ethics and (eco)feminist positions.

In this chapter, I outline Singer and Regan's theories before arguing that they involve, and do not address, anthropocentrism. I conclude by noting how both relate to, and do not

address, the problems in the previous chapter. My claim is that despite having many positive elements, a less anthropocentric theory that could address anthropocentrism would thus have advantages as a nonhuman ethic. I do not claim that Singer and Regan's theories cannot be re-worked to be less anthropocentric, but that they currently involve A(i).

#### **§4.1 'Can they suffer?'**

In this section I outline Singer's theory. I draw upon this throughout §4.3 when arguing that Singer's theory involves anthropocentrism. Singer endorses an 'interests', rather than 'rights', theory of nonhuman ethics. In fact, he claims that the *only* right he recognizes is one to equal consideration, which can be cashed out rather as a basic moral principle that applies to all morally considerable entities *qua* being morally considerable (Singer, 1978:p.122).

Singer's theory, a form of Preference Utilitarianism; i.e. one should maximize the amount of preferences/interests satisfied rather than happiness/pleasure (Warren, 2000:p.64), is grounded in what he claims are generally accepted moral beliefs. He claims that upon consideration these beliefs require that many nonhuman animals are included in moral consideration.

To make this claim, Singer claims that general moral assumptions require that most people accept the 'Principle of Equal Consideration of Interests' (PECI) as a basic moral principle (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.36):

**PECI:** If entities share the same morally relevant interests then these interests should be considered equally

To most this is uncontroversial (DeGrazia, 1996:p.45), largely because, Singer notes, this principle is used against race and sex discrimination (Singer, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.162). This is because, Singer claims, the PECE is *the only* basis for equality, as equality cannot be established empirically, for humans differ in size, shape, moral and intellectual capacities, capacity for benevolence, ability to communicate, and capacities to experience pleasure and pain (Singer, in Walters & Portmess, 1999:p.168).<sup>132</sup>

Accordingly, Singer argues that equality is a moral, not empirical, claim (*Ibid*:p.170), in the sense that, as Richard Arneson states, “[n]either supposed racial differences, nor skin color, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, intelligence, or any other differences among humans negate their fundamental equal worth and dignity” (Arneson, in Jamieson, 1999:p.103). It is this moral idea of equality that Singer aims to capture in the PECE, in “that it is [the being’s] interests that matter, *not whose* interests they happen to be” (Jamieson, 2002:p.25), and that regardless of other differences, if a being has morally relevant interests it is equally morally considerable (Singer, in Walters & Portmess, 1999:p.170).

Having established the PECE, Singer argues that the capacity to suffer, (i.e. experience pleasure and pain), is a characteristic that is morally relevant (Singer, 1995:pp.7-8), for it is this capacity that is summed up in the common ethical principle, the ‘(No) Harm Principle’ (NHP):

**NHP:** “it is wrong to cause pain [or harm] unless there is a good enough reason”  
(Rachels, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.260).

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<sup>132</sup> Singer obtains and justifies the PECE in *Animal Liberation* by considering sex and race discrimination and liberation/equality movements and noting that nonhuman animals both require similar equal consideration/liberation/cessation of discrimination and can have equal consideration apply to them due to this ‘moral sense’ of equality (Singer, 1995:pp.1-9). The full title of the first chapter of *Animal Liberation* – where his position is argued for – is ‘*All Animals are Equal: or why the ethical principle on which human equality rests requires us to extend equal consideration to animals too*’ (*Ibid*:p.1).

The NHP establishes that the capacity for suffering is *a* morally relevant interest; however Singer argues that it is also *the prerequisite* for having *any* interests at all (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.36-37). Singer justifies this by arguing that it is “nonsense to say that it was not in the interests of a stone to be kicked...[as] A stone does not have interests because it cannot suffer. Nothing that we can do to it could possibly make any difference to its welfare” (*Ibid*:p.37), unlike a human.

As a result, Singer argues that: “[t]his is why the limit of sentience (using the term as...shorthand for the capacity to suffer or experience enjoyment or happiness) is the only defensible boundary of concern for the interests of others” (*Ibid*). Any other characteristic used for moral consideration, Singer argues, will either exclude some beings we want to include (e.g. human infants and mentally disabled would be excluded if possessing language or rationality were used) or be arbitrary so as to include these beings (e.g. invoking species-membership, which consequently justifies arbitrary lines such as race- or sex-membership) (Singer, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.163). As neither option is palatable, Singer argues that the only non-arbitrary boundary that includes all beings that we want to morally consider is the capacity to suffer. For Singer, if a being has this capacity, then it can have additional interests, if not, then it has *no* interests *at all* (DeGrazia, 1996:p.3; Singer, 1995:pp.7-8).<sup>133</sup>

From this conclusion Singer draws on the generally accepted claim that many nonhuman animals feel pain (Richards, 1981:pp.78-79; Frey, 1980:p.144) to argue that these nonhumans *also* possess the capacity to suffer and are therefore morally considerable (Frey, 1980:p.141). Thus whatever moral principles apply to beings with interests (like humans) must,

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<sup>133</sup> Here, it can be noticed, Singer relies on the justification outlined in §2.3, by appealing to what he considers to be a morally relevant characteristic (sentience/suffering) that he uses to determine which beings are included within the sphere of moral considerability. Moreover, Singer here can be seen to mean by ‘moral considerability’, ‘moral status’ (as outlined in §1.1) – at least in-so-far as he means those who are to be considered at all. Those who are *included* within moral considerability, Singer here makes clear (and this will be further shown in the next paragraphs, as well as in detail in §4.3.2.1), however are not all equal in value. Thus Singer posits distinctions of value within the moral community while excluding those without from all value. This illustrates the complexities involved, and the importance of being aware of, the distinction between standing and status as well as taking care not to interpret one use of the terms in §1.1 as always meaning the same for all theorists.

qua Singer's earlier points, also apply to these nonhumans. The PEI therefore applies to nonhuman animals also (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.37). Consequently, many nonhuman animals are morally considerable and deserve equal consideration of their morally relevant interests.

This does not imply, Singer argues, that these nonhumans must be *treated equally*, only that their interests should be *considered equally* (Singer, 1995:p.2), as interests and the value of life vary. First, Singer argues, only 'like' interests must be considered equally, but as beings possess different kinds and amounts of interests this justifies different treatment (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.37-38). For example, when suffering is equal it must be considered and treated equally, regardless of the being. However when unequal (e.g. the same slap may hurt a baby more than a horse) then different consideration and treatment is justified (Singer, 1995:p.15). Similarly, Singer argues, humans possess 'higher' cognitive capacities, and thus may suffer in ways that nonhuman animals cannot, e.g. through an appreciation of time or by having future plans (Singer, Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.38).<sup>134</sup> Finally, humans may have interests that nonhumans do not, such as in acquiring a university place (DeGrazia, 1996:p.3). Despite these differences, Singer argues that minor interests should not outweigh major interests, thus the enjoyment *X* derives from torturing *Y* does not outweigh *Y*'s suffering (Singer, Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.39). Thus, for Singer, several factors can alter the treatment a being receives, even with equal consideration.<sup>135</sup>

Second, Singer argues that equal consideration does *not* entail that lives are equally valuable (Singer, 1993:pp.61-62&95&110) as the "life of a self-aware being, capable of

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<sup>134</sup> One should note that Singer does allow that these capacities, through understanding their situation, may lead humans to suffer less than beings with 'lesser' capacities, as the humans can understand 'what is going on' and thus understand that they are not in danger.

<sup>135</sup> Again, Singer can here be seen to once again rely on the justification outlined in §2.3 to justify a difference in moral value between humans and nonhumans based upon the possession or lack of certain morally relevant characteristics. How this relates to A(ii) and the discussion in that section will be discussed below in §4.3.2.1 and §4.3.1.2.

abstract thought, of planning for the future, of complex acts of communication, and so on, is more valuable than the life of a being without these capacities” (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.38). Singer’s justification is that these persons, (i) have *additional* interests, (ii) are not simply receptacles of pleasure/pain, instead they have future-oriented preferences, desires, and a conscious wish to continue living, and thus their lives are also *valuable to them* (Warren, 2000:p.69), and (iii) would be judged from a neutral standpoint to live a more preferable, and thus more valuable, life (Singer, 1993:pp.106-107). Singer therefore claims that there is a ‘hierarchy of value’ for lives, in that while killing may be wrong for any morally considerable being (due to the termination of interests), it is *worse* for certain beings; thus killing a human is worse than killing a dog (*Ibid*:pp.105-109).<sup>136</sup>

With these clarifications Singer avoids claiming that nonhuman animals are in all things morally equal to humans, while retaining that nonhuman animals count morally and that their interests can outweigh humans’. These arguments have been significant, especially within debates on meat-eating and experimentation (Singer, 1995, 1993, 2008). By showing that nonhuman animal interests count and may outweigh human interests, Singer claims to provide a species-neutral theory (Singer, 1978:p.121), and thus appears to avoid anthropocentrism.

#### **§4.2 Nonhuman Animal Rights**

In this section I outline Regan’s theory. I draw upon this throughout §4.3 when arguing that Regan’s theory involves anthropocentrism. Regan aims to provide a species-neutral theory (Regan, 2004:p.xxxiii) by endorsing a rights, rather than interests, theory, (i) to avoid utilitarian problems that he argues Singer faces (*Ibid*:pp.195-231), and (ii) as suffering does not *make* something wrong, but rather *compounds* the wrong done, whereas the source lies in treating

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<sup>136</sup> See previous footnote.

that (type of) being in that way (Regan, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.176). For instance, slavery is wrong because it is wrong to treat humans in that way, suffering makes slavery worse but is irrelevant to the wrong of slavery *per se*. Thus, Regan argues that something more basic is required for moral considerability<sup>137</sup> (DeGrazia, 1996:p.5).

Regan claims that ‘it is just wrong to treat humans in this way’ as it treats them as means rather than ends and thus violates their rights. Rights explain why it is wrong to experiment on mentally disabled children, harm one person for the happiness of ten, or painlessly kill humans for sport, in a way that utilitarian theories cannot. Further, violating rights explains why these are wrong without *any* suffering, while allowing that suffering makes them worse (Regan, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.184).

Regan thus argues that rights are an intuitive way to assert moral significance. Given this, he moves to consider why humans have rights. Regan argues that the reason why *all* humans have rights shows that rights cannot be withheld from many nonhuman animals (Regan, 1982:pp.70-71; Jamieson, 2002:p.25). Regan’s aim is not to attempt to *prove* nonhumans (or humans) have rights (Regan, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.39), only to show that *if* humans have rights so do some nonhumans. Consequently, Regan’s account is stronger than some alternatives, as by rejecting his theory one must demonstrate how *all* humans have rights without it following that nonhuman animals do too.

Regan begins by distinguishing between ‘moral agents’ and ‘moral patients’. The former are morally considerable beings that can act morally and are morally responsible (e.g. ‘normal’ adult humans). The latter are morally considerable beings despite being unable to act morally or be held morally responsible (e.g. ‘normal’ human babies) (Regan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.19-20).

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<sup>137</sup> Regan shifts between several terms, such as ‘moral considerability’ (Regan, 2004:p.152), ‘moral status’ (*Ibid*:p.156), ‘moral community’ (*Ibid*:pp.152-156), and ‘moral significance’ (*Ibid*:p.366). Thus Regan’s exact meaning of these terms in light of moral standing, moral status, and how these distinctions vary in use (see §1.1) is unclear. This is made more unclear by Regan’s discussion of his criteria and value as I discuss below.

Noting this distinction, Regan argues that humans have rights because humans possess ‘inherent value’ (Regan, 1982:p.71).<sup>138</sup> For Regan, inherent value is distinct from, and incommensurable with, any intrinsic value that a being’s experiences have for them and any instrumental value bestowed by others:

“...The inherent value of any...[being] isn’t equal to any sum of intrinsic values, neither the intrinsic value of that individual’s experiences nor the total of the intrinsic value of the experiences of all other moral agents...[Inherently valuable beings] have value in their own right, a value that is distinct from, not reducible to, and incommensurate with the values of those experiences which, as receptacles, they have or undergo...” (Regan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.20-21)

Regan claims that as all humans possess inherent value, this value must arise from some criterion all humans share (Regan, 1982:pp.126-135). Thus it cannot be a criterion such as reason, as this excludes mentally-disabled humans (*Ibid*).

Regan argues that this criterion is that all humans are ‘subjects-of-a-life’, which he defines as, beings:

“...who have desires and beliefs...perceive, remember, and can act intentionally...have a sense of the future, including their own...i.e., are self-aware or self-conscious...have an emotional life...a psychophysical identity

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<sup>138</sup> Regan does consider other reasons; such as the possession of ‘reason’, ‘autonomy’, ‘selfhood’, and ‘being human’ (Regan, in Walters & Portmess, 1999:pp.154-157), yet he finds each of inadequate as for the former three, some humans that we would wish to include would not possess rights (such as the mentally-disabled), whereas the latter Regan finds difficult to justify, circular, and arbitrary (and perhaps justifies similar problematic criteria such as race or sex).

over time...a kind of autonomy...[and] an experiential welfare...” (Regan, 2008:p.153)

Due to their capacities Regan argues subjects-of-a-life have a welfare; “...in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them...independently of their utility for others and...their being the object of anyone else’s interests” (Regan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.22). This capacity gives rise to their having inherent value.<sup>139</sup> This criterion, Regan purports, includes all humans, including mentally-disabled children (Regan, 1982:p.135).

As inherent value is possessed *qua* being a subject-of-a-life, such value is equally possessed by each subject-of-a-life, and thus each subject-of-a-life has an equal claim to be treated in a manner consistent with their possessing this value (*Ibid*:p.71).<sup>140</sup> Thus, Regan argues, “any principle that declares what treatment is due [to ‘subjects-of-a-life’] as a matter of justice must take their equal value into account” (Regan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.23). Regan therefore posits the ‘Respect Principle’ (RP) to do this:

**RP:** “We are to treat those individuals who have inherent value in ways that respect their inherent value.” (*Ibid*)

Taken together, the equal claim and the RP requires that each subject-of-a-life has a right to have their inherent value respected (Regan, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.39). Moreover, as inherent value arises from being a subject-of-a-life *that has a welfare*, Regan argues that we

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<sup>139</sup> Here, it can be noticed, Regan clearly relies on the justification outlined in §2.3 via appealing to a set of (morally relevant) characteristics that he claims determines which beings have a specific value and which do not.

<sup>140</sup> Regan moves from the claim that ‘a subject-of-a-life possesses inherent value’ to the further claim that ‘this value gives the being a ‘claim’ to be treated in a way that is consistent with their possessing this value’ via appealing to what he calls ‘the principle of justice’ (i.e. that we give each being their due) (Regan, 2004:p.248). Whether such a move is plausible, coherent, or justified is not the purpose of this chapter, rather I highlight it here to explain *why* Regan claims that each subject of a life therefore *has an equal claim* to be treated in a way that is consistent with their being inherently valuable.

“fail to treat such individuals in ways that respect their value if we treat them in ways that detract from their welfare” (Regan, 2004:p.262). Thus, from the RP he derives the ‘(No) Harm Principle’ (NHP). Consequently, subjects-of-a-life have a ‘right to respect’ and a ‘right not to be harmed’.

Regan adds two clarifications. First, rights can never be outweighed by numbers (*Ibid*:p.xviii). Second, in general rights are not to be violated (and cannot be overridden for another’s benefit) (*Ibid*:pp.xvii-xviii&286). Regan posits two principles for situations where whatever decision is made some rights *must* be violated (Varner, 2002:p.112); the ‘Miniride Principle’ (MP) and the ‘Worse-Off Principle’ (WOP):

**MP:** When we *must* override the rights of the many or the few, and the harm to each individual is comparable, we should override the rights of the few (Regan, 2004:p.305).

**WOP:** When we *must* override the rights of the many or the few, and the harm to the few would make them worse-off than any of the many would be if any other option were chosen, we should override the rights of the many (*Ibid*:p.308).

Having argued for why humans have rights, Regan argues that rights cannot be restricted to humans (Regan, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.39) as many nonhuman animals also satisfy the subject-of-a-life criterion (Regan, 1982:p.71), and thus also have a welfare and consequently inherent value (*Ibid*). Thus, these nonhumans have rights. Further, as with humans, this value is distinct from any intrinsic value of their experiences and any instrumental value humans bestow upon them (*Ibid*). Similarly, as with humans, these nonhumans must also possess inherent value to an equal degree as any subject-of-a-life (Regan, in Linzey & Clarke, 2004:p.186). Consequently, such nonhumans have an equal claim to be treated in a manner

consistent with their being inherently valuable, and thus the RP and NHP apply to these nonhumans (Regan, in Miller & Williams, 1983:p.39). Accordingly, nonhuman animals, as their human counterparts, have a right to be treated with respect and a right not to be harmed (*Ibid*).

In this way Regan claims nonhuman animals have rights if humans have rights. This significantly impacts experimentation, hunting, and meat-eating (Regan, 2004:p.xvii).

### **§4.3 Anthropocentrism**

While Singer and Regan's theories have had a significant impact in nonhuman ethics and society, both involve anthropocentrism. This is because both theories focus on nonhumans being morally considerable and thus addressing and avoiding *speciesism*, i.e. A(ii). This focus does not consider or address A(i), and the norms/biases this results in. Thus A(i) remains in both theories, and due to their focus cannot be addressed by either position. Moreover, this A(i) results in both theories retaining some A(ii) despite their aim.

I focus on two themes in both accounts to show this. First, both theories argue *from* humans *to* nonhuman animals in a way that loads each account with anthropocentrism. Second, both assume a hierarchy of value that is justified via anthropocentrism. Both of these themes result in the theories involving A(i) and A(ii). As anthropocentrism is problematic, ought to be avoided as much as possible, and should be addressed by nonhuman ethics', I conclude in §4.4 that a less anthropocentric theory that *does* address anthropocentrism would thus have advantages.

### **§4.3.1 Arguing From Humans**

In this section I consider the first theme: that both theories involve arguing *from* humans *to* nonhuman animals. In this sub-section I outline how this methodology involves anthropocentrism.

The methodology of arguing from humans to nonhumans loads any derived criteria for moral considerability with anthropocentrism. This is undesirable for purported species-neutral nonhuman ethics that aim to fairly determine which beings are morally considerable. To illustrate this methodology, recall that for Regan it is via considering human rights that leads to the subject-of-a-life criterion and from this he argues to nonhuman rights. This methodology is problematic for it is unclear *why* one should accept this derived criterion as the basis for which beings have *any* rights or moral considerability.<sup>141</sup> While humans should be included within any theory of moral considerability or rights, it is not clear that humans should be the blueprint; especially for a *nonhuman* ethic. While humans are uncontroversially morally considerable, by beginning with one set of beings one derives a criterion based on those beings and their characteristics and this loads against any being not resembling that set. Hence any theory beginning from humans becomes implicitly anthropocentric.

Thus beginning from humans and using humans as the blueprint results in humans being the Centre against which nonhumans are judged. Further, nonhumans are only included if they are similar to the Centre. Nonhumans that do not satisfy this are, *because of their differences*, outside moral concern and thus inferior (regarding consideration)<sup>142</sup> *because of what they are* and their characteristics (or lack thereof<sup>143</sup>). Nonhuman characteristics are not considered and

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<sup>141</sup> Or even for why beings are to have higher and lower value (or standing, qua §1.1) on this basis – either would be similar, as I describe below, to ascribing no or less value to women or races via a white, male blueprint.

<sup>142</sup> Or at minimum would be considered of less concern, and thus inferior, regarding consideration if a lower value/standing were given to them on this basis.

<sup>143</sup> By this latter I mean, just as is argued against ethnocentrism and androcentrism, that women/races are not only seen as inferior in andro/ethnocentrism because of their differences, but because they are not white males.

brought into the Centre to make this blueprint, rather only human traits are considered and nonhumans are measured as to whether they possess these – their own characteristics being essentially of no value. This reasoning typifies centric thinking outlined in §1.4.2 and §3.1.2 that androcentrism and ethnocentrism fulfils, and involves A(i).

For example, a landowner during the slave-trade asks whether ‘black people’, ‘Native Americans’, or ‘women’ should possess rights, and consequently begins with the beings that currently have rights; i.e. ‘white males’. The landowner considers what these beings have in common. No challenge to centric thinking/biases/norms is given. Arguably that landowner will conclude that it is the characteristics of being ‘white’ and ‘male’ that are the basis for rights,<sup>144</sup> and thus as the other humans do not possess these traits, despite possessing other characteristics and a welfare, they cannot have rights.<sup>145</sup>

Most would find this reasoning loaded from the beginning against the humans who do not resemble ‘white males’. Moreover, the reasoning *reinforces* the racist/sexist prejudice via apparently justifying it.<sup>146</sup> In nonhuman ethics this is the same. For instance, nonhuman ethics asks whether nonhuman animals matter morally, and if so how. By arguing from humans and moving out to nonhumans, this loads the result against nonhumans that are not relevantly-similar to humans and implies that nonhumans can *only* matter if they are similar to humans.<sup>147</sup> As Deborah Slicer notes, nonhuman animals’ moral considerability is recognised because nonhuman “animals are represented as beings with the kind of capacity that human beings most fully possess and deem valuable for living a full human life” (Slicer, 1991:p.111). Thus by arguing from humans to nonhumans, only human-similar nonhumans are judged considerable,

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<sup>144</sup> A conclusion supported by historical evidence, most notably in the U.S. Reference could also be made to responses to women being given the right to vote as ‘absurd’ and leading to reductios (cf. responses to Wollstonecraft).

<sup>145</sup> Alternatively, this could be ‘reason’ and because no challenge to centric thinking/biases/norms is made, and during that period ideas of women’s/black people’s/Native American’s ‘nature’ involved their possessing lower reason, the same result would be concluded.

<sup>146</sup> Examples and arguments such as these are well-known from contemporary Feminist theory, (see, for example, the ‘Feminist Ethics’ entry in the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* - Tong & Williams, 2011)

<sup>147</sup> As will be shown below, this is exactly what Regan and Singer conclude.

and this biases the position against dissimilar beings from the outset. Further, this bias results from criteria that matters to humans and humans possess paradigmatically. All of this is A(i).<sup>148</sup>

This reasoning perpetuates anthropocentrism. Further, nonhumans are not considered beyond the human, and when they are it is not as adult beings that have societies that function, rules, cultures, and that survive on their own, but rather in comparison with human children or mentally-disabled humans.<sup>149</sup> A(i) is thus perpetuated and solidified. Therefore using this method to determine who is morally considerable or deserves rights biases a theory from the outset.

While justifications for the derived criterion may be offered this does not negate the bias as the criterion would still be derived centrally. This is commonly argued in feminist, post-colonial feminist, and anti-ethnocentric/racist arguments, where traits, capacities, or criteria are often derived from (and biased towards) the white, male Centre (e.g. reason has been used for both throughout history). These are then offered justification as reasonable/acceptable. Centric bias remains, it is argued, as how the criteria, etc., were derived and who they are biased towards remains (Plumwood, 1996:pp.134-139; Plumwood, 1991:p.5; Slicer, 1991; MacKinnon, in Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2004:pp.264-265; Landau, 2006).<sup>150</sup> Regan and Singer's positions, I argue, involve this method with the same result, rather than providing a species-neutral nonhuman ethic.

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<sup>148</sup> As an additional (if not strictly necessary) point, no questions are asked whether nonhumans are active, moral beings in a sense that could alter the criteria used for moral consideration either. Assumptions of their capacities/'nature' are thus drawn on adding a further layer of anthropocentrism. That this is similar to many feminist arguments regarding how men typically have dismissed typically-considered 'women's traits' as morally inferior/irrelevant in comparison to typically-considered 'men's traits' only adds another possible anthropocentric element to this reasoning.

<sup>149</sup> This also carries the implication of a discontinuity between humans and nonhumans evolutionarily.

<sup>150</sup> As noted in chapters one and three, such centric biasing in all centrisms can be done invisibly and unintentionally and only revealed via critical reflection. In fact, many feminists argue that those at the Centre of centric biases are often unable to perceive such biasing as it is 'the norm'. I do not, therefore, claim that any anthropocentrism is deliberate. As noted in §3.1.6 most anthropocentrism within nonhuman ethics is indirect and unintentional.

#### §4.3.1.1 Regan

In this sub-section I consider how Regan uses this method of ‘arguing from humans’ to establish nonhuman animal rights and conclude that his position therefore involves anthropocentrism.

Regan considers what all humans possess,<sup>151</sup> forms a definition, and then considers which nonhuman animals also fit this definition. This is shown in *All That Dwell Therein*:<sup>152</sup>

“...[T]he case for animal rights...is more difficult than the case for human rights, upon which it is parasitic. By this I mean that the case for animal rights must be built on, must be shown to be a rational extension of, the case for human rights...[the] arguments for postulating animal rights cannot be any stronger (and may...be weaker) than the...arguments for postulating human rights...[the] strongest case for human moral rights...[is] The world contains individuals (e.g. human beings) who...are the subjects of a life they have...Human beings...have a kind of value...we might term inherent value...as possessors of inherent value, we have a moral right to be treated in ways...consistent with our having [such] value...Can this argument be extended to include nonhuman animals? I believe it can...they have value in their own right if humans do; and they have, therefore, a moral right...if it is true...that humans have this right...” (Regan, 1982:pp.70-72)

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<sup>151</sup> By this Regan actually refers mostly to so-called ‘paradigmatic humans’, as although he does include some nonhumans that he refers to as ‘marginal cases’, as argued below he does omit other ‘marginal case’ humans on the basis of appeal to characteristics that are ‘typical’ of humans (i.e. of non-marginal, paradigm examples).

<sup>152</sup> A book published a year before *The Case for Animal Rights* containing papers and lectures given over six years before. Regan’s claims here form the basis for the later book.

In *The Case for Animal Rights*, Regan adds: “I never would have become an animal rights advocate if I had not first been a human rights advocate” (Regan, 2004:p.xiii). Dale Jamieson similarly notes: “Regan...argues that whatever plausible criteria we have for attributing rights to all humans apply also to many nonhumans” (Jamieson, 2002:p.25).

This method, and the result, is similar to the example above. It begins with *human* rights which loads the definition with human characteristics, and thus anthropocentric bias. For the criteria that makes a subject-of-a-life resembles humans, and nonhuman animals that do not fulfil this criteria, but that have a welfare (Benson, 2000:p.88), are excluded *because of this*, despite their own characteristics.<sup>153</sup>

This, as in the example above, reinforces anthropocentrism as any being not resembling humans in these ways is denied rights and as the theory includes *some* nonhuman animals it appears to justify this exclusion. However, it is unclear *why* those beings that do not fulfil the human-Centred definition *should* be excluded, especially as by lacking *any* rights we can treat them as we wish.<sup>154</sup> Thus, Regan’s theory is loaded with anthropocentrism (i.e. A(i))

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<sup>153</sup> Similar methodology is used to measure women in comparison to men regarding value, capabilities, and suitability for social/political positions.

<sup>154</sup> Given the distinction between status and standing outlined in §1.1, Regan’s exclusion of nonhuman animals that do not possess rights from all considerability may be questioned here. This interpretation, however, seems reasonable given that although Regan does mention non-subject-of-a-life beings on four occasions (in *The Case for Animal Rights* – his seminal work expounding his rights position), Regan nowhere explicitly considers their moral standing/considerability nor, given his theory, how we should act towards them. Moreover, Regan’s position was posited as he did not believe Singer’s position to be adequate (hence the need for rights). Singer, as noted above and will be discussed below, did not consider those outside of his theory as having moral considerability, however. Given his lack of consideration of such beings in regard to his position, and his focus on those beings Singer wished to include, this interpretation seems plausible. While Regan does claim in one passage that causing pain to non-subject-of-a-life animals is of moral significance (Regan, 2004:p.366), (and by this he does not mean suffering, which he distinguishes from pain as something only subjects-of-a-life can experience (*Ibid*:pp.95-99)), he does not explain how or why this is the case or the relation to his position. Moreover, it is unclear how this claim (or moral standing) can be made on Regan’s position, given: (i) direct moral duties are only owed to subjects-of-a-life (*Ibid*:pp.152&243-245&260), (ii) only subjects-of-a-life have value in themselves, whereas non-subjects have no value themselves and it is only their intrinsic experiences that have value (*Ibid*:pp.236&246) (and given (i) why this should matter to moral agents is unclear), (iii) Regan’s principles regarding respect and no harm only apply to, and are derived from, the subject-of-a-life criterion, and thus cannot apply to non-subjects (In addition to §4.2, cf. *Ibid*:p.264), and similarly his claims regarding death and killing being morally wrong only apply to subjects-of-a-life (*Ibid*:pp.101&367), thus why and how we should morally act towards non-subjects is unclear, and (iv) Regan not only states that non-subjects are not part of the moral community but he also states that they are of no direct moral concern (*Ibid*:pp.152-153&239-240). Finally, Mary Anne Warren interprets Regan similarly (Warren, 2000:p.91). For all of these reasons therefore, without a clarification from Regan it is reasonable to interpret Regan as I have. However, even if Regan granted some standing outside of rights (and given the above this would seem a very weak standing) the claims of this section

and as this A(i) leads to nonhumans being excluded, thus A(ii), it is a questionable means to establish moral considerability.

This is shown by considering how Regan's definition excludes both certain 'non-paradigmatic' humans and many nonhumans; beings many wish to include.<sup>155</sup> For example, human infants, new-borns, new-borns who will (or may) not live past one year old, and the irreversibly-comatose do not fulfil Regan's definition and therefore lack *any* rights and so we could treat them however we wished or kill them without moral censure. Similarly with many nonhuman animals, thus the intuition that it is wrong to treat spiders as toys or kill jelly fish with bats is left unexplained.<sup>156</sup>

Regan provides two responses. First, Regan claims that he does not 'draw a line' as to which beings are subjects-of-a-life, rather he is unsure where the line should be, but wherever it is those beings that fulfil the criteria are included (Regan, 2004:p.xvi). This does not resolve the difficulty, for new-born and infant humans *must* be included in these rights. Thus Regan must either draw his line to include these, which undermines his definition, or exclude them and therefore undermine his theory's tenability. More importantly, this does not resolve

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remain as I only claim here that Regan's criteria include and exclude beings in his theory due to similarity with humans. Thus the anthropocentrism would still remain. While Regan perhaps need not exclude standing, and could refine his position, how is unclear, as is how it fits his current claims. As the anthropocentrism would remain however, while an important clarification for his position's implications, this possibility does not affect my current claims.

<sup>155</sup> That certain humans are excluded here does not undermine the charge of anthropocentrism. This is because by looking at what it is that gives *humans* rights and value (see below that those not fulfilling Regan's criteria have no value), knowingly excluding the humans considered here (Regan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp. 19-20). Consequently it is clear that Regan considers this criteria to reflect 'paradigmatic humans', or humans as they 'normally' are. This clearly implies (given that Regan considers any being lacking these criteria to have no rights or any value – see below) that the criteria are meant to represent humans, and that these other humans (who most would consider to have rights or at least value) are not to be considered as sources of what gives humans rights. This implies that it is the 'paradigmatic' humans that really give the criteria for *human* rights, and thus that the criteria are derived from what Regan considers to be human.

<sup>156</sup> While I consider Regan's responses below, a brief clarification should be made here. Regan may respond to these claims via the potential for subject-of-a-life-hood that these beings have (Regan, 2004:p.358) or via giving them the benefit of the doubt regarding subjecthood (*Ibid*:pp.366-367). I do not consider these below as (i) the following responses still remain, and (ii) some humans and nonhumans – such as new-borns who will (or may) not live past one year old and some irreversible coma patients, as well as nonmammalian animals – would remain excluded and thus these claims would remain. As Regan's principles and his claims regarding the wrongness of death stem from being a subject-of-a-life, even if these beings had some (very weak) standing, qua footnote 155, not treating them with respect, killing them, considering them to not be valuable in themselves, and having no direct duties to them would remain. Thus the claims would remain.

nonhumans being included/excluded on the basis of fitting a human-derived criterion. All Regan essentially claims is that he is not sure which beings should be classed as relevantly-similar to humans, not that nonhumans that are different are worthy of consideration for other-than-human criteria. Consequently, this does not remove anthropocentrism.

Second, Regan claims that being a subject-of-a-life is only sufficient for inherent value, not necessary (*Ibid*:pp.245-246). Thus other beings *may* have inherent value (*Ibid*:p.246) and rights. Despite this, Regan *does* seem to believe that being a subject-of-a-life *is necessary* (Pluhar, 1988:p.36) as he states: "...it is *radically unclear* how the attribution of inherent value to these individuals can be made intelligible and nonarbitrary" (Regan, 2004:p.246) and "...[n]ot all living things are subjects-of-a-life, in the sense explained, thus not all living things are to be viewed as having the same moral status" (Regan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.23). Furthermore, Regan argues that non-subject-of-a-life beings may perhaps "only properly be viewed as receptacles of what has intrinsic value, lacking any value in their own right" (Regan, 2004:p.246). More importantly, even granting Regan's response, this would then undermine Regan's account as one could have inherent value, and thus rights, without being a subject-of-a-life. Thus Regan's criterion becomes irrelevant.

Moreover, it is important to note that this second response further underscores the anthropocentrism of the first, as Regan states that nonhumans outside the human-derived criteria are only 'receptacles of what has intrinsic value' with no 'value in their own right',<sup>157</sup> despite such beings possibly having a welfare (i.e. things can be good or bad for them) but not fulfilling the human-derived subject-of-a-life criteria. Similarly, Regan's claim that such

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<sup>157</sup> Regan makes this claim via an analogy with cup in response to utilitarian positions. He claims that such positions do not consider the 'cup' as valuable-in-itself, but only as a receptacle for intrinsically valuable experiences (Regan, 2004:pp.153&236-246). His subject-of-a-life criterion and rights claims are intended to establish this value – i.e. inherent value – and thus claim that while the experiences have intrinsic value the cup (i.e. the being) has inherent value, thus can not be dispensed with, replaced with another equally full cup, and so on (*Ibid*). Consequently, it is only subjects-of-a-life that have value in themselves, as opposed to being replaceable cups of intrinsically valuable experiences.

beings may have rights based on something other than his criterion raises the question of why Regan sticks with the anthropocentric account.

This raises a second possibility of anthropocentrism, via the question of *why* only beings that fulfil the subject-of-a-life criterion are granted rights. Regan's only answer, *qua* his theory, is that it is by being a subject-of-a-life that a being gains inherent value. The above responses show this as dubious however. More importantly, it is unclear how, beyond Regan's stipulation, inherent value is linked to being a subject-of-a-life. As Mary Anne Warren argues, if inherent value is independent of intrinsic value, as Regan claims, then "why does the fact that [the subject-of-a-life] has certain sorts of experiences constitute evidence that it has inherent value?" (Warren, 1986:p.164). Regan's only justification is that 'such beings have a welfare', however as Warren argues, so do all conscious creatures, such as the humans noted above and even plants (*Ibid*:pp.165-166). Why these beings have no inherent value therefore is unclear. Regan's response is that any other criterion used to include such beings, such as 'being alive',<sup>158</sup> entails granting other entities, like cancer cells, inherent value, and this is unpalatable (Regan, 2004:p.242).

While a problem for some accounts, the moral considerability of cancer cells only proves problematic if one posits 'equal inherent value', which is unnecessary for moral theories that wish to include all beings, or if one places an absolute sanctity on life, which no environmental theory does. Further, cancer cells attack other cells and thus one's life, and so environmental theories may respond that self-defence justifies combating cancer cells even if they had value. Finally, some environmental theories define life in such a way (e.g. goal-oriented, possessing interests, etc.) that while one-cell nonhuman animal organisms and plants are included cells do not fit the same definition (Taylor, in Benson, 2000:p.220; Cahen, in Light

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<sup>158</sup> See Kenneth Goodpaster, 1978.

& Rolston, 2008:pp.115-120). Consequently, Regan has yet to establish why inherent value is *necessarily* linked to being a subject-of-a-life.<sup>159</sup>

This is important, for it is *this* criterion, derived via the method of arguing from humans, *which generates* Regan's problems with including certain humans and is the reason that many nonhuman animals are excluded from rights and *all* moral consideration.<sup>160</sup> As Regan has not established this link it is unclear why he should endorse this criterion.<sup>161</sup> While this does not *demonstrate* that anthropocentrism is the reason behind this second possibility, considering how Regan chooses this criterion and its definition, and how nonhumans are included/excluded on this basis, both of which *are* anthropocentric, this *does* raise the question of why Regan's attempt to provide a species-neutral theory should continue to endorse a criterion that favours ('paradigmatic') humans. Thus this method of reasoning from humans reveals two ways that Regan's theory involves anthropocentrism.

#### **§4.3.1.2 Singer**

In this sub-section I consider how Singer also uses this method of reasoning from humans and conclude that his position therefore also involves anthropocentrism.

Although Singer does not clearly derive his criterion of suffering by arguing from humans, as Regan does,<sup>162</sup> Singer argues from ('paradigmatic') humans to determine which beings can suffer and how. From this he derives which beings are morally considerable *at all*. As outlined in §4.1, for Singer suffering is not only *a* morally relevant interest, but the

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<sup>159</sup> My aim here is not to endorse or support the criterion of life, only to illustrate that Regan has not sufficiently established that inherent value is necessarily linked to the criterion he uses and that others could be used.

<sup>160</sup> See 'footnote 154'.

<sup>161</sup> Especially given his use of 'welfare', which fits more nonhuman animals than his 'subject-of-a-life' criteria.

<sup>162</sup> Though Singer does derive the PEI from a discussion and comparison of nonhuman liberation with how human liberation movements work, and it is from Bentham's comments on human equality that Singer derives suffering as his criterion (Singer, 1995:pp.1-9).

prerequisite for having *any* interests (hence *any* moral considerability) *at all*. If a being cannot suffer then we can do as we please with them without being morally wrong (Singer, 1995:p.171). Thus for Singer who is morally considerable is identical to who is capable of suffering.

Singer's account of which beings can suffer relies on two factors. First, comparing a being's behaviour with humans:

“...We can never directly experience the pain of another being, whether that being is human or not...I know that [my daughter] feels pain because of the way she behaves...[and] I know that I...behave in a somewhat similar...way when I feel pain...The basis of my belief that animals can feel pain is similar...Animals in pain behave in much the same way as humans do, and their behaviour is sufficient justification for the belief that they feel pain...” (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.42)

Second, a comparison of their nervous system to ours:

“...To back up our inference from animal behaviour, we can point to the fact that the nervous systems of all vertebrates...are fundamentally similar. Those parts of the human nervous system that are concerned with feeling pain are relatively old...This anatomical parallel makes it likely that the capacity of animals to feel is similar to our own...none of the grounds we have for believing that animals feel pain hold for plants...[as] plants do not have a centrally organized nervous system like ours...” (*Ibid*)

Using this method, any being that does not resemble humans, via behaviour or biology, is judged unable to suffer and consequently excluded from *all* moral considerability. Accordingly, numerous nonhumans and some humans have no moral weight at all; thus there is nothing wrong in using jelly fish as balls in baseball.

Singer's response is that this method is the only means to make a 'reasonable inference' regarding which beings can suffer (*Ibid*), especially as contemporary pain literature considers it difficult to consider whether a nonhuman animal is in pain without using human-nonhuman analogies. The problem is that while this *may* be plausible for the *empirical* or epistemological question<sup>163</sup> it is problematic when it comes to the *moral* question of which beings should be morally considerable at all, as *what is reasonable to infer* depends upon *similarity to us* (Singer, 1995:p.171) which is anthropocentric.

This is especially problematic given that evolutionarily similar capacities may evolve to work in similar ways but via different means. For instance, as Mark Bekoff shows, organs may differ between beings yet perform the same function (Bekoff, 2007:p.34), some beings may not display emotions in a similar way to humans yet still have them (*Ibid*:p.44), and as Mary Anne Warren argues, there is evidence that insects are sentient and that although their nervous system differs from ours this is no reason to conclude that they do not feel pain as their means of feeling pain may just be different from ours (Warren, 1986:p.166; Eisner & Camazine, 1983:p.3382). An example cited by Holmes Rolston of how Sand Dollars' nervous systems differ from ours in such a way that Singer would not accept them on his theory reveals that Sand Dollars do have a nervous system despite this difference (Rolston, in Jamieson, 1999:pp.258-259).

Thus, evolutionarily nonhumans could evolve systems of suffering that are dissimilar to humans, and while this would make *knowing* that such beings suffer problematic, given that

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<sup>163</sup> Though the inductive logical claim that all evolved systems that allow suffering must be similar to our own is questionable. As I discuss below.

*all* moral consideration rests on this relying on the human comparison is unfair and anthropocentric.<sup>164</sup> Thus what is ‘reasonable to infer’ regarding suffering is *not* what is similar to us – especially when considering moral problems and who is considerable at all. This is further supported by considering that nonhumans, via having biological similarities and differences, not only suffer in ways that humans do not but also express such suffering sometimes similarly and sometimes differently (Adams, in Donovan & Adams, 2007:p.207). Arguing from humans regarding moral considerability therefore threatens to exclude nonhumans based on their dissimilarity with humans, in a way that does not take into account their different capacities/abilities/means to suffer.

Singer’s theory thus involves A(i) in selecting which beings are morally considerable. Both Singer and Regan’s theories therefore involve a method of reasoning that loads the theory against any being that differs from the human ‘blueprint’.

### **§4.3.2 The Hierarchy of Value**

The second theme which reveals anthropocentrism is that both theorists endorse a ‘hierarchy of the value of life’, and at the top is humanity. Despite their claim to reject human chauvinism, this is A(ii). Moreover, this A(ii) derives from A(i).

#### **§4.3.2.1 Singer**

In this section I consider Singer’s hierarchy of value and argue that this involves A(i), and thus is A(ii). Singer claims that the “life of a self-aware being, capable of abstract thought, of

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<sup>164</sup> Even if this anthropocentrism is unintentional. Recall that I have noted that anthropocentrism need not be direct or even known, but may – like androcentrism and ethnocentrism – be invisible even to those that are anthropocentric. Such is one of the problems of centric thinking argued by many feminists, amongst other theorists.

planning for the future, of complex acts of communication, and so on, is more valuable than the life of a being without these capacities” (Singer, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.38). This was noted in §4.1 to be because such beings have additional interests (like future-oriented preferences), can value their lives, and would be judged from a neutral standpoint to have a more preferable, hence valuable, life than ‘merely sentient’ beings (Singer, 1993:pp.106-107). Singer therefore justifies this hierarchy via appeal to the amount or type of interests a being has, rather than on the basis of species, in order to avoid human chauvinism.

Despite this, anthropocentrism remains. One may ask what justifies the move from ‘different beings have different amounts or types of interests’ to ‘those beings with more interests are more valuable’. This move depends on assuming either, (i) ‘the types of interests are more valuable’ or (ii) ‘possessing more interests necessarily entails more value’. However, there is little reason to assume (i), for it is unclear how certain interests could be more valuable in an objectively verifiable way, rather than being subjectively based. Given the subjective basis this relies on human preferences for the human life and interests humans’ value – which is A(i).<sup>165</sup> Thus (i) is anthropocentric. However (ii) is also dubious for there is no reason to accept that ‘more interests equals more value’ over the view that ‘while a being with more interests may often outweigh other beings in considerations simply by having more interests, the lives of those beings are equally valuable’. Accepting this latter is compelling as the former implies that humans with more interests are more valuable than humans with less.<sup>166</sup> Thus there seems no reason to assume (ii) over the alternative. Without assuming (i) or (ii), however, moving from ‘more interests’ to ‘more value’ is unjustified.

Singer recognizes this and claims that: “It would be possible to defend [the hierarchy] *only* if we can find some neutral ground, some impartial standpoint from which we can make

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<sup>165</sup> This shall be returned to in more detail below. As I note in the next paragraph, Singer accepts the problem I outline here.

<sup>166</sup> This goes back to the discussions on ‘internal hierarchies’ amongst humans discussed throughout chapter two.

the comparison” (*Ibid*:p.106). Singer attempts this defence via a thought experiment where one removes all bias, imagines living the best possible nonhuman, then human, life, then enters an intersubjective state that is neutral and free of all species-preference bias<sup>167</sup> where one impartially judges which life is preferable (*Ibid*:pp.106-107). This, Singer claims, leads one to judge that the life of the human is of greater value than the nonhuman (*Ibid*:p.107).

This defence is anthropocentric and reveals A(ii). First, it is presumptuous to claim that *all* humans *would* agree that human lives are more preferable, hence more valuable. This is a problem for the defence and shows Singer’s bias towards those that do agree. Second, Singer *presumes* that an impartial judge would rank humans highest. However no evidence other than his own use of the thought experiment is given. Moreover it is unclear what life an *impartial* judge would actually choose (Fjellstrom, 2003:p.95). This is supported by considering that humans and nonhumans find pleasure in different things, especially amongst individuals. Consequently an impartial judge would likely find pleasure, etc., in what their specific capacity set up was. This again is a problem and reveals bias.

Third, Singer presumes that one can remove all bias from oneself in order to be neutral, and upon doing so (and thus being without any background beliefs, knowledge, opinions, etc.) one could still make judgements. This is *at least* questionable, and if false reveals that Singer has not removed A(i) as his preferences and valuing of human capabilities and traits are used to judge human lives as more valuable. This fits with how anthropocentrism, like all centrisms, can be unintentionally held and applied indirectly.<sup>168</sup>

Finally, it is unclear (a) whether a human could truly imagine the life of another being *from that being’s perspective*, rather than as a human imagining what that perspective is, and (b) whether a human *could* knowingly avoid all human bias, especially when considering the value of a different being’s life via *its* capacities, for the human has only known *their* life and

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<sup>167</sup> Similar to being ‘behind the veil’ for Rawls.

<sup>168</sup> Note also how this exemplifies the A(i) and A(ii) relations.

*their* capacities, and they have *their* desires, preferences and enjoyments that derive from those capacities (*Ibid*).<sup>169</sup>

This thought experiment, therefore, provides little justification for Singer's hierarchy, and thus Singer's 'only defence' collapses. As Roger Fjellstrom argues, "Singer's method of applying value to life...presupposes what it intends to prove" (*Ibid*:p.96). More importantly, if one cannot avoid all bias in one's judgements,<sup>170</sup> then Singer's conclusion that humanity is at the apex of the hierarchy demonstrates Singer's own subjective A(i)-influenced assumption that human life is more valuable. This is A(ii).

One other justification Singer gives for this hierarchy derives from his views on the ethics of killing. Singer claims that human lives are worse to take, (hence more valuable), due to (i) the impact on family and friends (Singer, in Goodpaster & Sayre, 1979:p.196), (ii) humans having greater chances of more happiness (*Ibid*), (iii) the social fear of killing humans (*Ibid*:p.199), and (iv) the greater capacities that humans have (i.e. awareness over time, suffering due to this awareness, and frustration of future preferences) (*Ibid*) and that humans, as persons, have a biographical life (Singer, 1993:pp.126&191-192).

None of these however are peculiar to humans. For instance, (i) and (iii) apply just as much to wolves and apes – as Singer acknowledges – as both have complex social relations (Singer, in Goodpaster & Sayre, 1979:p.200). The second reason is an assumption that relies on assuming that 'human capacities lead to more happiness' or as 'humans have more and varied capacities this means a greater amount of happiness'. All three assumptions are questionable, and it is unclear how they *could* be justified. Moreover, that a being's total pleasure is more than just the total sum of pleasure of their life (i.e. that a perfectly happy dog

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<sup>169</sup> It should also be noted that this thought experiment could equally be used regarding race and gender, (as could the claim that there is a hierarchy of value that results from differing capacities – cf. Santayana (Johnson, in Miller & Williams, 1983p.133)). Thus even aside from the problems mentioned here, a high price comes with accepting such a thought experiment as justification.

<sup>170</sup> Avoiding all bias and centric thought is not easy – and few, if any, even amongst those who resist centrisms are free of them – and Singer has given no evidence thus far that he has.

has a less pleasurable life than a perfectly happy human) is highly questionable (Johnson, in Miller & Williams, 1983:pp.131-132). Finally, (iv) is flawed as Singer himself claims that such capacities can also *reduce* suffering due to humans understanding their situation, which nonhuman animals may not (Singer, 1993:p.60). In addition, many nonhumans show signs of these capacities, such as spiders (Warren, 2000:p.82). Most importantly, it is unclear how such comparisons *could* be made. For as Mary Anne Warren argues:

“...human preferences have little relevance to the value of a spider’s life to the spider...[she never had these capacities, therefore]...if a spider is not self-aware, then the value that [her] life has for [her] is based upon the enjoyment of [her] natural pleasures, and perhaps consciousness itself.” (*Ibid*:p.81)

Simply put, just because *humans* value our capacities does not provide any more value for them, or human life, over the capacities of another animal and that animal’s life; *humans* may find such ‘lesser’ capacities a loss, but this does *not show* that it *is* a loss (Johnson, in Miller & Williams, 1983:pp.131-132). Moreover using criteria humans’ value that has no relevance to nonhumans to judge the value of all beings is anthropocentric.<sup>171</sup>

Moreover, the criteria for this comparison involves A(i). For instance, Warren argues that even if non-self-aware beings cannot *take* an interest in the future, or continued existence, they can *have* an interest in such (Warren, 2000:p.80). The spider’s preferences require her continued existence, and thus she *has* an interest in continued existence even if she cannot *take* an interest in such (*Ibid*:p.81). Similarly, even if she cannot *take* an interest in her future preferences, she still *has* an interest regarding them to lose. Thus the sense of the criteria that humans use/prefer is being used to judge her *and* in comparison to humans. As Warren

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<sup>171</sup> Just as it is androcentric/ethnocentric to do the same with ‘male’/‘white’/‘European’ values that have no relevance to ‘female’/‘non-white’/‘non-European’ humans to judge the value of all humans.

concludes, value is being assigned due to how close to humans the nonhuman is (*Ibid*:p.83).

This is A(i) leading to A(ii).

Fjellstrom adds that Singer's conception of a 'biographical life' also involves, and preferences, human criteria. For, Fjellstrom argues, *all* beings have biographical lives: "every being is unique and is perceived...[so] by others [e.g. offspring]...we all have a unique past, present, and future due to our particular equipment and...series of circumstances under which we live...[thus] we all have a unique story" (Fjellstrom, 2003:p.96). Singer's conception, however, is that 'biographical lives' involve rationality, self-consciousness, being autonomous, being highly cognitive, possessing conscious states linked over time, ideas/desires/projects in the future, etc. (Fjellstrom, 2003:p.97; Singer, 1993:pp.126&191-192). Thus, Singer's understanding involves not just having a biographical life, but being able to tell/understand one's biographical life (Fjellstrom, 2003:p.97). Fjellstrom argues that this "involve[s] such high cognitive and linguistic capacities that...[non-]self-conscious [beings] and...the great apes are excluded" (*Ibid*). This understanding of biographical life, Fjellstrom argues, can therefore only support (iv), and thus the hierarchy, if it understands 'persons' in a human-favouring sense (*Ibid*). Moreover, Singer provides no reason to prefer his understanding over the former, and the only reason to prefer his is relying on what humans think is more valuable (*Ibid*). James Rachels' argument for biographical life, for instance, only argues that biographical life is valuable *to humans* and is not absolute (Fjellstrom, 2003:p.97; Rachels, 1990:p.199). Thus the criteria is A(i), and nonhumans are judged against humans, which is A(i), and both are used to support the hierarchy, which is A(ii).

Taken together, none of these reasons justify Singer's claim that human lives are more valuable, and thus only a subjective preference for human capacities can explain Singer's hierarchy. My claim is that anthropocentrism thus lies behind Singer's hierarchy. Thus A(i) leading to A(ii).

#### §4.3.2.2. Regan

In this section I consider Regan's hierarchy of value and argue that this also involves A(i), and thus is A(ii). Regan's hierarchy is illustrated by his resolution to what he terms 'exceptional cases'. Recall that Regan distinguishes inherent value from intrinsic value. Inherent value only serves a purpose in normal situations and vanishes in the exceptional circumstances that the MP and WOP apply to, being rather replaced by a utilitarian-type calculation of intrinsic value.

This is shown in 'lifeboat examples', where four humans and a dog are in a lifeboat and one must die (Regan, 2004:p.xxix). All four have equal inherent value and rights, however as someone must die someone's rights must be violated. Regan concludes that:

“...it should be the dog because...death for any of the human survivors would cause a greater harm than death would cause...[for] the dog...[b]ecause the loss that death represents is a function of the number and variety of possible sources of satisfaction it forecloses...” (*Ibid*)

Regan's sources of satisfaction can only mean the *experiences* which death forecloses; i.e. experiences that constitute intrinsic value. Regan acknowledges that beings with equal inherent value can have unequal intrinsic value due to their capacities (Edwards, 1993:p.232). As such, in a lifeboat case equal inherent values nullify each other and what remains is intrinsic value (*Ibid*:p.234).

From this, Regan's statement makes it clear that the only way to determine what should be done in such cases is to return to Singer's calculus of experiences; i.e. humans have more sources of satisfaction, hence should survive. Similar to Singer then, Regan believes that

humans have more sources of satisfaction due to their capacities, and as a result ‘paradigmatic’ humans *will always* outweigh *any* nonhuman. This view is anthropocentric. Regan attempts to avoid this by conceding that if the choice were between two humans, a dog and a mentally-disabled child or irreversibly-comatose adult, then the latter should be sacrificed (Regan, 1982:p.137; Regan, 2004:p.xxxiii).

Although this seems to challenge an anthropocentric hierarchy,<sup>172</sup> this is not the case for four reasons. First, Regan does not include human infants as having less sources of satisfaction than a dog despite dogs having more cognitive capacities than human infants up to the age of three. Second, the reasons given to justify the hierarchy are similar to Singer’s, i.e. the value of their experiences or capacities, all of which were shown to be anthropocentric and result from A(i).

Third, Regan demonstrates that nonhumans<sup>173</sup> can *never* be as valuable as any ‘paradigmatic’ human based upon these same human-biased capacities/preferences. Thus, as Gary Francione argues, Regan’s resolution appeals “to a supposed human ‘excellence’ (the ability to pursue opportunities for satisfaction). But to say that this virtue may be appealed to only in exceptional cases is nevertheless to say that in that *class of cases*, there is routine subordination based on a supposed virtue possessed by one *class* of rightholders.” (Francione, 1995:p.85).<sup>174</sup>

Fourth, as Cathryn Bailey argues, such exceptional cases “are meant both to rely upon and reinforce common sense assumptions” (Bailey, 2009:p.130). Regan acknowledges this by stating that these cases “illuminate and justify...prereflective intuition” (Regan, 2004:p.324). This is arguably why Regan claims that ‘no reasonable person’ would save the dog (*Ibid*).

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<sup>172</sup> As even with this reply by Regan the hierarchy still remains.

<sup>173</sup> Individually or innumerably, as Regan claims that numbers do not matter and thus even a million dogs should be sacrificed to save one human (Regan, 2004:pp.324-325).

<sup>174</sup> Consider, for instance, if the same reasoning were used for ‘race’ or ‘gender’/‘sex’, or even for the rich and poor - whether nation or individuals – as one group in any of these may possess more ‘sources of satisfaction’ than another. The resulting hierarchy would clearly be prejudiced.

Bailey argues, however, that:

“...our commonsense intuitions are deeply bound up with prejudices and stereotypes so that such scenarios are not as abstract or innocent as many may think...[as] in discussions about the possible sacrifice of human life, especially self-sacrifice, racist, sexist, and ethnocentric associations can also be found lurking uncomfortably close to the common Western beliefs in the supremacy and unique superiority of the human individual...” (Bailey, 2009:p.130)

That such prejudices affect Regan is shown by his claim regarding what is ‘reasonable’ and his attempt to justify ‘pre-reflective intuition’, his commitment to the hierarchical view of interests and life value that was problematic for Singer, and his lack of considering nonhuman animal capabilities compared to human capabilities which would call into question his hierarchy. According to Bailey, the reason:

“...it is absurd that the man might sacrifice himself for the dog...is because his value is both taken for granted and reestablished against a back drop of appropriate opportunities for assertive moral agency...” (*Ibid*:p.132)

In other words, it is reasonable because most people’s, and Regan’s, intuitions are already bound up with the anthropocentrism of the hierarchy, i.e. A(i) resulting in A(ii). Regan simply reinforces this. Non-Western views emphasise this, for the example in §2.1 of Buddha’s self-sacrifice to save nonhuman animals<sup>175</sup> is an intuition that some may have regarding lifeboat cases. Similarly, *qua* Singer’s admission that ‘greater capacities’ can mean less suffering due

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<sup>175</sup> Whether real or not is irrelevant, as the example also would serve as a lesson for Buddhists.

to one being able to understand what is occurring, etc., one may also argue that the humans ought to voluntarily sacrifice themselves for those with lesser capacities. This would clearly be intuitive for many in the case of three adults and a ‘normal’ human infant. Each of these reinforces the idea that the intuitions Regan is using, depending upon, and reinforcing in justifying his hierarchy are anthropocentric. Thus Regan’s position also involves A(i) leading to A(ii).

#### **§4.4. Addressing Anthropocentrism**

In this section I briefly consider how Singer and Regan’s theories are unable to address A(i). I conclude that a theory that does address anthropocentrism would therefore have advantages.

In addition to involving anthropocentrism both positions are unable to address anthropocentrism. Both theories focus solely on rejecting speciesism and do this via arguing for the moral consideration of nonhumans. This only challenges A(ii), not A(i). For instance, when Singer objects to something as speciesist it is because it is not considering nonhuman interests equally and doing so *qua* a species prejudice. This was highlighted in his definition of speciesism in §1.2 (also, cf. Singer, 1995:p.6). Thus by positing equal consideration of interests regardless of species, Singer challenges speciesism. This, however, does not provide a means to identify and address A(i) norms/ideas. Similarly, Regan’s rights only provide a means for nonhumans to be considered morally, not challenge A(i).

For instance, equally considering interests or rights does not challenge A(i) ideas and norms, such as ‘what nonhumans like’, ‘what nonhumans are’, defining nonhumans in comparison with humans, centring human ideas/capacities over nonhuman (e.g. traditionally reason/awareness), what is ‘wild’ or ‘domestic’, what is ‘natural’, what capacities are morally

valuable, or the value of preferences. Yet these norms/ideas result in differential treatment (as outlined in §3.1.4).<sup>176</sup>

For example, A(i) norms/ideas regarding preferences or lives can result in valuing preferences or lives differently even when equally considering their possession. This was exemplified in arguments for *the good life* (§2.3) and in Singer's theory (§4.3.2.1). Similarly, nonhumans and their abilities are compared, or defined in relation, to humans – i.e. something other than themselves or a set defined via and in favour of something other than themselves – rather than accepted as themselves and as being equally good. These ideas/norms cannot be challenged by weighing up interests or rights.

Likewise, A(i) ideas/norms may result in differential treatment politically. For example, Singer claims that nonhumans have no interest regarding voting (Singer, 1995:p.2).<sup>177</sup> This relies on A(i)/human conceptions of political agency. For instance, Eva Meijer argues that nonhumans express political agency and thus with a less anthropocentric focus political systems could include nonhuman political actors (Meijer, in Garmendia da Trindade & Woodhall, 2016; Meijer, in Woodhall & Garmendia da Trindade, 2017). Singer and Regan, however, have no means of challenging the A(i) norms/ideas to thus argue for the inclusion of nonhuman voices politically.<sup>178</sup>

Anthropocentrism is a centrism and thus unlike speciesism norms do not need to be based on species itself, but rather involve humans being the Centre against which everything else is defined or viewed. Thus there is a species-bias, but it is not the same species bias Singer appeals to in speciesism. Consequently, considering all interests equally and rejecting speciesism would not entail that centric bias or any A(i) norms or A(i) behind interests was

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<sup>176</sup> As was noted in that section, this same argument is made by feminists regarding equality and androcentrism.

<sup>177</sup> Singer and Regan distinguish between 'having an interest' and 'taking an interest'. Thus by this Singer does not mean that nonhuman animals do not take an interest in voting, but rather that "[s]ince dogs can't vote, it is meaningless to talk of their right to vote" (Singer, 1995:p.2).

<sup>178</sup> I do not claim here that this is correct or incorrect. My claim is only to show how Singer and Regan's theories can not address such issues because they are the result of A(i), not A(ii).

addressed. Similarly then for Regan's account (which grants rights but offers no means to identify or address A(i)).

By focusing solely on equal moral consideration Singer and Regan are thus unable to respond to the problems in §3.1.4 – e.g. species profiling, considering nonhumans as dissimilar to humans, A(i) behind some non-intervention, etc. Given that A(i) norms/ideas bias positions, the relation of A(i) to A(ii) (and how this led to Singer and Regan's hierarchies), and the aim of nonhuman ethics, as well as the problems in chapter three, a theory that addresses A(i) would therefore have advantages.

#### **§4.5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, Singer and Regan's theories involve, and do not address, anthropocentrism. While both are positive contributions to nonhuman ethics, their being anthropocentric is problematic. For instance, neither currently fulfil the aim of nonhuman ethics as well as they could. Both exclude nonhuman animals due to anthropocentrism and perpetuate anthropocentric ideas regarding nonhumans (e.g. that nonhumans are passive moral patients rather than active agents who may be moral (Denison, 2010:pp.69-70), as well as the idea that human values and lives are superior). Both involve species-bias and perpetuate A(i) and A(ii).

More importantly, neither provide a means to *address* anthropocentrism, as both focus solely on rejecting A(ii), not A(i). Thus neither can respond to the previous chapter's problems, especially those caused by A(i). Moreover, by involving A(i) both are a problematic means for avoiding A(ii) *qua* §3.1.3.

This does not mean that these theories cannot be re-worked. All I argue is that a less anthropocentric theory that addressed both A(i) and A(ii) would have advantages, such as aiding more nonhumans, fulfilling the aim of nonhuman ethics fully, avoiding unjustifiable

prejudices, and addressing more problems for nonhumans. My aim is to provide such an alternative.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### NONHUMAN ETHICS THEORIES: 'NON-ANTHROPOCENTRIC' POSITIONS

There are numerous other nonhuman ethical theories that could be considered.<sup>179</sup> However most use similar methods,<sup>180</sup> and have the same focus, to Singer and Regan and as such the previous chapter's arguments apply to these positions also.<sup>181</sup>

In this chapter I consider positions that use different methodologies and claim to be non-anthropocentric and address anthropocentrism.<sup>182</sup> I argue that these positions *are* less anthropocentric, but still involve anthropocentrism. I do not claim that these theories could not be re-worked or that they are not positive contributions to nonhuman ethics. All I argue is that even these theories are anthropocentric and thus if a less anthropocentric position could be posited this would have advantages.

I consider Deep Ecology and holistic environmental ethics,<sup>183</sup> feminist care theory, and ecofeminist anti-domination ethics positions. Though the former two are not nonhuman

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<sup>179</sup> Such as those of Paola Cavalieri, Steven F. Sapontzis, Mary Midgley, James Rachels, Martha Nussbaum, and Tony Milligan.

<sup>180</sup> By this I not only refer to how the positions' methodologies work, their arguing from humans, and their endorsing of a hierarchy of value, I also mean how each relies on the justification outlined in §2.3 as was noted Singer and Regan did in the previous chapter. The anthropocentrism demonstrated in Singer and Regan's positions throughout §4.3 clearly reflects some of the responses to that justification of A(ii) in §2.3. As these positions have similar methodologies and appeal to the similar claims, as well as the justification in §2.3, the same arguments apply to them. It should be noted that, as outlined in §1.1 and throughout the previous chapter, such theories vary in their claims regarding anthropocentrism, especially in terms of A(ii). While there are theorists who exclude those beings that do not fit with their criteria many allow either for them to have moral standing or to be included with less value. Both, on my position, remain A(ii) of course, as does the A(i) in each (qua the similar methods, focus, claims, and conclusions in all).

<sup>181</sup> Considering all nonhuman ethics theories, moreover, is beyond the scope of this thesis and would require an investigation of much greater length.

<sup>182</sup> Due to this claim, if such positions are anthropocentric, then in conjunction with the arguments against Singer and Regan's theories, this shall raise sufficient reason to question the aforementioned other nonhuman ethics', given their method of argument and not claiming to be non-anthropocentric.

<sup>183</sup> Although there are other environmental ethics positions, such as that posited by Paul Taylor, the two positions I shall consider are generally thought of as the most important, and least anthropocentric, positions in the field. For this reason, and as considering all possibly relevant theories is beyond the scope of this thesis, I shall focus only on these positions here.

ethics,<sup>184</sup> as environmental ethics typifies non-anthropocentric approaches considering these positions strengthens the claim of this thesis. I outline each theory before arguing that each involves anthropocentrism.

### **§5.1 Environmental Ethics**

In this section I briefly outline environmental ethics as a field, distinguish it from nonhuman ethics, and explain why I focus on the positions I consider in §5.1.1 and §5.1.2.

Environmental ethics considers the more-than-human world and includes not only nonhuman animals within moral considerability but also plants, ecosystems, inanimate ‘nature’, and even biospherical organisms.<sup>185</sup> Despite this, environmental ethics does not specifically focus on nonhuman animals or nonhuman animal issues (Waller, 1997:pp.187-188). Rather environmental theories consider nonhumans: (a) insofar as they relate to the environment, and (b) as they consider a wide range of entities. This focus on the more-than-human world is why environmental theories are critical of nonhuman ethics, claiming that nonhuman ethics does not go far enough, narrows its focus to sentient nonhumans, and uses a method that leads to A(ii) (Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.256). Environmental ethics claims to reject this method in favour of an approach that does not perpetuate anthropocentrism (Benson, 2000:p.24). Thus nonhuman and environmental ethics are considered different due to their focus.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> In the sense of the term I am using here – i.e. to stand in for the commonly used term ‘animal ethic’

<sup>185</sup> As noted in §1.1 environmental ethics, like nonhuman ethics, has often involved the moral standing and moral status distinction, and such has often been considered the starting point for why the more-than-human world should be included morally on the basis of it being anthropocentric to exclude such from even just moral standing, even if the more-than-human world should not be included in moral status. As also noted, different theorists have appealed to this distinction in various way, some considering the more-than-human world to be included in moral standing, others in moral status, and others (such as Plumwood, in theory) arguing that everything (including particles) is included with no ‘outside’. Thus the importance of this distinction, and these differences, are important to keep in mind for the discussion that follows, as is how any value distinction remains A(ii) even so.

<sup>186</sup> This distinction is being increasingly challenged within contemporary literature. For my purposes, it is the focus of the theories that is important, for within this thesis I aim only to consider anthropocentrism in nonhuman

Within environmental ethics there are ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ approaches. The former endorse the ‘Sole Value Assumption’ outlined in §1.1, and include positions that claim (i) humans can do as they please, or (ii) humans should consider the more-than-human world due to human interests (Attfield, 1993:p.22).<sup>187</sup> In contrast, deep positions consider the more-than-human world on its own terms, separate to human interests, and claim to not involve anthropocentrism (Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.255).<sup>188</sup> Shallow positions require small change to human behaviour and do not challenge human thoughts regarding the more-than-human world, whereas deep positions require systematic changes to behaviour and attitudes (Katz, Light & Rothenbery, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.ix). Nonhuman ethics is thus ‘deeper’ than ‘shallow’ positions, but not a ‘deep’ position, as while it rejects the Sole VA most endorse the Greater Value Assumption and do not consider value in the more-than-human world (Attfield, 1993:p.22).

Despite the differences, I consider environmental positions as they attempt to move beyond anthropocentrism (Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.17). I consider these as potential non-anthropocentric nonhuman ethics, rather than environmental ethics, and thus focus on how they consider nonhuman animals rather than plants or ecosystems. I consider only ‘deep’ positions as these claim to reject anthropocentrism. I first consider Deep Ecology and then Holism.

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ethics rather than environmental ethics, i.e. anthropocentrism in regards to the focus on nonhuman animals and the effect this has. I do not claim that nonhuman ethics and environmental ethics should be distinct, nor that one can not be made to apply to another. I only wish to concern this thesis with the focus on nonhuman animals however. (Moreover, anything further would require a much greater amount of research space).

<sup>187</sup> Such positions vary regarding whether any or some moral standing (qua §1.1) is given to the more-than-human world. In standard environmental ethics debates such theories are considered to not consider the more-than-human world at all outside of instrumental value (Routley & Routley, in Elliot, 2004; Palmer, in Light & Rolston, 2008:p.18).

<sup>188</sup> There are, of course, variations in ‘shallow’ to ‘deep’ positions which include those who grant some moral standing to the more-than-human world without including them in moral status (e.g. Feinberg), those who do not separate moral status from standing and either post biospherical egalitarianism (at least in theory) or the Greater VA (e.g. Taylor, Callicott’s revised position), and those who are truly ‘deep’ positions that posit all belong to the same moral status with none outside (e.g. Plumwood and Callicott’s original account, both in theory). There are also environmental ethics that include plants but not ecosystems or mountains (and some include those in standing and others not), and so on.

### **§5.1.1 Deep Ecology**

In this section I outline Deep Ecology. I draw upon this in §5.1.1.1 when arguing that Deep Ecology involves anthropocentrism. Deep Ecology purports to be non-dominating towards the more-than-human world (Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.255), and thus is considered the antithesis of anthropocentrism. There is not one Deep Ecology position, however, but rather several that share common threads (Grey, 1993:pp.464-465; Sessions, 1991:p.92). Arne Naess, George Sessions, Warwick Fox, Richard Sylvan, Robin Attfield, and Bill Devall have put forward differing Deep Ecology positions (Katz, Light & Rothenbery, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.xii; French, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.128). Even so, Deep Ecology was coined by, and the position's central thoughts were derived from, Arne Naess (Plumwood, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.89; Grey, 1993:p.468; Sale, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.214). Naess' thoughts are considered the seminal Deep Ecology (Sessions, 1991:p.91), and thus I focus on Naess' position.

Deep Ecology centres around its 'eight point program' which sum up the position's claims and aim (Katz, Light & Rothenbery, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.x-xi):

- (1) The flourishing of human and nonhuman life has intrinsic, not just instrumental, value
- (2) Richness and diversity of life are values in themselves, such contribute to human and nonhuman flourishing
- (3) Humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of life, only to satisfy vital needs
- (4) Human interference in the more-than-human world is excessive

- (5) The flourishing of human life and culture is compatible with a decrease in human population. The more-than-human world requires this.
- (6) Significant change in life conditions require change in policies
- (7) Ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality, rather than adhering to a high-standard of living
- (8) Subscribing to these points provides an obligation to implement them

The central claim is thus: the dominant Western mind-set fails to provide a satisfactory basis for an ethic towards the more-than-human world (Grey, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.49), all life is valuable in itself and humans must alter their behaviour to consider the more-than-human world (Sale, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.214), thus biospherical egalitarianism is required and this requires expanding the self out to identify with the earth (Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.19-21; French, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.129).<sup>189</sup> Deep Ecology thus rejects human superiority, anthropocentrism, and requires changes in our understanding, approaches to the more-than-human world, and human society and behaviour.

Before outlining the position, Deep Ecology's claims regarding ethics require clarifying as Naess is often intentionally vague regarding this aspect of his account (Clark, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.4-5; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.263-264). For example, Deep Ecology often seems unconcerned with ethics, focusing rather on metaphysics and changing human ideas regarding humans' place in the more-than-human world (Attfield, 1993:p.26). The claim is that by adopting the Deep Ecology world-view ethical implications just follow (Katz, Light & Rothenbery, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.xiii-xiv; Naess, in Benson, 2000:p.244). Such ethical attitudes, however, are not given normatively, but rather

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<sup>189</sup> Deep Ecology, therefore, in theory attempts to bring all the more-than-human world within the bounds of moral status.

simply express the attitudes one would likely adopt (Attfield, 1993:p.26). Naess' lack of focus on normativity has led to Deep Ecology not being seen as a value-theory at all (Attfield, 1993:p.26; French, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.127-128). In many instances, Karen Warren claims, "Naess' view is more of a personal code...that guides one's decisions" (Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.263-264). In other instances, however, Naess explicitly claims that Deep Ecology is "clearly and forcefully normative" and expresses a "value priority system" (Naess, 1973:pp.98-99).

This ambiguity arises as for Naess Deep Ecology is a movement not a philosophical position (Katz, Light & Rothenbery, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.ix; Clark, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.4). Thus Deep Ecology is not an environmental *ethic* but rather a world-view that considers humans' place in the world (Katz, Light & Rothenbery, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.ix-xiv). Despite this, Naess considers Deep Ecology's views to be ethical or at least have ethical consequences (Attfield, 1993:pp.27-28).

Deep Ecology can thus be clarified as a personal changing of world-view, by challenging the human-'nature' divide via establishing a relational view of reality, which subsequently has ethical consequences. Thus Deep Ecology focuses on the human self via arguing for a change in the human perspective (Attfield, 1993:pp.26-27; Naess, in Benson, 2000:p.244). 'Life' is therefore not the locus of value, and thus Deep Ecology is not biocentrism (Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.19-20).

Deep Ecology can now be outlined as follows. The position challenges anthropocentrism via de-Centring humans by making humans and the more-than-human world equally valuable and asserting ecocentrism (Waller, 1997:p.188). Human flourishing is supported only in balance with the flourishing of the more-than-human world (Sessions, 1991:p.91). Thus, human interests are not privileged and do not override members of other species or the more-than-human world, nor is the world to be interpreted or managed from a

human standpoint (Watson, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.109). Nonhuman animals and the more-than-human world have a right<sup>190</sup> to live and flourish equally (*Ibid*). Further, no human ethic should be used, as this perpetuates anthropocentrism, rather once one attains the Deep Ecology world-view ethics becomes a personal endeavour that derives from one's ecocentric world-view (Sessions, 1991:p.92; Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.33-35; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.263-264).

Deep Ecology achieves this world-view by rejecting the traditional 'human-in-nature' image and adopting a 'relational, total-field image' (Naess, 1973:p.95). By this Naess means altering one's perspective from anthropocentrism and the individual-self to the conception of the self as part of, and related, to the whole, and thus that the whole is part of one's self. This is achieved via using three 'Senses of Self' – (i) the Indistinguishable Self, (ii) the Expanded Self, and (iii) the Trans-Personal Self (Diehm, 2002:p.25; Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.26-28; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259). By these Naess means:

- *Indistinguishable Self*: via understanding that humans are one strand in a biotic web we reject boundaries between ourselves and 'nature' (Diehm, 2002:p.30; Plumwood, 1991:pp.12-13; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259).
- *Expanded Self*: via empathy with others we are led to a larger Self that is detached from particular concerns (Diehm, 2002:p.27; Plumwood, 1991:p.14; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259).

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<sup>190</sup> This word is meant loosely to just mean that humans and the more-than-human world have equal claims to/deserve to equally live and flourish.

- *Trans-Personal Self*: the overcoming of the self via impartial identification with particulars in a way that removes attachment, emotion, and the personal (Diehm, 2002:p.25; Plumwood, 1991:p.15; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259).

Using these ‘Senses’ causes the personal, anthropocentric Self to be rejected, we increasingly perceive that we are just one part of the world until we attain the Deep Ecology total-world-view. Thus we spiral out from the personal self to the cosmic related-self, and this results in acting ecocentrically.

Naess claims that biospherical egalitarianism results *in principle*, as it is impossible to live without killing, though recognizing that everything has a right to live and flourish is entailed (Naess, 1973:pp.95-96). This then leads to the eight point program. Thus Deep Ecology seems to reject anthropocentrism.

#### **§5.1.1.1 Anthropocentrism**

In this section I argue that Deep Ecology involves anthropocentrism. First, I outline Val Plumwood’s objections to Naess and show how these reveal anthropocentrism. Second, I draw upon this and Naess’ methodology to reveal additional anthropocentrism. I conclude that Deep Ecology thus involves anthropocentrism.

First, Plumwood argues that Deep Ecology’s method to establish a total-view, via spiralling out from the personal to the cosmic, and the Senses of Self that are used, all involve centric thinking. I consider Plumwood’s objections to each Sense of Self, the response to this, and how this reveals anthropocentrism in turn.

First, Plumwood argues that the Trans-Personal Self involves androcentric ideas, such as the rejection of the personal in favour of the impersonal, the universal over the particular,

rationalist conceptions of the universal, and the superiority of reason over capacities such as emotion (Diehm, 2002:p.25; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259; Plumwood, 1991:p.15). All involve and perpetuate androcentrism via the reason/nature and mind/body dichotomies (Plumwood, 1991:pp.15-16; Diehm, 2002:pp.25-26). Plumwood argues that this Sense of Self perpetuates ideas of transcending ‘nature’, the inferiority of emotion and body, and of rejecting the personal for an abstract impersonal. Thus, Plumwood argues, this Sense of Self focuses solely on the *human/male*-self, defined as impersonal reason rather than relation-based emotion/’nature’ and it is from this that we relate to the more-than-human world (Plumwood, 1991:pp.15-16).<sup>191</sup> This involves A(i).<sup>192</sup> Christian Diehm responds that while correct for some Deep Ecologists, Naess does not reject the personal but ‘spirals out from the personal to the cosmic’, and thus the personal forms the basis of the cosmic (Diehm, 2002:p.26).

Moving from the personal to the cosmic, however, implies an expansion of egoism<sup>193</sup> outward. If so, given that Naess considers ethics to be a personal matter after attaining a total-view, and that the total-view is based upon the individual expanding out to view the world from their personal self, the individual’s centric thinking remains unchallenged *before* the expansion of the self. Thus the resulting ethical world-view and one’s actions involve this. For instance, conceptions of what is natural for men and women or human and nonhuman that result from A(i) may remain. Expanding from this to the cosmic, and basing ethical decisions upon the self, without challenging these ideas first lead to interactions with the more-than-human world that can involve A(i).

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<sup>191</sup> The relation of impersonal, transcending ‘nature’, and reason to anthropocentrism was also discussed in chapters two and three.

<sup>192</sup> It should be recalled here how it was shown in chapter two that ‘reason’ and ‘mind’ have been traditionally anthropocentric and used to separate humans from the more-than-human world.

<sup>193</sup> In the sense of what is the Self, not being egocentric as discussed in chapter one.

Second, Plumwood objects on this basis to the Expanded Self. This Sense of Self relies on, and reinforces, egoism and self-interest via being based on one's self and then expanding out to understand the universe on this basis (Plumwood, 1991:pp.14-15; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259; Diehm, 2002:p.27). Plumwood argues that expanding one's self into a larger self does not question egoism or the original self, and thus the larger self is just egoism (Plumwood, 1991:p.14). One relates to the more-than-human world therefore not by distinguishing them from oneself, recognizing differences, or considering others' needs as they are for them, but only in relation to, and to the extent that, they are incorporated into one's self (Plumwood, 1991:pp.14-15; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259). One's relation to another is thus based on interpreting the other *from one's perspective*, interpreting them *on the basis of one's self*, all while centric thinking in the self remains unquestioned. This involves A(i) in how one relates to the more-than-human world. As ethical decisions are personal, this is anthropocentric. Diehm responds that for some Deep Ecologists this is correct, yet Naess considers that the human self is always relational to the whole and is never based on a particular self that could involve egoism (Diehm, 2002:pp.27-28).

If correct, however, Diehm's response to Plumwood's first objection could not be made, as if there is never a self aside from relation then it is unclear how one spirals out from the self to the cosmic to achieve Naess' rejection of anthropocentrism and attain the total-view. While Diehm could claim Naess means a realization that one is never non-relational, this is unconvincing as Naess admits that there is an 'alienated' self, formed without the world in mind (Naess, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.3-4). Further, given that Naess rejects holism (Diehm, 2002:p.30; Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.22-24) and claims that individuals always remain separate (Diehm, 2002:p.31; Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.22-24) Naess clearly intended the anthropocentric, individual self to be expanded to become a cosmic self via relation. Thus Plumwood's objection, and anthropocentrism, remains.

Third, Plumwood argues that the Indistinguishable Self rejects *any* difference between one's self and another, and thus the other *is* one's self, and it is from this realization that Deep Ecology claims humans would then care about the more-than-human world as everything is one whole, and the world's needs therefore become one's own (Plumwood, 1991:p.12; Diehm, 2002:p.30; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.259). Plumwood argues that this claim does not follow, as if the self and the more-than-human world is Indistinguishable, then there is no reason to consider its needs rather than that it should consider ours (Diehm, 2002:p.30). Whatever one does, one does to one's self. In conjunction with the egoism and unchanged beliefs this seems just as plausible a result. This results in more a *more* anthropocentric world-view, i.e. *it is me*, rather than *I am it*, and involves A(i) via seeing others as one's self in an *indistinguishable* way (Plumwood, 1991:pp.12-13). Moreover, this does not challenge why humans think themselves separate from the more-than-human world – i.e. by what it is to be human (i.e. distinct from nature) – but only attempts to resolve the difference by making humans and the more-than-human world indistinguishably connected (*Ibid*). This does not challenge the underlying A(i) and as from this realisation the Self expands out, in an impersonal way that views everything as indistinguishable, A(i) remains and is perpetuated in the individual's actions (*Ibid*). Diehm responds that Naess rejects holism that obliterates difference and thus that there are always individuals, but these individuals are related (Diehm, 2002:pp.30-31).

This again calls into question Diehm's previous response and does not fit with Naess' claims. For instance, Diehm admits that Naess claims that interests *are* fused in this indistinguishable way, even if selves are not fused together (*Ibid*:p.32). It is unlikely that this means 'mutual interests' rather than 'indistinguishable interests' as Diehm notes how Naess's position "of necessity relates the interests of others to those of oneself; it discounts kinships and similarities, and sees others to be 'like' oneself" (*Ibid*). Diehm concedes that even if such

interests are “not identical to one’s own, it will always be the case that identification centres upon a recognition of interests which are in significant aspects similar to one’s own” (*Ibid*:p.33). This undermines Diehm’s response to Plumwood.

More importantly, A(i) is the result of this method of identifying interests, especially when the above problems are added in, and as these Senses of Self are what ethical action is based upon, such actions also involve A(i). Diehm essentially concedes this by acknowledging that Naess’ view, as a result of this identification of interests, “runs the risk of failing to include others whose interests are so divergent as to obstruct or ruin the process of identification, or of assuming that the same sorts of things that are good for oneself are also the sorts of things that are good for others, since one relates to others based primarily on an assumed similarity of interests” (*Ibid*). As nonhuman interests can be radically different, and we identify them only with ourselves, and this self-identification is Naess’ only means of considering others’ interests, (and as the self retains centric thinking), Naess’ position involves A(i).

As Eric Katz sums up, Deep Ecology’s three core ideas are structured anthropocentrically and based on human categories of thought and human values, via identifying human interests with the interests of the world and considering the latter based on humans (Katz, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:pp.33-34). This is A(i). Further, the rejection of positing an ethic regarding the more-than-human world is based upon this anthropocentric identification process (*Ibid*), and thus any individual-based ethical decision similarly involves A(i). Finally, Deep Ecology involves valuing nature via a process that cannot adequately consider interests not relevantly-similar to humans’, based upon a ‘sameness or difference’ dichotomy rather than considering that humans and nonhumans have similarities *and* differences (Plumwood, in Katz, Light & Rothenbery, 2000:p.65). As Plumwood notes, “to have value exclusively on either sameness with or difference from the human implicitly

construes the human as the centre and point of value – either as the positive (same) or the negative (different) source of value or recognition” (*Ibid*).

The second means of revealing anthropocentrism in Deep Ecology – shown by considering how Naess treats interference with the more-than-human world – draws upon this method and conclusions. Given the identification and continuity of the self with the more-than-human world, it is unclear why Naess claims human interference in ‘nature’ is non-natural (Grey, 1993:pp.465-466). This only makes sense on an understanding that ‘nature’ is whatever is independent from human interaction/influence, thus what is natural is different from what is human – e.g. that interaction between human societies is acceptable as there is a similarity, such as morality, however such similarity does not exist in ‘nature’. This is anthropocentric.<sup>194</sup> This is supported by the Deep Ecology claim that nonhumans, unlike humans, are allowed to act ‘according to their species’ (Watson, in in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.112-115). This claim homogenizes nonhuman animals and implies that nonhumans are to be treated and judged *completely* differently to humans and cannot act in ways, or curb behaviour, as humans do. Thus, Deep Ecology considers nonhumans different (A(i)) in ways used to justify differential treatment.<sup>195</sup> This separation justifies non-interference in the more-than-human world, even if ‘prey’ nonhumans would *prefer* to live and accept help, in a way that is distinct from the human case. Similarly, Deep Ecology uses this to distinguish ‘paradigmatic humans’ from nonhumans and claim that the latter cannot be citizens like the former (either societal or moral) (*Ibid*:pp.112-113). Contemporary political-based nonhuman theories show that this is neither practically problematic nor justifiable on non-anthropocentric grounds (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011:pp.101-155&252-258).

This A(i)-based reasoning is likely why Naess also claims biospherical egalitarianism only ‘in principle’ (Waller, 1997:p.188; French, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.129). This

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<sup>194</sup> As discussed in chapters two and three.

<sup>195</sup> See chapters two and three.

claim is not based only on practicality as Naess further holds that when human vital interests are at stake these interests should be defended rather than nonhuman interests (French, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.130). This is not that in certain instances human interests may outweigh nonhuman interests and this can change due to context. Rather Naess claims that certain 'vital' human interests will *always* trump nonhuman interests (*Ibid*). Naess' first justification for this is that "in practice, we have...greater obligation to that which is nearer to us" (*Ibid*:p.131).<sup>196</sup> A second justification given is that "Naess himself emphasizes that humans [thus, unlike nonhumans] have 'extraordinary' and particular traits" (Sale, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.219). Both justifications rely on this A(i) reasoning of distinguishing humans and have been shown questionable in Singer and Regan's accounts. Naess, however, explicitly rejects that humans should never be privileged over nonhumans, despite claiming equal inherent value, that all should flourish, and that the human population should be reduced (French, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.133; Naess, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.123-124). This is A(ii) derived from A(i).

Further, this commitment leads Naess to endorse actions towards nonhumans that he does not with humans. As David Waller notes:

"...[T]he 'in principle' clause is inserted because any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation, and suppression" (Naess 1973, 95). [Naess] never explains what he means by "realistic praxis" and "some killing."...Indeed, hunting is implicitly condoned by Naess...although he takes exception to "needless" suffering. He says that 'it is a serious matter when animals are submitted to painful experiments in order to test the chemicals used...in food

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<sup>196</sup> It should be recalled that this was discussed in §2.2 and was there shown to be anthropocentric, and further not to justify that all humans would or should put humans first without anthropocentrism being assumed. Those same considerations apply to Naess also, with similar conclusions.

colorings. Human beings are closer to us than animals, but there is no unsatisfied vital human need driving the food cosmetic industry.’...[However] Does an unsatisfied vital human need drive the beef industry or even hunting in general?...” (Waller, 1997:p.188)

What Naess means by ‘vital interest’ is left intentionally vague to “allow for considerable latitude in judgement. Differences in climate and related factors, together with differences in the structures of societies as they now exist, need to be considered. Also the difference between a means to the satisfaction of the need and the need must be considered.” (*Ibid*) The example Naess gives is: “If a whaler in an industrial culture quits whaling he may risk unemployment under the present economic conditions. Whaling is for him an important means. But in a rich country with a high standard of living whaling is not a vital need” (*Ibid*).

This is problematic as this allows some intervention in nature – for human needs, but never for nonhuman needs – and raises questions of why this criteria for a ‘vital need’ is justified, why these outweigh nonhumans’ lives and flourishing, and whether similar behaviour would be acceptable with humans – the lack of human analogues in Naess’ work is telling (Peterson, 2013:p.124; Waller, 1997:p.188). However, even setting these aside, Naess clearly claims that nonhuman lives and flourishing can be outweighed by human lives *and* human interests that need not be necessary as alternative jobs and unemployment would not end all humans’ lives. Moreover, these claims focus on a human view rather than an ecocentric total-view, which is also A(i), and the A(i) and A(ii) behind them leads to treatment of nonhumans that is anthropocentric and, moreover, problematic for any nonhuman ethic (Waller, 1997:pp.188-189). Thus Naess’ Deep Ecology involves anthropocentrism <sup>197</sup> and is

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<sup>197</sup> This is further exemplified by Naess, who claims that within his cottage in winter human guests rather than nonhuman guests are privileged enormously, and that even though the latter deserve some recognition it is toward the humans – *qua* being human, his closeness to humans, or their traits – that Naess has obligations that are “enormously greater” (Naess, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.147-148).

questionable for a nonhuman ethic. A less anthropocentric alternative would therefore be advantageous.

### **§5.1.2 Holism**

In this section I consider J. Baird Callicott's environmental ethic as Callicott offers the paradigmatic holistic account and is the leading interpreter of Aldo Leopold's 'Land Ethic' (Varner, 2002:p.12). I briefly outline his position then argue that it involves anthropocentrism.

Callicott traditionally argued that the biotic community is of central concern and that which preserves the integrity, stability, and beauty of that community is good, and that which does otherwise is wrong (Callicott, in Elliot, 2004:p.39; Varner, 2002:p.12). Callicott maintains that morality is based upon moral sentiment (reminiscent of Hume, Smith, or Darwin) in regard to community and, given ecology and evolution, the moral community is the biotic, not human, community (Varner, 2002:p.12). Callicott argues that as morality developed via increasingly expanding our caring outwards to encompass more others, humans can also care for the more-than-human world (Callicott, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.442-443). Due to this holism, Callicott traditionally endorsed biospherical egalitarianism, claiming that humans are not conquerors of the more-than-human world, just equal members (Callicott, in Elliot, 2004:p.32). Callicott traditionally claimed that no entity is more important than any other:

“...The land ethic manifestly does not accord equal moral worth to each and every member of the biotic community; the moral worth of individuals (including, take note, human individuals) is relative, to be assessed in

accordance with the particular relation of each to the collective entity...called  
'land'..." (*Ibid*:p.47)<sup>198</sup>

Callicott argued that his position implies views that Deep Ecology does not, such as humans being vegetarian due to environmental reasons (*Ibid*:p.30). Despite this Callicott objected to nonhuman ethics due to its focus on individuals and how it does not discriminate between certain types of nonhuman animals, e.g. 'wild'/'domestic', 'abundant'/'rare', or 'natural'/'exotic' (Callicott, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.441). Callicott argued that these, along with nonhuman ethics focusing on rights or suffering, entail the Predation Argument, i.e. that humans must police the more-than-human world if suffering or rights violations are to be prevented. Callicott considers this absurd (Callicott, 1988:p.168). Finally, Callicott objected to nonhuman ethics' using human morality and expanding outwards without challenging first principles, claiming that this results in a 'humane morality' focused on sentience and does not include the more-than-human world (Callicott, in Elliot, 2004:pp.36-39).

This is Callicott's traditional account however. Callicott altered his position by merging Mary Midgley's individualistic nonhuman ethic with his land ethic (Hadley, 2007:p.67). This nonhuman/environmental ethic argues similarly to the traditional position, but included Midgley's claim that we are part of different relationships that expand outward, and thus Callicott argued that we can include nonhumans as individuals within expanding relationships without challenging the focus on the biotic community (Callicott, 1988:p.165; Callicott, in Elliot, 2004:pp.29-30; Hadley, 2007:p.67). Essentially, the traditional claims remain but when we are in a community relationship with ever increasing circles of beings (family, friends, neighbourhood, etc.) this can include nonhuman animals, and thus we have moral concerns

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<sup>198</sup> Callicott's traditional approach therefore includes all of the more-than-human world within moral status, and further does not begin from moral standing – but rather the claim that biospherical integrity is the most important factor rather than any set of beings' status.

regarding such nonhumans (*Ibid*). With this Callicott maintained that we should take ‘domestic’ nonhumans into consideration, but as we are not in a community with ‘wild’ nonhumans these require no consideration (Callicott, 1988:pp.167-168).<sup>199</sup>

This hybrid theory has much to offer as a nonhuman ethic. Despite this, anthropocentrism is involved for two reasons. First, Callicott retracted both biospherical egalitarianism and the biotic community as the sole focus of his ethic. For instance, Callicott changed his position to claim that preferencing the biotic community over humans in a way that resulted in humans being worse off would be a perverse morality (Callicott, 1989:p.94), that his position does not cancel human morality (*Ibid*), and that:

“...[T]he land ethic does not replace our several human communities and their correlative ethics – our duties and obligations to family...to municipality and fellow-citizens, to country and countrymen, to humanity and human beings. Rather it supplements them. Hence the land ethic leaves our traditional human morality quite intact and pre-emptive...” (Callicott, in Elliot, 2004:p.29)

While human morality is altered to consider the biotic community, the latter is neither the focus nor does it replace traditional morality as the main moral claim (Callicott, 1989:p.94). Additionally, although Callicott maintains that concern for ‘domestic’ nonhumans is within his morality, he now rejects all members of the biotic community as equal in favour of considering humans (*Ibid*:pp.93-96), and claims that “[n]onhuman fellow members of the biotic community have no ‘human rights’, because they are not, by definition, members of the human community” (*Ibid*:p.94). In short, nonhuman animals are not part of the human community,

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<sup>199</sup> This demonstrates a shift that the ‘status’ / ‘standing’ distinction outlined in §1.1 reveals, in that Callicott moved from including all equally within moral status to having a separate status based on Midgley’s concentric circles for those closer. Thus this version of Callicott’s theory moves to the value distinctions of moral standing (i.e. some beings have status, others standing, which equates to the Greater VA) outlined in §1.1.

their exclusion is based on not being human, they do not possess what gives humans consideration above others, are to be judged in comparison to and on the basis of human criteria for inclusion, and are not morally equal (Hadley, 2007:pp.67-71). Moreover, Callicott does not consider what gives humans rights, and given his focus on community as the foundation for moral concern, the exclusion of nonhumans from community with humans ‘by definition’ implies that it is by not being human that such exclusion is made. Considering that Midgley acknowledged that human communities are intermixed with nonhumans (Clement, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.447)<sup>200</sup> that Callicott does not consider this supports this conclusion. All of these alterations involve A(i) and lead to A(ii).

Second, like Deep Ecology, Callicott relies on a distinction of nonhumans into ‘wild’ and ‘domestic’. As argued in §3.1.4 this relies on anthropocentric ideas of nonhumans (Peterson, 2013:pp.65-73&173), such as that what is ‘wild’ is outside of human civilization. Similarly, the idea that ‘civilization’ is the opposite of ‘wild nature’ involves separating humans and the more-than-human world. Callicott subscribes to these ideas (Callicott, 1989:pp.95-96).<sup>201</sup> This division has been argued to be mistaken, as humans and nonhumans have never been separate and nonhumans have influenced human evolution just as humans have influenced nonhumans’ (Peterson, 2013:pp.14-15&65-73&84-95&158).<sup>202</sup> Moreover, as argued in §3.1.4, this conception of ‘wild’ and ‘domestic’ involves an understanding of what nonhumans are defined in relation to their interaction or relationship with humans (*Ibid*:p.173). This is faulty reasoning, given how fluid human and nonhuman interactions and societies are, but also involves A(i). This also involves understanding what is ‘natural’ via reference to the human, which considers the human to be separate to the more-than-human world and also the

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<sup>200</sup> Contemporary evidence from ethologists, philosophers, and political scientists – such as Peterson, Donaldson & Kymlicka, and Bekoff – further supports this. See also the arguments in §2.2.

<sup>201</sup> This relates to §2.1 and §3.1.2, as this same dichotomy of ‘nature’ and ‘civilization’, or what is more human/mind versus more natural/body, has been used to distinguish men/women and Western societies over primitive societies, etc., throughout history.

<sup>202</sup> See also Donaldson & Kymlicka’s *Zoopolis* for a detailed consideration of this.

Centre by which everything is defined. This is A(i). Moreover, as noted in chapter two, this reasoning occurs due to a setting-apart of humans on the basis of some characteristic, which is also anthropocentric. Callicott does this in considering, and how he justifies, human communities as separate.

More importantly, Callicott uses this dichotomy as the basis for differential treatment, i.e. *because of 'what they are'*, in determining that we should not intervene in the more-than-human world. While Callicott may claim free-roaming nonhumans are not within our community, the problem is neither are some humans and yet, as John Hadley notes, “Callicott accepts we have obligations to *all* human beings” (Hadley, 2007:p.71). This differential treatment involves A(i) and A(ii).

Callicott’s theory thus involves anthropocentrism. A less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic would thus have advantages.

## **§5.2 Feminist Ethics**

In the following sections I consider two feminist nonhuman ethics positions. In this section I briefly outline feminist nonhuman ethics and show an important distinction between the two approaches I draw on in §5.2.1 and §5.2.2.

Given feminist positions reject sexism and centric thinking, these may offer a good approach for less anthropocentric nonhuman ethics. Despite this, most feminists do not believe nonhuman animals are oppressed relevantly-similar to women or other groups, or that feminism must address nonhuman issues (Lucas, 2005:pp.150-151; Wellington, 1995:pp.99-100).<sup>203</sup> Other feminists, however, argue that women and nonhuman animals face similar problems and

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<sup>203</sup> As an additional, but not necessary, clarification: these feminists argue that nonhuman ethics is culturally imperialistic and involves androcentric norms, such as claims that women and nature are similar or only considers what is nutritionally good for men and universalizes this (Lucas, 2005:pp.153-154).

that feminist thought can thus offer a better nonhuman ethic than traditional approaches. The two main feminist accounts are Care Theory and ‘anti-domination’ ecofeminism (Wellington, 1995:p.98).

Both feminisms focus on androcentrism, and reject Deep Ecology by claiming that it involves and perpetuates androcentric norms. Both claim that approaching nonhumans via androcentrism better deals with the issues and ensures androcentric norms are removed. Thus whereas environmental positions focus on anthropocentrism, feminist theories focus on androcentrism, approach nonhumans through this, and claim that this removes anthropocentrism also (Lee-Lampshire, 1996:p.92).

The two approaches’ essential difference is that Care Theory considers *similarities* between women and nonhuman animals and their oppression, whereas ecofeminism considers these connections *a matter of logic* – i.e. all centrism, oppression, and domination is necessarily linked, thus to reject one all must be rejected (Curtin, 1991:pp.60-66; Sessions, 1991:pp.96-98; Warren, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:p.257). Thus Care Theory considers the similarities important, but does not consider this a necessary connection or focus on the rejection of centrisms. This distinction will be important.

### **§5.2.1 Feminist Care Theory**

In this section I consider feminist Care Theory. I outline the position before arguing that it involves anthropocentrism in four ways.

In nonhuman ethics Care Theorists begin by noting that there are similarities between how women and nonhuman animals are oppressed (Deckha, 2012:pp.527-528; Peterson, 2013:pp.56-59). Examples involve how women’s views, values, and norms are ignored in favour of traditionally-male perspectives, how women are oppressed by these norms (due to

claims involving reason/mind over ‘nature’, emotion, or body, or separation rather than relation), and how women are considered less or treated differently because of them (Donovan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.47; Deckha, 2012:pp.527-528). Care Theorists reject traditional nonhuman approaches (e.g. rights and interests) as such privilege reason-based thinking/criteria, ignore context in favour of the universal, dispense with emotion, and ignore that humans and nonhumans are relational beings (i.e. rather than isolated individuals) (Donovan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.47-48; Donovan, 1996:p.81; Wellington, 1995:p.100). Given the oppressions women face and the Care ethic proposed in response, this same approach is applied to nonhuman animals (Donovan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.47-48).

Josephine Donovan, the best known Care Theorist, states the position “is one of listening to animals, paying emotional attention, taking seriously – *caring about* – what they are telling us...[w]e should not kill, eat, torture, and exploit animals because they do not want to be so treated and we know that” (*Ibid*:p.47). Thus Care Theory argues that we can recognize when nonhumans want/like certain behaviour from what they tell us, we respond by caring about how they feel, and then act on this basis, caring about them. Two points require clarification. First, ‘care’ does not mean ‘caring for nonhumans like mothers’ (*Ibid*), but rather that we pay emotional and mental attention to, and then care for, what nonhumans tells us (Donovan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.47; Curtin, 1991:pp.65-67). Second, by ‘care’ Donovan does not mean empathy, but rather the keeping of a certain distance and imaginatively constructing the others’ situation from what they tell us so as to understand it emotionally and intellectually (Donovan, 1996:p.83).

This method forms a ‘dialogical ethic’ which Donovan clarifies as “the attempt to reach out emotionally as well as intellectually to what is different from oneself rather than reshaping...that difference to conform to one’s own human-based preconceptions” (Donovan,

in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.48). This is accomplished similarly to how we read humans, via “[b]ody language, eye movement, facial expression, tone of voice” (*Ibid*:p.50). We also consider “the species’ habits and culture. And, as with humans, repeated experiences with one individual help one to understand that individual’s unique needs and wishes” (*Ibid*). Donovan concludes that, “[b]y paying attention to, by studying, what is signified, one comes to know, to care about, the signifier...One imagines...how the animal is feeling based on how one would feel in a similar situation” (*Ibid*). This approach thus stresses the importance of relationships rather than focusing on separate individuals (Clement, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.444-445).

From this, Donovan concludes “that [moral] status should be granted to living creatures with whom one can communicate cognitively and emotionally as to their needs and wishes” (Donovan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.49).<sup>204</sup> This position has several merits given its focus on nonhumans *as nonhumans* and the attempt to consider nonhuman animals as individuals with their own preferences and perspectives.

Anthropocentrism remains, however, in four ways. First, given Donovan’s description of how we relate to nonhuman animals the Care account only relates to nonhumans that are physiologically and behaviourally similar to humans. Likewise, the need to relate emotionally *and intellectually* requires this similarity, i.e. that their thoughts and feelings are relevantly-similar to us. While this works for many nonhumans, such as mammals, any nonhuman animal that differs facially, vocally, or behaviourally cannot be related to. These nonhumans may have similar thoughts or feelings and yet express them in less obvious ways or in a manner different to humans, such as via subtle movements or olfactory means. Examples of such differences are noted in ethological studies (Bekoff, 2007:pp.29-84), and other means may exist that we have

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<sup>204</sup> Again, here a morally relevant characteristic or a set of characteristics are being appealed to for which beings are included within moral consideration and to what extent. This once more shows how the justification in §2.3 is appealed to by many nonhuman ethics positions.

not found and may never know. This method therefore excludes such nonhumans and does so due to their difference from humans. Further, this occurs *because* this is, as Donovan claims, how the Care ethic works with humans. Thus, using a theory proposed for, and based on, human communication and interaction for nonhumans (Peterson, 2013:pp.56-59), only those nonhumans resembling humans are included, and this due to their similarity with humans, whereas others are excluded *because* the theory is designed to focus on human-like beings and *because* they differ from humans. This is A(i). Moreover, Donovan's criteria for moral considerability grants moral status to those beings with which we can communicate, and thus excludes these other nonhumans for the same reasons. This is A(ii) that results from Donovan's A(i).

Second, some feminists object to positions that consider women as closer to 'nature' and that claim men and women think differently. It is argued that this idea is part of the problems facing women (Lucas, 2005:pp.150-151; Plumwood, 1993:pp.30-40). I shall not consider this objection itself, however it raises a possible analogue regarding nonhumans and anthropocentrism in that Care Theory's focus on emotion and rejection of reason regarding nonhuman animals implies that such nonhumans do not share in reason, or at least in the same way, as human-males. This implies a conception of nonhumans as 'nature' rather than 'reason', just as the objection claims it conceives women in the same way, rather than considering that nonhumans – like humans – are alike.<sup>205</sup> At minimum this raises the possibility of the A(i) noted as problematic in §3.1.4.

Third, a common objection to Care Theory is that it takes 'domestic' nonhuman animals as paradigmatic and has problems accounting for free-roaming nonhumans (Clement, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.445). For instance, Care Theory's focus on relationships and rejection of autonomy works for 'domestic' nonhumans but not for free-roaming nonhumans

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<sup>205</sup> And thus that the human dichotomy is the result of social/cultural conditioning that is likely androcentric.

that are independent of humans (*Ibid*:pp.445-446). This objection involves the anthropocentric dichotomy of ‘wild’ and ‘domestic’, however the core concern – i.e. that there are nonhumans distant from humans – reveals a problem. If correct, Care Theory focuses only on certain ‘types’ of nonhuman animals in developing a theory to apply *to all* nonhuman animals, and thus has difficulty relating to these other nonhumans but also will not be able to account for their perspectives. This is especially the case given that many nonhumans that live at a distance from humans (e.g. in the ocean) are not in contact with humans and thus it is difficult to apply this ethic even though human actions affect these nonhumans (e.g. climate change).

This reveals four problems. First, nonhumans are homogenised as all being alike, which was noted in §3.1.4 to be anthropocentric.<sup>206</sup> Second, these nonhumans’ perspectives are not represented, and this is based on considering certain ‘types’ of nonhuman and because the position moves from humans to include nonhumans. This is A(i). Third, Donovan’s solution to this is that we begin from particular reactions and then extract this to other situations to generate universal ideas (Donovan, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:p.49). The problem is that beginning from ‘domestic’ nonhumans that are involved with, and dependent upon, humans, and have been raised by and within community with humans, will not accurately represent free-roaming nonhuman perspectives given that these elements are missing and that they operate independent of human relations (Clement, in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:pp.447-448). This threatens to bring A(i) into Donovan’s theory. Fourth, by focusing on ‘domestic’ nonhumans rather than all nonhumans, this theory may accept the dichotomy of ‘domestic’ and ‘wild’ and the anthropocentrism this involves (*Ibid*).

Fourth, implications Care theorists accept, given the commitment to relationships and dialogue on the basis of context, reveals anthropocentrism. For instance, some Care Theorists argue that vegetarianism is not morally required as contextual matters (e.g. locale, gender,

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<sup>206</sup> As it is androcentric and ethnocentric in regard to women and race respectively.

class, and cultural and religious interests) and relationships should be considered (Curtin, 1991:pp.68-70). Despite this, it is unclear that similar factors would justify oppressing human women. Given that such positions focus on women's oppression, and that this is the motivation for a Care Theory for nonhumans, this seems unlikely. More importantly, these factors privilege human interests, norms, and values over nonhuman animals – and to the extent that they override nonhuman lives – even cultural and religious expression. In some instances then, commitment to context and relationships entails that nonhumans are considered less in the dialogue. All of this involves A(i), and possibly additional A(ii) given the prioritizing of humans over nonhumans. As this is derived from how the position works and why it is posited as a human ethic, this anthropocentrism is essential to the theory.

As a result, nonhuman Care Theory involves anthropocentrism and thus a less anthropocentric position would have advantages.

### **§5.2.2 Ecofeminism**

In this section I consider ecofeminism. I outline the position before arguing that it involves anthropocentrism in four ways and as accepting the position also requires a demanding ontology an alternative, less anthropocentric theory would have advantages.

Most ecofeminists argue that the domination of the more-than-human world is linked to the domination of women (Adams, 1991:p.125; Deckha, 2012:p.529; Hawkins, 1998:p.158; Lee-Lampshire, 1996:pp.91-92). Ecofeminists argue that there are important connections – historically, experientially, symbolically, and theoretically – between both oppressions, and it is the conceptual framework of patriarchy that perpetuates both (Curtin, 1991:p.60). Thus to combat one, all must be fought (Adams, 1991:p.125). Other ecofeminists, such as Plumwood, argue that the centric logic behind both dominations is identical, as it is with all centrisms

(Plumwood, 1996:pp.133-138&147-148; Plumwood, 2008:pp.100-111; Plumwood, 1993:pp.22-40&67-68&190-196; Hawkins, 1998:p.158). Thus all oppressions and centric thinking are linked (*Ibid*). Consequently, to eradicate one all must be eradicated (*Ibid*).<sup>207</sup> Examples of these connections are ‘reason vs nature/emotion’, ‘culture vs nature’, ‘mind vs body’, ‘subject vs object’, and ‘agent vs passive’ (Hawkins, 1998:p.158). Ecofeminism concludes that while gender should be central to women, so must the inclusion of race, class, and nonhumans (Deckha, 2012:pp.529-533). Some further argue that to be concerned with *any* centricism, one *must* be concerned with all (Adams, 1991:p.129; Lucas, 2005:p.98). Consequently, ecofeminism rejects anthropocentrism.

Ecofeminism thus arises after considering androcentrism and its relationship with other centrisms. After arguing for the rejection of anthropocentrism, however, few ethical theories are then put forward. Most ecofeminists posit Care Theory as outlined above (Curtin, 1991:pp.60-61). Carol Adams does so (Adams, in Donovan & Adams, 2007:p.221) and Karen Warren’s claim that considerability depends on ‘care, love, friendship, and reciprocity’ seems similar (Wellington, 1995:p.101). Maneesha Deckha notes that this is due to ecofeminist’s focus on androcentrism, and *then* other centrisms, which often leads to the downplaying of other centrisms’ in favour of gender (Deckha, 2012:pp.583-584). This, Deckha notes, results in issues specific to other centrisms being ignored (*Ibid*).<sup>208</sup> Having already discussed Care Theory the same considerations apply here.

Plumwood’s position differs and thus should be considered. As outlined in §3.2, Plumwood argues that all centrisms share the same logic, and thus it is this ‘Master Identity’ that must be rejected. Plumwood contends that ethics must include evolutionary biology, recognize that beings are not ‘undifferentiated masses’, and embrace similarities and

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<sup>207</sup> As this was outlined in more detail in §3.1.4 I shall not outline this again

<sup>208</sup> This seems similar to how feminists of colour have objected to traditional, Western feminists as only focusing on certain types of women (white, middle-rich class, European-descent, and so on).

differences between and among humans and nonhumans (Hawkins, 1998:p.160-164). From this, Plumwood argues that rejecting anthropocentrism is not about ethics, but rather changing ourselves – i.e. removing what prevents us from connecting with the more-than-human world<sup>209</sup> (Plumwood, 2008:pp.98-100; Plumwood, 1991:pp.17-18). Plumwood argues that it is the Master Identity that justifies our exclusion of the more-than-human world, and once we reject this we can then relate to the world (*Ibid*). How we do this is via an ‘interspecies dialogue’ similar to Care theory. The difference is that Plumwood rejects ‘consciousness’ in favour of ‘intentionality’, which she argues can exist without the former, and by which she means ‘mind-like qualities’ (‘mind’ not being an all-or-nothing quality) (Plumwood, 1993:p.133).

Plumwood then argues for what she terms the ‘intentional recognition stance’, where everything – humans, nonhumans, plants, mountains, and even atoms – has intentionality (Plumwood, 2008:pp.174-186; Plumwood, 1993:pp.131-138). From this, Plumwood contends that we do not need ethics, but rather by rejecting the Master Identity and altering ourselves using this ‘intentional recognition stance’ we can then have a dialogical relationship with everything (Plumwood, 2008:pp.167-195; Plumwood, 1993:pp.141-164). Thus for Plumwood it is the challenging of the self (i.e. how humans see things) that is important, not ethics but rather why *we* cannot relate to the more-than-human world. Once fixed, relationship follows.

Plumwood’s position avoids much of the anthropocentrism Care Theorists encounter as, although she intentionally does not consider moral status (Plumwood, 2008:p.169), moral considerability is open to everything.<sup>210</sup> Further, Plumwood focuses on rejecting all centrisms

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<sup>209</sup> This focus on changing ‘self’ rather than positing ethics to resolve problems is reminiscent of Deep Ecology’s claim

<sup>210</sup> In terms of the moral status and moral standing distinction outlined in §1.1, Plumwood includes all the more-than-human world (including atoms) within the same moral status, in theory, via not considering moral status as relevant at all.

rather than prioritizing one. Plumwood's theory is thus less anthropocentric than the previous positions.

Despite this, some anthropocentrism remains. This is shown in four ways. First, despite everything having intentionality and relying on a dialogue regarding intentions and interests, Plumwood accepts predation and holds with non-interference in the more-than-human world (Plumwood, 1995:pp.32-34; Plumwood, 1991:p.8; Plumwood, 1993:pp.171-172; Eaton, 2002:p.175). This stems from her commitment to dialogue and relationships, just as Care Theory, and the environmental ethics' stance on non-intervention (*Ibid*). As noted in previous sections, including §3.1.4, this involves anthropocentrism.

For instance, the environmental ethics' commitment to non-intervention relies on the idea that it is anthropocentric to intervene in the more-than-human world. As noted in §3.1.4 this often involves anthropocentrism itself by conceiving of the more-than-human world as distinct and different from humans – i.e. the more-than-human world is defined in opposition to the human, humans and nonhumans live in separate, rather than inter-related, societies, denial of similar behaviours/capacities in nonhumans (e.g. moral codes that overlap with our own), or denying that human and nonhuman interactions may be moral in nature and that societies interact in ways that require responses to each other.<sup>211</sup> Further, human actions are outside the bounds of the more-than-human world here. Our interactions and interventions with 'human societies' is acceptable unlike our actions towards anything 'outside' these societies. This separates humans from, and prevents involvement with, the more-than-human world.

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<sup>211</sup> It was outlined in §3.1.4 that nonhumans may interact with humans, have perspectives and desires to be helped or live, and may be capable of moral behaviour. Thus it is at least possible that intervention actions need to be considered in ways that reflect that nonhumans are active social beings that may be in an inter-related societal state with humans or even an international community and thus that intervention may be acceptable. The point here is not to *establish* this claim, but only to show that the Plumwood's support of predation and non-intervention does not take these points into consideration due to her conception of 'nature' and maintaining of the more-than-human world as it is. These latter, and the dismissal of the former due to the latter reveals it is A(i) that lies behind her position – by conceiving of humans and nonhumans in different terms, having an idea of what nonhumans are that is distinct (socially, morally, and behaviourally) from humans, and of what is 'natural' and how 'nature' should remain.

Humans are thus conceived as radically different from nonhumans, and in ways that do not fit with the evolutionary biology Plumwood relies on (i.e. that humans and nonhumans are not radically different physiologically or in behaviour and social development). This is all A(i). As noted in §3.1.4, intervention *can* be anthropocentric but so can non-intervention, and a blanket rejection of all intervention thus involves anthropocentrism as it precludes intervention based on A(i) ideas.

Further evidence for Plumwood's reliance on what is 'natural' – and thus A(i) ideas of humans and nonhumans – is revealed in a second way, by noting that Plumwood's focus on preserving or not interfering with the more-than-human world stems from the idea that the more-than-human world should remain as is, and thus protected from human interference. Plumwood relies on this to reject other feminist claims that vegetarianism is morally required, by claiming that eating meat is cultural and natural and thus vegetarianism is anthropocentric by separating humans from 'nature' (Eaton, 2002:pp.170-172). This, however, conceives of 'nature' as separate to, and not naturally involving, morality, or that moral codes can develop and *as a natural development* can non-anthropocentrically challenge what is natural. Thus morality is conceived as outside of natural occurrences; traditionally because morality is considered human.<sup>212</sup> If morality occurs naturally however, such as by being an evolved behaviour, then challenging and altering beliefs *is* natural and preventing either so as to keep 'nature' as *we* think it should remain is anthropocentric (Watson, in Witoszek & Brennan, 1999:pp.116-117). Conceiving of the more-than-human world as sacred, and of moral development as challenging this, conceives of morality as non-natural, and that animals other than humans may not develop moral behaviours, norms or values and thus engage in moral-based interactions. Further, this conceives of societal development as separate to 'nature', (i.e. society and its development is separate to 'what is/happens out there', and thus should not

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<sup>212</sup> As noted in chapters two and three, and will further be documented in chapters six and seven.

touch it), and again does not consider that other animals do this and are not bound by similar separation. As Richard Watson notes, these are anthropocentric ideas of the more-than-human world (*Ibid*).

Third, Plumwood only considers human perspectives regarding predation – what *we* think *because of* what we conceive of as ‘natural’ – rather than also considering predator and prey perspectives. If human and nonhuman societies and codes can interrelate<sup>213</sup> then this is especially problematic given Plumwood proposes an interspecies dialogue. Given Plumwood’s aim to achieve an ecological self and as she argues from an environmental position to environmental ends, her endorsement of the environmental reluctance to intervene or alter the more-than-human world is expected. However this relies on anthropocentric ideas of humans and nonhumans, especially as intra-human societal interactions and human actions that involve *preserving* the environment are not considered in the same way.

The anthropocentrism in these three points results from Plumwood’s conception of centrism,<sup>214</sup> which emphasizes the de-Centring of certain groups and value rather than considering the reliance on, and Centering of, norms, values, etc., within centric thinking. This is emphasized in my clarification of anthropocentrism by looking at usage and definitions, whereas Plumwood focuses on logical components centrism share. This focus is geared to reveal the Master Identity, but this results in Plumwood missing the perspective understanding of A(i) that she too possesses.<sup>215</sup>

Fourth, A(i) may result from Plumwood’s reliance on a dialogical ethic. Plumwood only avoids the problems for Care Theory via positing that everything is intentional and it is towards this that the dialogue is framed. The way in which interaction occurs is still the same and does not consider nonhuman interactions in how the theory is posited (and thus whether

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<sup>213</sup> As argued in §3.1.4.

<sup>214</sup> Outlined in §3.2.

<sup>215</sup> It should be clarified here that I do not intend to imply that Plumwood’s work on centrism is problematic, only incomplete, and it is from this that her A(i) remains. I am much indebted to Plumwood.

interaction with nonhumans is possible without solely relying on how we interact with humans). In support, although Plumwood notes many nonhuman capacities, challenges human exceptionalism from the more-than-human world, and draws on evolutionary biology, when considering ethical approaches or interactions Plumwood only considers human moral behaviour (Plumwood, 1993:pp.165-189). Given that Plumwood's theory focuses on the self (human), and that the above shows that she has not considered nonhumans as even possibly being able to act morally, this raises the concern of anthropocentrism.

Finally, despite this anthropocentrism Plumwood's theory is more acceptable than the previous positions. However, granting Plumwood's position requires accepting her ontology, i.e. everything is intentional (which she implies is a form of panpsychism). The necessity of accepting this, especially just to propose a nonhuman ethic, seems demanding. As a result of this anthropocentrism and demanding ontology, an alternative and less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic would have advantages.

### **§5.3 Conclusion**

Having considered positions that claim to be non-anthropocentric I have argued that all involve anthropocentrism. I do not claim that these theories are not positive contributions nor that they could not be re-worked. My claim is only that if an alternative, less anthropocentric position could be proposed then this would have advantages as a nonhuman ethic.

**CHAPTER SIX**  
**EVOLUTION AND MORALITY**

Having argued that nonhuman ethics theories currently involve anthropocentrism, the rest of this thesis proposes a less anthropocentric position that addresses anthropocentrism. To do this nonhuman animals must be included within the theory's construction and this inclusion must consider nonhumans *as those nonhumans*, rather than relying on traditional or common conceptions. Thus nonhuman perspectives, values, etc., must be included equally to de-Centre humans and create a theory that does not have human/human-biased criteria for moral consideration. Thus I will not argue from humans to nonhumans, nor rely on human values alone in creating the theory, and will ensure the principles for behaviour and moral considerability are less anthropocentric.

I begin by considering an evolutionary account of morality. This account provides an explanation of what morality requires that I draw on in the next chapter to show that nonhuman animals act morally. In the last chapter I draw on all of this to propose a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic that includes nonhumans in its principles and how it posits moral considerability. This allows the theory to address A(ii) *and* A(i) both via how the position is constructed and in what it applies to. By being less anthropocentric and addressing anthropocentrism this position thus has advantages as a nonhuman ethic.

In this chapter, I outline an evolutionary account of morality. I offer support for the account and show it fits with a common conception of morality. I then consider humanity's place in relation to nonhumans. These, I argue, are important for positing a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic. The evolutionary account, as supported and fitting with common conceptions

of morality, provides a strong basis to claim nonhumans can be moral. Human-nonhuman relations add to this in ways that a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic must consider.

### **§6.1 An Evolutionary Account of Morality**

Attempts to consider morality in light of evolution, rather than in terms of the development of human thought, have been made in philosophy, evolutionary biology, psychology, ethology, and the social sciences (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.127; Bekoff, 2004:p.491; Katz, 2002:pp.ix-xvi). For given evolution there must be an explanation for how morality evolved, what evolutionary purpose it served, and why it remains evolutionarily viable. These inquiries attempt to understand what impact evolution would and should have on morality, in the sense of how morality developed, what morality is, what is right or wrong, who and what is morally considerable, who can act morally and how, and what this means for ethics. Despite some differences, one central account is identifiable. This I term the evolutionary account of morality. In §6.1.2 I outline this account. In §6.1.3 I offer support and consider its implications. In §6.1.4 I explain how it fits with common conceptions of morality. I do not defend this account though I offer support for why it is plausible. My purpose is to suggest that by granting this reasonable position nonhumans can be shown moral. Both of these can then provide a basis for a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic.

### **§6.1.1 Evolution**

In this section I clarify what I mean by evolution. This is to avoid anthropocentrism as one interpretation links to anthropocentrism in morality and regarding nonhuman animals. This clarification will be drawn on throughout the next three chapters.<sup>216</sup>

There have been numerous theories of evolution. Thus to clarify, by evolution I mean Darwinian Evolution rather than the common misinterpretation of Darwin's theory that is closer to Lamarckian Evolution. This distinction is important as Lamarckian Evolution considers entities to evolve via an internal force driving the being, and its progeny, to greater complexity and perfection. Thus evolution is a process of moving *from* simple and less perfect beings *to* more complex and perfect beings, which develop characteristics that enable them to survive because of this (Rachels, 1991:pp.14-15).

Darwinian Evolution considers the evolution of entities to result from natural selection by chance, that depends on fitness in and for specific circumstances. Entities pass on traits to their progeny, random occurrences in traits appear, and members of species differ in traits (*Ibid*:pp.25-26). An entity's survival is not based on its being 'better' or more perfect, but rather depends on the circumstances it is in and the traits it has. Thus entity *A* may survive in circumstance *X* whereas *B* may not, yet *A* may not survive in circumstance *Y* whereas *B* may. Thus evolution is not a process of evolving towards more perfect beings as those that survived were just those that could survive in the circumstances that they faced, and natural selection was not focused solely on an entity's capacity to adapt, as the traits one possessed, luck, and the circumstances one was in also determined survival (*Ibid*:pp.35-36). Adaptable species are more likely to survive, though they are not more perfect. Unlike Lamarck, evolution for Darwin is not a scale, but rather about entities changing and just being more suited to and adaptive

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<sup>216</sup> It is therefore important to recall for why certain claims do not lead to hierarchies in chapter eight.

within the circumstances they are in. It is this conception of evolution that modern theories are based on, and notions of ‘progress’, ‘orthogenesis’, and evolving towards something (or towards being more perfect) are rejected (Ulett, 2014:p.131; Pigliucci, 2009:pp.138-139).

This clarification is important as much anthropocentrism involves appeals to humans being *more evolved* or nonhumans being primitive or less evolved, or that humans possess unique traits. This has often included the idea that morality is unique to humans. Such notions do not fit with Darwinian evolution, but do fit on a Lamarckian view. Claims that certain entities may be more or less complex, or have traits that are more complex due to additional variables and circumstances, fit with Darwinian evolution, however such do not entail superiority. Similarly, claims that nonhuman traits are proto-versions of human traits can be misleading, as this can mean nonhumans possess something humans once possessed, a trait that is not fully what humans possess, or a trait that has similarities to what humans possess.

On Lamarckian evolution nonhumans would thus be inferior or seen as not possessing something that humans possess.<sup>217</sup> For Darwin this is not the case.<sup>218</sup> This is further supported by Darwin’s claims that it is unlikely any trait exists in one species uniquely and variations are of degree rather than kind (Rachels, 1991:p.133; Shapiro, 2006:p.359; Bekoff, 2004:p.491). This is supported, Frans de Waal notes, as “[e]volution depends on the success of a trait over millions of years” (de Waal, 2006:p.171). Changes occur slowly and the likelihood of any trait (e.g. morality) being unique to humans is unlikely. Thus, while humans may have a more complex reasoning capacity or ability to use language, less complex variations could exist elsewhere. Similarly with what constitutes morality and whether something ‘really’ is morality if it does not match human morality.

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<sup>217</sup> I.e. a ‘proto’ version of the trait humans have, rather than a trait that can be considered on its own terms.

<sup>218</sup> (Though this is repetition of the above, I provide this for clarification: for Darwin, while humans and nonhumans can have more or less complex forms of a trait and similarities or differences, this would not mean that any trait is unique, a lesser version of that trait, or does not function in an equally similar (if more or less complex) way.)

On the evolutionary account and the following chapters, I thus understand the concept of morality and its evolution in Darwinian terms. Morality is thus not something that, (a) makes a being more perfect, (b) ‘higher’ beings only necessarily possess, (c) must be of a single type or complexity, or (d) if nonhumans possess is only a proto-human morality *qua* its less complex form. What matters for the evolutionary account is that moralities fit with common conceptions of what a morality is and does, why morality evolved in social species, and have some link due to the common origin of morality in such species.

Thus it is important that one not mistake different moralities as more or less advanced types of *human* morality or that something is a morality only if it is like human morality. If nonhumans have morality, it is their morality, even though human and nonhuman morality would share similarities due to evolving in the same way and for the same purpose. There can be differences within these moralities, just as there are among human moralities, due to different variables – e.g. cognitive and social complexity, tradition, social structure, biological needs, etc. – but there are also likely similarities. Thus certain aspects of morality that have typically been considered ‘human’ may just be general aspects of morality due to evolution that moralities share, and the aspects that only human morality has due to complexity may be smaller than we think.<sup>219</sup>

### **§6.1.2 An Evolutionary Account**

In this section I outline the evolutionary account of morality that I draw on in the following two chapters. I introduce the account and explain how evolution and morality are argued to fit together. I then illustrate the account’s focus on social animals, rather than humans, before

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<sup>219</sup> This is important to consider as most evolutionary biologists, ethologists, and so on, that study the evolution of morality have not considered anthropocentrism, that nonhumans may have morality, or considered different accounts of what morality may be. The evolutionary account does not require one to consider morality as proto-morality in other beings, especially when evolution is clarified along Darwinian lines.

clarifying the account's claims and offering support which further develops the position. I conclude by summing up the account.

On an evolutionary account of morality, as everything is the product of evolution morality must have evolved. Further, as moral conduct is still practiced and evolution has not corrected this behaviour, morality must have survival value. As a result, morality must have some biological basis rather than *just* being the product of rational reflection or deliberately intended thought and must have some survival advantage. For as Jessica Flack and Frans de Waal note:

“...[T]he degree to which the tendency to develop and enforce moral systems is universal across cultures (Midgley, 1991; Silberbauer, 1991), suggests that moral systems...do have biological origins and are an integral part of human nature. Morality indeed may be an invention of sorts, but one that in all likelihood arose during the course of evolution and was only refined in its expression and content by various cultures...” (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.2)

Despite this most believe morality is uniquely human, even the defining characteristic of humanity that sets humans apart from ‘nature’ (Denison, 2010:p.60; Shapiro, 2006:p.357; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhart & van Schaik, 2011:p.2). Most therefore have difficulty considering morality in nonhumans and whether nonhumans are moral is generally considered in light of human morality.<sup>220</sup> This is problematic when attempting to reduce anthropocentrism, and is also, according to the account of how morality evolved, an incorrect understanding of how human morality works given how complex morality is relatively new.

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<sup>220</sup> This is the standard practice in nonhuman ethics, for instance. Hence Regan's categorising of nonhuman animals as only moral patients rather than moral agents.

This human-centred understanding is so entrenched that some consider attributing morality to nonhumans would end humanity's uniqueness and superiority (Lillehammer, 2010:p.362). Darwin, conversely, recognized that if morality is uniquely human then evolutionary theory is in trouble as the claim that traits evolve from other traits and are present to varying degrees in other beings is undermined (Pennock, 1995:p.291; de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.2).

Morality as an evolved behaviour, however, may seem problematic given that morality often runs counter to an individual's interests and thus defies natural selection (Harman, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.11). Evolutionary biology, however, claims that morality is evolutionarily useful. Social interactions provide an individual with advantages for survival and reproduction (Allchin, 2009:p.599; Bekoff, 2004:p.489; de Waal, 2006:p.4), and consequently social behaviours, and the development of moral behaviours to regulate individuals in society,<sup>221</sup> became evolutionarily advantageous to the individual (Baumard, André, & Sperber, 2013:pp.63-67). This is the first aspect of the evolutionary account.

The second is that the first applies to all social animals. Evolutionary biologists not only draw on modern humans and human ancestors when claiming this, but also nonhumans (mostly primates) (Allchin, 2009:pp.591-598; Kitcher, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.110-111; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.2). For example, Flack and de Waal note:

“...If...morality arose from biological origins, then we should expect at a minimum that elements of it are present in other social species. And indeed, the evidence...suggests that chimpanzees and other social animals are not the ‘true

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<sup>221</sup> I shall discuss these more below, but just as examples: honesty, consideration of others' interests, fairness, cooperation, punishment, and altruism.

denizens of Hobbes' state of nature' they are surmised to be... If we are to understand how our moral systems evolved, we must be open to the idea that the sets of rules that govern how non-human animals behave in their social groups provide clues to how morality arose during the course of evolution. These simple rules, which emerge out of these animals' social interactions, create an element of order that makes living together a possibility...The order that these sets of rules create is vital to maintaining the stability of social systems and probably is the reason why human morality...has not been eliminated by natural selection (Kummer, 1979)...” (Flack & de Waal, 2000:pp.2-3)

Douglas Allchin adds to this by considering values behind ethical theories, such as utilitarianism and deontology, and human moral behaviour. Allchin similarly observes how these are present to varying degrees within nonhuman social species and derive from social behaviours (Allchin, 2009:pp.590-600). Philip Kitcher considers the evolution of morality by comparing ancestral hominids with current primatological studies (Kitcher, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.110-111). Whereas Claudia Rudolf von Rohr, Judith M. Burkart and Carel P. van Schaik move from considering pro-social behaviour to social norms in primates, as these “constitute an important element of moral behaviour” (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkart & van Schaik, 2011:p.2).

Thus on an evolutionary account morality fits with evolution when understood as a socially beneficial behaviour.<sup>222</sup> This central claim is important as the above analysis is thus intended to provide a possible evolutionary explanation *for morality in evolved social beings* – not just humans. While in most instances evolutionary biologists focus on explaining human morality, this is largely because (a) it is uncontroversial that humans possess morality, and (b)

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<sup>222</sup> Whether between individuals or groups, the behaviour is still social in nature.

few have seriously questioned whether nonhumans also have morality.<sup>223</sup> Nonhuman examples (and human ancestors) are however cited at least as often within the literature, and some theorists – such as Douglas Allchin, Colin Allen and Mark Bekoff – explicitly consider that this account may show social nonhumans have (some form of) morality. For instance, Allchin states:

“...Conceptualizing morality as a form of behavior opens the possibility of observing it in other species. Indeed, if complex features evolve gradually, one might well expect to find stages of protomorality, incipient morality, or various precursors in organisms besides humans...” (Allchin, 2009:p.590)

Whereas Allen and Bekoff state:

“...[S]ome of the critics rejected the idea that the behavior of nonhuman primates is “genuinely” moral in the same sense as human moral behavior. Human moral behavior spans a range of capacities from performing specific behaviors to theoretical reasoning...Nevertheless, human morality also involves some very basic emotional responses and tendencies towards distributing resources fairly. These moral responses...have analogues in animal behavior (see also Brosnan and de Waal, 2003, 2004)...[while this] is not necessarily to say that morality itself is a characteristic of those animals...it is also possible that the behavior of some nonhuman animals is best understood as a genuine

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<sup>223</sup> Additionally, though this would require research beyond the scope of this thesis, elements of Lamarckian ideas of evolution may remain and morality may be conceived only on human terms, thus these may further reasons why morality is not considered with nonhumans.

form of moral behavior, albeit not identical to human moral behavior ...” (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.126).

Bekoff later amends this with Jessica Pierce by claiming that “[m]orality is an evolved trait and ‘they’ (other animals) have it just like we have it” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.xi)

From these two aspects, the evolutionary account begins by explaining morality’s evolution via the social evolution of moral values. The claim is that behaviours lead to habits and norms, and certain sentiments and desires occur, which over time become accepted as values. Importantly, it does not follow that these behaviours are therefore justified or what moral beings *should* follow. As Allchin states, “[t]o describe morality as a practice is not to prescribe any particular moral rule. To explain the behavior is not to justify it. Facts and values (is and ought) are conceptually distinct” (Allchin, 2009:p.591). Discussion about whether the moral values found by the evolutionary account are how we *should* live is a debate after the fact, and is not ruled out by the account. Thus evolutionary ideas of morality do not lead to Social Darwinism, as some have argued (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.20). The claim is only that, similar to moral sentimentalist or care theories, morality is *based on*, or is in its most simple forms, something natural and thus moral beings themselves are the source of value.

Thus morality, the evolutionary account posits, involves norms or values that moral beings accept knowingly or tacitly as behaviours that guide their social interactions. This does not rule out that evolved moral values may be inconsistent, not socially advantageous in different social systems, that there is no means for something to *just be* right or wrong, nor that ‘anything goes’ in the right circumstances. For instance, there may be core values that *always* evolve. Moreover, as Halvard Lillehammer notes, even if there are not:

“...[we can] confront our existing body of ethical beliefs with the facts and possibilities embodied in the contingency challenge and assess whether that body of beliefs can be made reflectively coherent in response to those facts and possibilities. This is a process of updating our ethical beliefs in response to new evidence...[and tests] for consistency and coherence, not only between particular ethical beliefs and general ethical principles...but also with ethically relevant non-ethical beliefs, including beliefs about the causes (proximate or distant) of those ethical beliefs...This is not a process that is likely to leave all our existing ethical beliefs intact. Yet neither is it a process that is certain to undermine the epistemic credentials of our entire body of ethical beliefs. Indeed, the process in question could reasonably be thought to lend some support to a non-trivial number of general ethical principles, even if not in the form of basic ethical axioms...” (Lillehammer, 2010:pp.374-375).

Thus, behaviour can still be evaluated as moral, debated, and altered based on these reasons.

Morality, the account then claims, evolves out of social interactions and the resulting necessity of responding to others (Harman, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.11; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.2; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.xiii). For instance, Flack and de Waal state that “simple rules, which emerge out of these animals’ social interactions, create an element of order that makes living together a possibility, and in a liberal sense, reflect elements of rudimentary moral systems. The order that these sets of rules create is vital to maintaining the stability of social systems and probably is the reason why human morality...has not been eliminated by natural selection” (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.2). Bekoff and Pierce argue from this idea that morality “is an essentially social phenomenon, arising in the interactions between and among individual animals, and it exists as a tangle of threads that

holds together a complicated and shifting tapestry of social relationships” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.7) by acting as “a social glue” (*Ibid*).

Such other-regarding behaviour only requires the capacity to distinguish between individuals, to remember and recognize actions and requests, and reciprocity, rather than complex cognitive capacities. As Bruce Waller clarifies<sup>224</sup>:

“...Rational reflection is not necessary for morality, and biological inquiry into the development of moral behavior supports that conclusion. Rather than higher intelligence being a condition of morality it is more likely that the conditions are reversed. Our rational faculties developed to enhance extensions of moral altruistic behavior, rather than moral concern and moral behaviour emerging from higher intellectual...capacities. The biological roots of other-regarding behavior are in kin altruism...Animals that protect and nurture their offspring are more likely to preserve replicas of their genes, including any genetic tendency toward kin altruism. To move beyond regard for close kin requires the resources of reciprocal altruism. Reciprocal altruism...can be found in a number of species, including humans...we should not exaggerate the intelligence required [for reciprocal altruism as such] does not require the drawing up of contracts, nor even a full conceptualization of the nature of the relationship. Basically it requires the capacity to distinguish among individuals and recognize and remember requests and bequests of reciprocal kindness...” (Waller, 1997:p.345).

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<sup>224</sup> This analysis is similarly endorsed by the evolutionary biologist Douglas Allchin in his paper (already cited). Due to the length of that discussion I shall not provide a quote here.

With the advent of social interaction and its advantages, development of social norms and the enforcement of them, capacities for empathy and sympathy, a sense of fairness, and mechanisms for conflict resolution, evolved (Shapiro, 2006:p.359). Such capacities evolutionary biologists argue are fundamental to all morality developing (*Ibid*).

Thus the evolutionary account concludes that morality emerges socially, is perpetuated via social norms and culture, and does not (in the majority) involve complex rational reflection but rather behaviours to govern social interaction (that vary in complexity depending on social and biological variables). Before I offer support for this account in the next section, I will outline five further points that not only fill out the account, but provide additional support and will be drawn upon in the next two chapters.

First, the importance of the capacities just discussed for morality has been noted by many philosophers. Some have argued that all are at least moral behaviours or values, while others argue that some are central to morality. For instance, Aristotle, Nussbaum, and Schopenhauer have all thought compassion either a moral sentiment or virtue or at least important for morality (Crisp, 2008:p.240; Guyer, 2012:p.403). Hume considered sympathy as a moral sentiment (Aaltola, 2014:pp.244-245) and sympathy is generally considered moral (Simmons, 2014:p.98). Fairness, altruism, and kindness are also common moral values. Frans de Waal claims that empathy and reciprocity are prerequisites for morality (de Waal, 2006:pp.20-21). Bekoff and Pierce also consider empathy as the cornerstone of morality when considering the implications of research on nonhuman behaviour, claiming “mice show empathy...if animals share with humans the capacity for empathy, they have in place the cornerstone of what in human society we know as morality” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.87). Michael Slote claims that empathy is the “cement of the moral universe” (Slote, 2013:p.13), with which other moral philosophers agree (Simmons, 2014:p.97; Kim, 2013:p.795). While Elisa Aaltola cites studies that “demonstrate that empathy figures as an important element in

the development of pro-social behaviours...[and that it is] linked to the ability to form moral judgments” (Aaltola, 2013:p.76) before acknowledging that “[b]ased on its connections to sociality and moral decision-making, many have argued that empathy acts as a key component in moral ability” (*Ibid*). The capacities above are posited as moral in sentiment-based positions (Aaltola, 2014:pp.244-245) and the Care theory in §5.2.1, while empathy is commonly thought of morally (Simmons, 2014). Finally, that the evolutionary account fits with common conceptions of morality, argued for in §6.1.4, also supports these capacities as moral.

Second, the account explains the development of consequentialism, deontology, and social contract theory. Consequentialism likely evolved via the evolutionary benefits arising from social interactions, such as being able to acquire food, security, and reproductive success easier (Allchin, 2009:pp.592-593). Thus the short-term costs to the individual are balanced by long-term benefits and mutually-beneficial relationships arose and were recognized (de Waal, 1996:pp.21-23; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.57-59). As de Waal notes, “[c]ontemporary biologists...do not believe that behavior evolved for a greater good [i.e. orthogenesis]. They assume that if bats, bees, dolphins, and other animals help one another, there must be benefits for each and every participant, otherwise the trait would not have spread” (de Waal, 1996:p.23). Similarly with humans, de Waal quotes Darwin: “tribes would have supplanted other tribes; and as morality is one element in their success, the standard of morality...will thus tend to rise and increase” (*Ibid*). Bekoff adds: “cooperation and fairness evolve because they are important in the formation and maintenance of social relationships...and that these relationships, in turn, improve the fitness of both individuals and groups” (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130) Consequentialist morality thus likely arose from recognising that co-operation was beneficial in the long-run, and the development of punishment – e.g. ostracizing, and thus beings lost the benefits – created an incentive to avoid breaking the co-operative relations (Allchin, 2009:p.597).

Deontology evolved via the development from a 'social instinct' to an ingrained and passed down 'habit' (*Ibid*:p.594). It is claimed that through interaction with others a social instinct evolved which likely conflicted with other instincts which did not accord with social benefit (*Ibid*). Memory aided with resolving this conflict as individuals learned to regulate instinct – because of the benefits and punishments – to make the social instinct primary (*Ibid*). Use of communication, empathy and the interpreting of another's behaviour enabled the communication of needs amongst individuals, and repetition led to habit and an eventual spontaneous intuition of what one ought to do (*Ibid*).

This explains why different cultures developed different moral principles and why moral intuitions (and prejudices) seem convincing. Importantly, the human species' formulation of moral principles is considered to be a recent evolutionary phenomenon, prior to this, biological, neurobiological, archaeological, anthropological, and historical studies indicate that morality stemmed from sentiment, intuition (or habit), religious belief, or tradition (e.g. culture) (Shapiro, 2006:p.362). This is important for two reasons. First, prior to this formulation these humans were and still are considered moral beings (*Ibid*). Second, these studies support some common conceptions of morality, such as sentimentalism or care theory that downplay the role of reason, reflection, and value-aware choice over unaware intention.

The evolution of contract-based morality likely resulted from deontology and consequentialism as societies began to form between individuals and smaller groups. Social norms likely grew to manage the group and individuals would become aware of those that would reciprocate, free-ride, cheat, or be selfish in co-operative situations. This, the account claims, likely resulted in individuals not co-operating with those who cheat. Others, attempting to avoid this, likely modified their behaviour, and from this punishments and contract-based moral norms arose. This fits with studies that show that cheating or selfishness occur when individuals are, feel, or act independently rather than in a social setting where social pressure

exists to act in co-operation with, punishments exist for breaking, and rewards exist for engaging in, social co-operation (Allchin, 2009:p.597; Baumard, André & Sperber, 2013:p.66).

As Allchin states:

“The problem [of cheating] arises...only when individuals act independently of each other. In a social setting, blind interactions can rarely be assumed. For example...individuals may learn to interact selectively: only with individuals that reciprocate or that are known publicly as reliable cooperators—or they may identify and punish violators. Social level interactions dramatically alter the prospects for moral behavior...” (Allchin, 2009:p.597)

The theory also fits with how punishment has always been important for human society and that helping and punishment behaviour are present in all human cultures (*Ibid*:pp.597-598).

Thus three major moral positions fit with the evolutionary account, adding to its support as a viable understanding of morality. Moreover, on this account these three positions are interconnected and developing from a similar focus – on regulating social interactions – rather than as competing positions as in traditional philosophy. Finally, such positions may thus be found in less complex moralities – including nonhumans’.

Third, the account also explains the evolution of altruism, co-operation, and fairness (Harman, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.11; Baumard, André, & Sperber, 2013:pp.60-64; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130). For instance, Nicolas Baumard, Jean-Baptiste André and Dan Sperber explain that, as “[t]he best partners are thus those who adjust their help to the circumstances so as to always behave in mutually advantageous ways...evolution will select not only a disposition to cooperate with others in a mutually advantageous manner, but also a disposition to cooperate with others whenever it is mutually

advantageous to do so” (Baumard, André, & Sperber, 2013:p.66). This has been shown in studies of hunter-gatherer societies, where hunter-gatherer societies have been shown to respect others’ interests even when it was not in their own (*Ibid*:p.67).

One interesting point to note is that fairness, response to punishment, and co-operation all involve self-regulation (*Ibid*:p.79), and thus an understanding, however complex, of oneself, the other, social interaction, consequences, and what one wants, especially in response to consequences. Yet from an evolutionary point of view, this does not require the complex ability to be able to reflect upon one’s actions or even know that *this* (i.e. considering the situation) is how one should act, only to understand *pre-reflectively* how one should behave in the circumstance at hand (i.e. being aware without consideration or reflection, perhaps by habit or ‘gut feeling’, of what one should do).

Fourth, the account explains other important moral beliefs. For instance, Rawls considered fairness to be central to justice (Borchert, 2006:pp.257-258; Widdows, 2011:pp.78-79) and thus the development of fairness, reciprocity, and punishment are likely the origins of the moral concept of justice. Similarly, examples of hunter-gatherers explain the origins of the ‘Golden Rule’, for these humans needed to assess the values of being a contributor (i.e. ‘is this worth the effort?’) which resulted in believing that one should have ‘equal distribution for equal input’. The development of punishment and group interaction then likely spread amongst the group. Mutual-aid thus evolved due to a form of reciprocity, the mutual advantage of which required fairness, and thus the development of a belief that one should act as one wishes to be treated (Baumard, André, & Sperber, 2013:p.67).

Fifth, values and principles evolve without being intentionally proposed, adopted, or resulting from rational reflection. As evolution occurs over small steps and thus changes do not occur all at once, behaviours like morality, and the values and principles that make it up, must have evolved from more simple behaviours and values, and then more complex behaviours and

thought processes (such as via society and reflection) developed. As touched on above, social beings behave in a certain way, learn the benefits and disadvantages of behaviour and what undermines or maintains social cohesion, this becomes a norm, and values and principles arise from this. Reflection and reasoning evolved after this, and thus were used to justify and explain already evolved moral beliefs, values and behaviours, and to add to them.

Thus on the evolutionary account, morality can be more or less complex, in the sense that morality begins from less complex values or sentiments, becomes more complex with increasing social and cognitive complexity and thus evolves norms, and then as more complex situations develop (e.g. larger societies, changing social circumstances, more complex societies, competing ideas, more complex cognitive capacities, and the influence of culture and social environments) morality becomes even more complex. This would explain why debates regarding morality as sentiment vs reason-based, or utilitarian vs deontological, remain intuitive yet conflicting for many.

Other variables noted as contributing to different complexities of morality are communication, language, and the expression of emotions – in humans largely via facial and body language – which provide clues to another's mental states (Allchin, 2009:p.598). In support of this claim, human neurological evidence has been cited to show that brain activity involves both emotion and logic when reasoning about moral situations (*Ibid*:pp.595-596). The more means of expressing feelings or communicating one has, and the more one is able to pick up and understand such expressions the more complex morality may become.

In sum, the evolutionary account posits: moral systems emerge socially and are perpetuated via social norms and culture (*Ibid*:p.598). Such systems regulate – with increasing complexity as societies and capacities become more complex – behaviours within social groups, primarily regarding well-being and norms of what is permissible within that group (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.7). Finally, due to morality evolving from more simple values such

as sentiments less complex moralities do not require reason or reflection. All together this suggests that biology and culture work together: the former originating moral and social feelings which the latter enhances and makes more complex (Peters, 1999:p.425).

Assuming the evolutionary account of morality, on a Darwinian understanding, we are led to accept that there may be more or less complex moralities, each of which are actual, rather than proto- or inferior, moralities that guide behaviour within groups. Thus some moralities may be based on sentiment, others on sentiment and reasoning, others may involve norms of varying complexity, or more complex principles, and others may require reflection or understanding of behaviours and habits (Stone, 2006:p.56; Waller, 1997:pp.345&348). This accords with the idea that other human cultures, including small indigenous tribes, that differ from Western morality have moral codes that are full moralities.

### **§6.1.3 Support for the Evolutionary Account**

In this section I offer four brief implications that further support the evolutionary account. These are in addition to the five points raised at the end of the previous section. Together these provide cause to consider the account reasonable and thus a plausible foundation for claiming that nonhuman animals are moral beings in the next chapter.

First, this account explains how evolution and morality can work together, without endorsing Social Darwinism or the claim that evolved moral codes are above ethical discussion.<sup>225</sup> Though some may dispute the necessity of including evolution within ethics, doing so is an advantage.

Second, the account fits well with many ethical and political positions, those outlined above and with Rawls, by explaining the origin and importance of justice for social beings and

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<sup>225</sup> As was discussed in the previous section.

fitting well with Rawls' conception of society as being a cooperative venture for mutual advantage (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.19).

Third, the account offers support to feminist claims regarding the importance of emotion or care to moral theory and the over-rationalizing of ethics, as social instincts such as empathy, sympathy, concern, and compassion are important elements, and likely the origin and driving force, of morality, whereas reason expands the range of behaviours these drive (Stone, 2006:p.63).

Fourth, an advantage for nonhuman ethics is that this account questions ideas that evolution and 'nature' are generally selfish (Allchin, 2009:p.599), that the natural state of humans is selfishness and conflict, that humans must correct their natural behaviour and become moral (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.1), and that 'nature' is 'red in tooth and claw' (Harman, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.12; Shapiro, 2006:p.359). This is for two reasons. First, given morality evolved incrementally then throughout history countless creatures must have increasingly acted morally. Second, morality is not a human invention or the product of intentional creation, reason, or culture, but originally biological. Further, as morality arose from social interaction all social beings thus may develop morality in some form of complexity. Together this means that morality likely exists among other evolved social creatures and therefore in the more-than-human world. For instance, Allchin argues that:

“...[The idea of] evolution as nothing more than a fiercely competitive "struggle for existence"...[is] based on the...flawed assumption that all behavior reduces simply to genes...Such a view disregards the relevance of learned behaviors at the psychological level and the regulation of behavior by interactions at the social level...Once one becomes aware of mutualisms between species,

reciprocities among individuals within a species, and the potentials of open behavioral programs, the view of natural selection as universally "selfish" is clearly too narrow..." (Allchin, 2009:p.599)

Paul Shapiro adds:

"...While it is sometimes assumed that natural selection simply promotes competition...the role of mutual assistance should not be underestimated. Other animals often band together...to make ends meet in an uncertain and changing environment. For example, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for wolves to survive as solitary or uncooperative creatures..." (Shapiro, 2006:p.359)

Finally, Bekoff and Pierce challenge the "domination...of the competition paradigm" which they claim is both "misleading and wrong" when the social origin of morality is considered, and the social and moral lives of nonhumans are shown (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.xii).

I have argued in §3.1.4, and chapters four and five, for the impact this has regarding intervention, for if nonhumans can be moral beings and morality can change and societies merge, then ignoring nonhuman morality and the evolutionary account can lead to anthropocentric rejection of intervention. Moreover, this account rejects the anthropocentric ideas of 'nature', the separation of how humans and nonhumans behave, and what each's 'natures' is, that were shown as A(i) and as underlying the accounts in chapters four and five.

In sum, these four implications provide additional support for the plausibility of the evolutionary account. I offer one final support in the next section.

### **§6.1.4 Conceptions of Morality**

In this section I consider how the evolutionary account fits with common and philosophical conceptions of morality. I outline common understandings of morality and show how these fit with common usage and ethical theories. I then briefly show how the common conception means that there can be different types of moral agency/moral being, before illustrating how the conception fits with the evolutionary account. I conclude that this further supports the evolutionary account.

To outline the basis of the common conception of morality I illustrate three commonly held conceptions, clarifying and showing them as supported, before summing up.

First, Oliver Putz sums morality up as the ability to decide what is right or wrong based on a background code of conduct that is understood as normative (Putz, 2009:p.615). Bernard Gert defines morality as a code of conduct that we govern our behaviour by (Gert, 2012).<sup>226</sup> These definitions fit with the common conception that morality is about how one should behave based on a normative code of conduct.

This seems relatively uncontroversial as a basic understanding of morality. However there is an ambiguity in what is meant by ‘principles’ or ‘values’, and ‘based on a code of conduct’, that requires clarification. For instance, ‘principles’ or ‘values’ can either mean (i) those that are reflectively chosen *or* (ii) those one has as a habit, has inherited, been taught or conditioned to accept or follow, or that are based on non-reflected-upon values. Although the former is often used, everyday morality and philosophy use *both*. For example, the Kant and Hume debate regarding the necessity of ‘rational reflection’ for morality centres on this difference. Traditionally Kant is understood as claiming that one is only truly moral if one acts based on duty and a reflective reasoning on what one ought to do. Hume, conversely, claimed

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<sup>226</sup> I refer here to the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* in order to show the generality of the claim.

that morality is based upon moral sentiments and reflective understanding or being aware that one's sentiments are moral are not *necessary* for acting morally. In everyday life, research shows humans will rationally reflect upon what is moral yet mainly simply act how they feel is right or based on how they have grown up without thinking (Aaltola, 2013:pp.86-87; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.127).

For instance, Aaltola notes, “[r]esearch suggests that moral decision-making rests more on the affective dimension than on reasoned deliberation. People do rely on reasoning, but they usually do so simply to support their underlying, pre-established attitudes, or in instances where emotive responses are obviously contradictory, or for the purpose of persuading others” (Aaltola, 2013:pp.86).<sup>227</sup> Biological ethicists Rudolf von Rohr, Burkart, and van Schaik add:

“...Human morality comprises a spectrum...ranging from moral emotions and moral behaviour to moral reasoning, moral judgment and...abstract concepts of right and wrong...Yet, in our daily lives morality comes almost naturally...we behave morally and do so often without previous deliberate consideration of the pros and cons of such behaviour. Generally, human moral behaviour reflects a set of particular values and principles, *both of which are often embedded in social norms*. Social norms are such an integral part of our social life...that we are often completely unaware of their omnipresence and our automatic adherence to them...Their social function includes the promotion of cooperation...social order...and the smoothening of social interactions...*social norms can be explicit or implicit*. In the former...they are either written down or spoken about openly, but *in the latter, they are not openly stated and maybe not*

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<sup>227</sup> Interestingly, this may be one of the causes for how prejudicial moral codes, such as those based on centrism, arise. This would fit well with conclusions drawn in chapters one, two, and three.

*even consciously represented...*” (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.3)

Important to note is the social function of morality and the aim of cooperation that these theorists refer to. Both fit with the evolutionary account.

An example given by Bruce Waller exemplifies this idea of morality. Waller claims that many would agree that, “[t]he spontaneous loving unreflective rescue of a child is morally virtuous: if the act is motivated by affection for the child the absence of deliberation does not imply absence of moral worth... The intent required for moral behavior need not be based on reasons and rules, but neither is it an involuntary reflex” (Waller, 1997:pp.341-342). As both meanings of ‘principles’ and ‘values’ thus have evidential support, I accept that morality can involve both meanings.

Second, morality is not commonly understood as governing our own behaviour *only* in regard to ourselves. Moral behaviour is commonly understood as primarily focused on how one’s actions affect others. Hugh LaFollette claims, in deciding how to act we do not simply consider our own interests, but also “in choosing how to act, I should acknowledge that many of my actions affect others, even if only indirectly...I must choose whether to pursue my self-interest or whether to pursue (or at least not harm) the interests of others” (LaFollette, 2003:pp.3-4). Morality, LaFollette continues, “traditionally understood, involves primarily, and perhaps exclusively, behaviour that affects others” (*Ibid*:p.4). LaFollette acknowledges that some do not endorse this (*Ibid*), however this does not detract from it being a common understanding (Copp, 2006:p.4).

Third, morality is commonly understood as a code that we think others should follow, either within a group (Borchert, 2006:p.380) or that applies to all who *could* understand it (Gert, 2012). The basic aim of morality on this understanding is to provide a common point of view

which a group can agree on regarding individual behaviour in order to negotiate between self and other interests to serve the individual and collective good (Borchert, 2006:p.380). Important to note is that this *aim* need not be *known or intended* by anyone, rather it can simply be what the governing of behaviour tacitly does. The ability to reflect on this aim is an addition to behaviour that just fits this purpose. To be moral, then, according to this understanding, is to live either in societies that *have* moral codes or that we *use* moral codes when interacting with others (Peters, 1999:p.424).

To sum up thus far. A common understanding of morality is that morality is a code of conduct that one's behaviour is governed by, based on principles or values reflectively chosen or simply accepted, that considers the individual's and others' interests in determining action, and involves thinking that others should follow the same behaviour. Thus morality can be understood as behaviour that determines how all *should* behave within a group, which intentionally or unintentionally serves the individual and the community. Based on this, it is reasonable that morality can be understood, at least in a less complex form, to be focused on group or interpersonal interaction with the aim of adjudicating interactions in a way that fits the group's behaviour or beliefs and thus promotes social cohesion.

This conception of morality is commonly accepted (*Ibid*). For instance, utilitarian, contractarian and Kantian theories entail this idea to varying extents and with differing applications. Similarly, objections and replies in environmental ethics involve this idea. For instance, the 'Last Man Argument' (i.e. would the last person alive be wrong if they planted a bomb to destroy the more-than-human world after they died) claims that there is no 'group' or 'other' to morally consider. Environmentalists respond that the more-than-human world has moral value, and thus plants, etc., are a morally considerable 'group'. This conception is further supported by studies that show that those who are self-sufficient and seldom interact with

others rarely, if ever, develop a sense of moral behaviour (Baumard, André, & Sperber, 2013:p.66).

Three further clarifications are required. First, it is not necessary on this conception that one *must know* (or rationally reflect) *or be aware* one is living by a morality, only that one *does live by* a morality and that upon reflection that code *could* be seen, whether by oneself or others. For instance, hunter-gatherers and small early human groups live<sup>228</sup> by such moral codes without reflecting on them, having ethical reflections, or even being aware that they were behaving morally. This fits with the common idea that morality is a normative code that rational persons *would* put forward (Gert, 2012), a thought which does not claim morality arises *because of this*, only that *one who can* reflect *would* recognize a code as moral on the above conception. Thus being *aware of* morality is not necessary *for* morality.<sup>229</sup> This fits with the evolutionary account's idea of how morality evolved from less complex, to more complex, forms.

Second, what is meant by 'choosing' or 'deciding' when one governs one's behaviour requires clarifying. Either can mean, 'reflectively choosing', 'being aware of choosing' or simply 'intentionally acting in a certain way'. As noted above, most humans act morally without thinking. Rational reflection in choosing how to behave thus can be involved in morality but is not *necessary* for moral behaviour. That one's behaviour *could* be evaluated is necessary, but that one or anyone else *does so* is not.<sup>230</sup> Similarly then with being aware of what one is choosing rather than simply intentionally acting due to moral sentiments, habit, conditioning, etc. While the former can be involved in morality, and may often be, it is not *necessary* as the latter is sufficient for moral behaviour.

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<sup>228</sup> And likely lived, historically

<sup>229</sup> Though again I shall refer to this when pointing out more and less complex moralities.

<sup>230</sup> For example, it seems perfectly reasonable that in a possible world a group of people exists that behave in ways that follow a code but never (and have never) reflected on or intentionally considered or decided on or to do this. Yet an observer to that possible world could still evaluate their behaviour as moral, even though none within that world ever thought about it.

For instance, humans condition their young to behave in certain ways, act compassionately and help the unfortunate without conscious thought, and act regarding fairness and justice spontaneously (Aaltola, 2013:pp.86-87; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.3).<sup>231</sup> For example, in addition to the quotes throughout this section, Allen and Bekoff point out that “humans generally are capable of reasoning theoretically about their morality in ways that most animals almost certainly are not. Nevertheless, human morality also involves some very basic emotional responses and tendencies towards distributing resources fairly” (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:pp.127-128). Bruce Waller’s example above further supports this (Waller, 1997:p.341).

As noted above also, humans rely on reasoning usually to support underlying or established attitudes, or where emotive, instinctive, habitual, ingrained, or conditioned responses conflict (Aaltola, 2013:pp.86-87). These other meanings of ‘choosing’ or ‘deciding’ then are part of more complex moralities but are not necessary for *all* types of moral behaviour. What *is* necessary is acting intentionally when one could have intentionally acted differently, regardless of whether one can reflect on, or choose because of being aware of, a moral code. For something to be moral in the least complex form is thus for one to simply have a code and act intentionally because of that code whether one is aware one has that code or not.

Third, the second clarification reveals an additional ambiguity when claiming that moral beings must ‘understand’ morality or ‘have reasons to act’. These may mean moral beings either, (i) can contemplate and reflectively weigh up and choose, or (ii) are aware of how they should act and intentionally act because of this (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.3). Both occur in human morality, however the latter is less cognitively-

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<sup>231</sup> This may be interpreted as explaining why we aim to ‘develop good character’, i.e. ‘developing good character’ could likely mean ‘learning good behaviour until it becomes part of our pre-reflective thinking so that we just *do* act this way’. If so, then reasoning would not be necessary in moral behaviour after. If this is possible, as the behaviour is still moral, it is at least plausible that other behaviours that just fit with being good from an Ideal Observer’s perspective and were never reflected on could similarly be moral.

demanding. Given that these do occur, while either is sufficient for morality, only the latter is necessary given its occurrence in all moral instances.

This requires a further clarification, as (ii) may mean: (a) being aware of how we should act and thus choosing whether to act, or (b) acting intentionally based on values that are accepted, felt, or ingrained (without thought or conscious choosing). Based on the above studies humans do both, and thus only the latter is required for a *basic* conception of morality. Philosophical arguments support this claim. For instance, Steven Sapontzis offers four examples of a human acting in a way most consider moral to show that reason and even being aware of how one is acting is not necessary for morality (Sapontzis, 1987:pp.11-26):

- (i) a person accidentally acts morally (A accidentally stops a bank robber because A thinks the robber pushed in line)
- (ii) a person whose action is moral but is lessened by ulterior motives (A stops the robber only to gain the manager's favour to secure a loan)
- (iii) a person whose chosen intentions matter to whether they are moral (A does or does not believe that the robber poses a threat when preventing the crime)
- (iv) a person whose traditions, ingrained values, etc., are why they act (A does not stop to think and may not be able to justify why they acted, they just stopped the robber because they thought/felt it was right, felt it was what they should do, did not want anyone to be harmed, had just been brought up that way, etc.)

Sapontzis claims these examples show that something can be moral without reason or choosing to act based on being aware of one's code. These reasons are contributing factors to an action being moral, and apply to more complex moralities where beliefs and choices add to moral value. However in (iv) only intentionally acting based on implicitly held values is necessary

for morality, even though choosing to act based on being aware of one's values would be sufficient.

This supports the claim that 'reflectively choosing', 'being aware of choosing and why', and simply 'intentionally acting based on values' *can* all be part of morality. Yet as the latter is sufficient for the common conception of morality, and does not contain the other meanings yet they contain it, it alone is necessary for morality.

This claim is further supported by moral theories (e.g. Hume, Adam Smith, and Edward Westermarck) that claim that values need not be defined as 'rationally thought out principles', but rather as moral sentiments, relationships, or virtues that we just have (Shapiro, 2006:p.361; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.20). Intentionally acting based on these need not involve rational reflection or even being aware of one's values and acting because of this. All that is necessary is acting intentionally because of the sentiments/values.

The example of caring for others' interests also exemplifies this. Most consider such, e.g. sacrificing one's own interest to avoid harming another, as moral, while some claim this is central to morality (Shapiro, 2006:p.361). Paul Shapiro asks what is more moral, one who acts begrudgingly out of duty to save another or one who does so because they (simply) care about the other's life or interests (*Ibid*:p.362)? The further question can be asked as to whether it is *only* one who chooses to act because they are aware that caring is good should be considered moral, or whether one who *just does* care and acts this way is *also* moral? That most would answer the latter in both questions shows that acting without reflection or conscious choosing of principles or values is acceptably attributed as moral.

To sum up thus far. A common conception of morality is as follows. Morality is a code of conduct that one's behaviour is governed by, based on principles/values reflectively chosen or simply accepted. This code governing behaviour considers one's and others' interests in determining action, aims at adjudicating interactions to promote social cohesion, and involves

thinking that others should follow the same behaviour. Beings do not need to be aware of the morality, nor choose to act because of it, they only need to act intentionally because they have a morality. I do not claim every position accepts this conception, only that this understanding fits common, philosophical, and biological understandings of morality.

As a result, whether values are based on sentiment, ingrained or conditioned behaviour, etc., this conception accepts that one can act morally if one acts intentionally based on those values, even if one is not aware of, nor acts because of, what would be considered the moral code by those that can reflect ethically. I will not consider whether one can accidentally act morally, as Sapontzis claims, and thus I shall not consider the possible difference between ‘accidental morality’ and ‘non-moral pro-social behaviour’.<sup>232</sup> I only claim that morality can involve more complex criteria but can also simply require intentional action based on some value or principle that is moral<sup>233</sup>. I thus conclude that reason, awareness of principles, conscious choice and reflection, makes for more complex or adaptive moralities, but is not necessary for governed behaviour to be moral. As Aaltola notes,

“...even if morality...rests on affective empathy, or on sheer emotion, [or moral sentiments], we can decide, at the conceptual or philosophical level, to favour something altogether different... [R]ationality[‘s] utilisation is surprisingly infrequent [however]...due to its...limited role, it would be an overstatement to say that rationality per se is a necessary requirement for moral agency. Instead, the door must finally be opened to a plurality of moral agencies, all of which

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<sup>232</sup> There may be a difference that could expand the minimum for moral behaviour – i.e. accidentally moral behaviour may be distinguished from non-moral pro-social behaviour as the latter is still mechanistic, and could – possibly – be undertaken without any ability to act otherwise, whereas the former may require that one could have acted differently yet still chose to act in a way that would be moral if intentionally done in this way but as a result is just accidentally of moral value. This expansion is not necessary for my theory however, yet it could be of use if my theory is expanded into an environmental ethic.

<sup>233</sup> ‘Moral’ as defined above and on the evolutionary account.

build on the same, shared background of affective empathy...[thus] affective empathy acts as a baseline, as core moral agency, onto which further capacities can be added, and which direct one towards different types of moral agencies...” (Aaltola, 2013:pp.86-87).

The evolutionary account fits well with this understanding, as morality can be more or less complex based on variables and there can be different moralities that are moral rather than proto-moral. This fits well with the account’s explanation of how morality evolved, and alters depending on circumstances and cognitive capacities. Similarly, the social nature of morality on the evolutionary account fits with the conception that morality is focused on interactions between individuals. In sum, the evolutionary account accords well with the common conception of morality. This offers the account further support while also providing explanations for why morality can be understood as this conception.

In sum, the evolutionary account offers a plausible understanding of what is required for morality. In the next chapter I use this to claim nonhuman animals are moral. I draw on both to form a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic in chapter eight.

## **§6.2 Humans and Nonhumans**

In this section I consider how humans and nonhumans relate to reveal important points for considering nonhumans and morality. I draw on this in chapter eight when forming my less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic. I outline how humans and nonhumans are not separate, but relate, interact, and are inter-dependent. I explain why this is important for considering morality in light of the evolutionary account, the conception of morality, and regarding nonhumans.

Many feminists reject the radical separation of the male Centre and the female Other. To avoid anthropocentrism, I similarly consider the relation of humans to nonhumans. Environmentalists and ecofeminists considering this relation focus on humanity's relation to the more-than-human world. I focus only on nonhuman animals.<sup>234</sup>

Given the evolutionary account, that humans are neither separate to, nor independent of, the more-than-human world is unsurprising. Moreover, given that nonhumans share our physical space, and are within, part of, and play important roles in societies and lives, that humans and nonhumans are not radically separate should also be uncontroversial. Their actions affect us and our actions affect them. Despite this, humans are commonly thought separate to nonhumans, that humans are distinct entities untouched by nonhuman animals, and that human societies are ours – nonhumans only have a place by our allowance and under our rules – and their place is outside – in 'the wild' or outside wherever we lay claim. This is a false conception, and, I argue, entails a problem for nonhuman ethics.

Traditional thought has humans 'rising above' their 'animal self', or 'nature', via mind/reason. This lies behind the idea in §6.1.2 and §6.1.3 that morality makes humans better than 'nature' as they can resist their 'natural impulses', and likewise in chapters two and three regarding anthropocentric ideas used to separate humans from the 'inhumane' 'beasts' and their 'brutish behaviour'. Similarly, animalistic terms were used for humans considered closer to 'nature', less 'civilized', 'un-cultured', and slaves to their 'baser passions' (de Jonge, in Boddice, 2011:p.309-310).

Recent research, however, shows that, just as humans are not entirely rational or autonomous, humans are not independent of the more-than-human world. Environmental studies, nonhuman ethics, ecofeminism, ethology, primatology, biology, and psychology, have

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<sup>234</sup> As my theory can be possibly expanded into an environmental ethic – as I shall explain later – all that would need doing here is to add the extra arguments for humanity's relation and interdependence on nature, not just nonhuman animals.

shown that humans are as much ‘nature’ as culture (Peterson, 2013:pp.14-15). The idea that what is ‘nature’ is separate to human influence, and what is human is separate to natural influence, has been observed as false (Plumwood, 1993:p.162; Benson, 2000:p.263). Humans and nonhumans have always co-existed, interacted, and often been mutually dependent – humans have been dependent on nonhumans for thousands of years, not only for food or labour but companionship, protection, aid in hunting, and more (Peterson, 2013:p.158). Similarly, the idea that human society was formed only by humans, and remains solely human, is false.

For instance, Anna Peterson notes that studies reveal that while humans played a role in domesticating nonhumans, humans did not force this<sup>235</sup> nor was this one-sided (*Ibid*:pp.84-95). Nonhumans also played a part in their domestication (*Ibid*). The reasons for this are tied to the evolutionary account, for Peterson shows that humans and nonhumans benefited from mutual interactions. Thus canine nonhumans likely sought humans as sources of warmth, food, and safety (*Ibid*). Thus human society was not independent from nonhumans even thousands of years ago, and human and nonhuman interaction was a mutual interaction with mutual benefits and *intended* co-operation. More importantly, Peterson cites archaeological and biological studies that indicate that nonhumans also domesticated humans and changed them (*Ibid*).<sup>236</sup> For, Peterson notes, the increasing reliance on nonhumans altered human capacities as certain traits were no longer used, senses were not relied on as much, cognitive capacities developed due to less focus on physical capacities nonhumans were used for, etc. (*Ibid*). Thus what humans have become and our very identity as humans<sup>237</sup> is the result of interactions with, and dependence upon, nonhumans and nonhumans within society.

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<sup>235</sup> At least in every case

<sup>236</sup> It is important to note that ‘domestication’ often implies some form of ‘domination’ rather than ‘cooperation’/‘interaction’/‘merging of groups’, etc.. This is likely linked to androcentrism and anthropocentrism. Thus the phrasing here may seem to imply the image of nonhumans taking humans as ‘pets’, etc. This is not what is intended.

<sup>237</sup> Consider here that such capacities and separation from ‘lower actions’ was, and often still is, cited as why humans are different to nonhumans.

Additional evidence is given by other theorists. Mary Midgley claimed that the expanding circles of sociality many rely on often include nonhumans more than humans, e.g. many are closer to the dog within their family than human strangers. Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka show how nonhumans are part of our society, that they live amongst us, that some are dependent upon us and we dependent on them while others are not. We are also in a global community with nonhumans, for everything we do affects them.<sup>238</sup> They are within ‘our’ borders. We breed them. We displace them within and outside ‘our territory’. We expand into ‘the wilderness’ and perform actions that affect their lives without any (or much reduced) consideration for their lives or societies. Thus that humans are separate from nonhumans, and that humans and nonhumans are radically separate beings that do not influence each other, are implausible ideas.

These interactions, inter-relatedness, and inter-dependence, are important for considering morality in regards to nonhumans.<sup>239</sup> Given the social nature of morality on the evolutionary account (and the common conception in §6.1.4), the origin of human-nonhuman co-operative relations, and society being intermixed with nonhumans, four points are revealed. First, morality focuses on interactions in groups and thus current treatment of nonhumans must be questioned. Second, moral interactions with nonhumans that are limited to certain nonhumans or consider humans (or society) separate to nonhumans must be questioned. Third, the method of moving from humans to nonhumans must be questioned. The first two obviously follow given the above claims, but the third requires clarification.

This implication follows as nonhuman ethics considers humans as the instigating agents in moral encounters and use human morality for how we should treat nonhumans. Nonhumans become, in Jaime Denison’s words, ‘passive’ rather than beings that regulate their behaviour

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<sup>238</sup> Thus even nonhumans not geographically in close proximity to us are still affected by human actions. Such as by global policy, pollution, travel, and so on.

<sup>239</sup> As well as revealing important points for humans to consider.

(Denison, 2010:pp.69-70). Nonhuman Others are thus made dependent upon the human Centre, which is distinguished from these Others by virtue of intentional capacities. How ‘we’ should treat ‘them’ is based upon ‘our’ society and morality which are independent from nonhuman influence. We are not in a mixed society (moral or social), especially not global, but in a human society that must consider how to treat those we have brought in who are unable to participate in agency.

Thus without recognizing human-nonhuman relational-existence and interdependence, and considering nonhuman morality, arguing from human morality threatens to taint the theory with anthropocentrism, rules out possible avenues that could be advantageous, and diminishes the fulfilling of nonhuman ethics’ aim. For example, this section raises the possibility of positing a global, cosmopolitan nonhuman ethic of all humans/nonhumans.

Fourth, the evolutionary account and the relation of humans and nonhumans opens up the possibility that human and nonhuman interactions are moral in nature if nonhuman animals can also be moral beings.

### **§6.3 Conclusion**

I have outlined an evolutionary account of morality, in order to show what is required for morality. I offered support and argued that the account fits with a common understanding of morality. The purpose of this is to consider the implications of this account for morality in nonhuman animals, and then to draw upon both in chapter eight to outline why this is important for nonhuman ethics, and to propose my less anthropocentric position.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **NONHUMAN MORAL BEINGS**

In this chapter I draw on the evolutionary account to argue that nonhuman animals have morality. This is important for including nonhumans as nonhumans and to enable moral values shared across moral systems to be found. I use these values in chapter eight to posit a less anthropocentric position.

First I consider the implications of the evolutionary account for nonhumans being moral. Second, I outline examples that demonstrate nonhuman moral behaviour. Third, I address three objections. Fourth, I explain why nonhuman morality is important for nonhuman ethics. I conclude that there is sufficient reason to think nonhumans are moral.

#### **§7.1 Nonhuman Moral Beings**

In this section I consider the implications of the evolutionary account for morality in nonhumans. I outline six reasons that suggest nonhumans may be moral.

Given the evolutionary account, the possibility that other animals have morality is opened up (Bekoff, 2001:p.81; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.xi). Douglas Allchin notes: “if complex features evolve gradually, one might well expect to find stages of protomorality, incipient morality, or various precursors in organisms besides humans” (Allchin, 2009:p.590). More so if one additionally grants morality as social as the evolutionary account does. As Bekoff clarifies:

“...Darwin[‘s]...ideas about evolutionary continuity, [are] that behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and moral variations among different species are differences in *degree* rather than...*kind*...If one...believes in evolutionary continuity, it seems premature to claim that only humans can be empathic and moral beings...” (Bekoff, 2004:p.491)

The evolutionary account provides six reasons to support nonhumans are moral.

First, studies show that all social groups that rely on cooperation – human and nonhuman – demonstrate group loyalty and tendencies towards helping others (de Waal, 2006:p.15). Social bonds develop to help regulate social behaviour and cooperation is used to achieve common goals and maintain social stability (Bekoff, 2001:p.85). As cooperation and social bonds are essential for morality to evolve given the evolutionary account, being present in nonhumans is indicative of the possibility of morality.

Second, many nonhumans are social, interact socially, and live in social societies that are often complex (Bekoff, 2004:p.492). For instance, primates have complex, cognitively demanding societies (de Waal, 2006:p.19) and their social skills develop similar to humans’ (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.7). Recent studies also show many fish live in social societies and have cultures. Bekoff and Pierce note: “fish are able to infer their own relative social status by observing dominance interactions among other fish” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.x), “[f]ish also have been observed to display unique personalities” (*Ibid*), and, Bekoff adds, “fish experience pain and fear...[and are] also cunning, deceitful, and display cultural traditions” (Bekoff, 2007:p.22).

Within their societies nonhumans do not behave regardless of others. Frans de Waal, explains how many nonhumans regulate behaviour, such as macaques and other primates, whose social hierarchy “is one giant system of social inhibitions” (de Waal, in de Waal, Smith

Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.52). For example, low-ranking males display high-ranking behaviour when high-status males are absent but then display nervous behaviour when reunited with the alpha. Researchers interpreted this “behaviour as an implicit recognition that they had violated a social code...[and concluded that] Perhaps social rules are not simply obeyed in the presence of dominants and forgotten in their absence, but internalized to some degree” (*Ibid*).

Many nonhumans show community concern and regulatory behaviour. Frans de Waal cites mediation among chimpanzees, females confiscating weapons to reduce tensions, amongst other examples, in support of this (de Waal, 1996:pp.33&211). Play, which humans use for learning and social behaviour instruction, is used by nonhumans to develop social interaction, social skills, and to learn social norms (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:pp.127-131; Bekoff, 2001:pp.84-85). Moreover, play involves rules, punishments for transgression, apologizing, and forgiveness (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130). Play also conditions social behaviour for adulthood, involving the negotiation of and abidance by tacitly agreed-upon rules, and introduces the ‘negative’, i.e. understanding something should not be done or has undesirable consequences, which is a necessary component for morality (Denison, 2010:pp.65-68). Being social and regulating behaviour are all indicative of morality on the evolutionary account.

Third, given complex features evolve gradually via small changes, given the evolutionary account, it is unlikely humans uniquely possess moral behaviour.<sup>240</sup> (Allchin, 2009:p.590). The likelihood is greater amongst closely related species and those having similar behaviours (*Ibid*), such as with primates like bonobos and chimpanzees. For example, aside from the genetic near-identity of humans and bonobos<sup>241</sup> and how both are closely related

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<sup>240</sup> To avoid repetition it must be recalled that morality can be of varying forms of complexity, and thus that nonhumans may have less complex forms than humans. It should be noted that by this I do not mean that nonhumans must only have the least complex forms of morality, i.e. that they may not reason or be aware of their moral values. Only that it is likely that different nonhumans have different complexities, and I refuse to homogenize.

<sup>241</sup> Which is currently believed to be around 98-99%

enough to share a genus (de Waal, 2006:14), de Waal illustrates other traits humans and primates share. From behavioural, e.g. pursuing power and sex, fellow-feeling and empathy (*Ibid*:p.1), aggression (*Ibid*:pp.5&17), and kindness (*Ibid*:pp.169-172), to mental and physical, e.g. problem-solving, facial recognition, a sense of time, understanding social behaviour (*Ibid*:pp.34-39), to “mental capacities and social tendencies that we share with other cooperative primates, such as chimpanzees” (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.23). Bekoff cites comparable similarities among other social species, such as birds and canids (Bekoff, 2007:p.14), and how humans, birds, rats, mice, primates, and canines possess ‘mirror neurons’, which may relate to empathy (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.29). Similar behaviours and traits, especially among those with similar cognitive capacities, ought to be interpreted similarly (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.29; Putz, 2009:p.614). Thus on the evolutionary account other animals may also have evolved moral behaviour (de Waal, 1996:p.210).

Fourth, communication is important for morality and its evolution. Humans, it was noted in §6.1.2, rely mostly on facial expressions and body language (Allchin, 2009:p.598; Bekoff, 2007:p.38). Many nonhuman social species, such primates, canids, felids, cetaceans, and avians, also use such cues (Bekoff, 2007:pp.29-84). Ethological studies further show that nonhuman communication can involve more subtle body movements or expressions or involve means of communication that humans do not use at all, e.g. via smells, higher sound frequencies, or subtle behaviour patterns that require familiarity to recognise (*Ibid*). Behavioural studies – ethological and laboratory – on primates and social mammals show that nonhumans have emotional lives and share many aspects of emotions and social motivations that humans possess (Stone, 2006:p.56). For example, Bekoff cites research that shows “mice are empathic...[and] fun-loving” (Bekoff, 2007:p.xix), friendship (even between typically predator/prey species, e.g. snakes and hamsters) (*Ibid*), love (*Ibid*:p.47), joy (*Ibid*:p.53), laughter (*Ibid*:p.56) amongst other emotions. Bekoff also cites research regarding similarities

in brain structure required for emotions (*Ibid*:pp.13-15), the possession of mirror neurons, and ‘spindle cells’ in whales, which were “once thought to be unique to humans and other great apes, [and] are believed to be important in processing emotions” (*Ibid*:p.xix). Emotional lives and social motivations are suggestive of the ability to behave morally *qua* the evolutionary account and the conception of morality in §6.1.4.

Fifth, capacities used to justify morality as being human – e.g. language, reason, problem-solving, memory, sociality, intentionality, and emotions – have not been shown to be *uniquely* human (DeGrazia, in Singer 2008:pp.40-51). Numerous examples of nonhumans possessing all of these are given in the literature, including in addition culture, tool-use, complex emotions, empathy, altruism, and self-mediation, from primates to fish (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.2; Bekoff, 2007:p.22). For instance, Valerie Stone cites research showing similarities in humans and other apes’ brains, and how primates can distinguish others and objects and understand others’ mental states (Stone, 2006:p.58). Oliver Putz adds:

“...Empirical evidence suggests that apes are capable of cognitive achievements...thought to be reserved exclusively for humans. Apes make and use tools...have culture...use plants for self-medication...have complex emotions...are empathic...and show altruistic behavior not only to conspecifics...great apes show signs of self-cognizance and the ability to employ symbolic processes that operate on the basis of mental images rather than direct sensory-motor phenomena...” (Putz, 2009:p.615)

Shapiro notes that rationality and language to varying degrees in nonhumans is now widely accepted (Shapiro, 2006:p.357). Bekoff and Pierce cite similar examples in social carnivores, elephants, rats and mice, and birds (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.39&51-52&81-83&145).

While these vary in degree and complexity none are unique to humans. Evolutionary biologists and ethologists conclude that despite contrary assertions there is not enough data to justify that cognitive and emotional capacities necessary for empathy or behaving fairly are not possessed by social nonhumans, and that there are more similarities than differences in these regards between primates, birds, and social carnivores (Bekoff, 2001:p.82). Similarly, the difference in intelligence between apes and monkeys is also insufficiently founded (*Ibid*). Bekoff cites ethologist Peter Marler, and evolutionary anthropologists and primate researchers, Michael Tomasello and Joseph Call:

“...Marler...concluded...that there are more similarities than differences between birds and primates. Each taxon has significant advantages that the other lacks...Tomasello and Call...summarized their comprehensive review of primate cognition by noting that, ‘The experimental foundation for claims that apes are “more intelligent” than monkeys is not a solid one, and there are few if any naturalistic observations that would substantiate such broad-based, species-general claims’...” (*Ibid*)

Consequently many nonhumans do have the capacities for being moral.

Sixth, morality is not all-or-nothing on the evolutionary account. As shown in §6.1.1., §6.1.2, and §6.1.4, there are different complexities of morality due to different variables. Thus nonhumans may have a different, or less complex, morality than humans. Given chapter six, it

would not follow that this entails inferiority or that these are not ‘real’ moralities.<sup>242</sup> Thus it is inappropriate to judge nonhumans against the morality humans have.<sup>243</sup> Further, while arguing for nonhuman morality is controversial, nonhuman animals having desires, intentions, feelings, thoughts, expectations, and emotions, was also controversial (de Waal, 1996:pp.62-63; Bekoff, 2007:p.22). Given the latter have been shown to be possessed, that nonhuman morality is controversial is no reason to presume it false. Thus that nonhumans could have a less complex morality is possible *qua* the evolutionary account and the conception of morality in §6.1.4.

Together these six reasons suggest some nonhumans may be moral. In further support, I now consider examples of nonhuman behaviour that fit with the evolutionary account and the conception of morality in §6.1.4.

### **§7.1.1 Examples of Nonhuman Moral Behaviour**

In this section I provide examples of nonhuman behaviour that indicates morality. I outline eight types of behaviour and note why each seems moral. I conclude that, given the evolutionary account, the conception of morality in §6.1.4, and the above points, the examples provide additional evidence that some nonhumans are moral.

Studies in evolutionary biology, ethology, laboratory experiments, neurobiology, nonhuman studies, ecological studies, and psychology show moral behaviour, ‘quasi-moral’ behaviour, or ‘proto-moral’ behaviour, in nonhuman animals (Rowlands, 2012:p.8). ‘Quasi’ or ‘proto’ moral behaviour is behaviour that is not quite morality because it is not human morality.

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<sup>242</sup> As noted in §6.1.2, this would not prevent some moralities from being inconsistent or less socially advantageous – especially when more variables are added, such as a wider moral community.

<sup>243</sup> It should be recalled here that, as discussed in the previous chapter, even though morality has different forms of complexity due to different variables entering into its evolution and use over time, that on the evolutionary account all moralities evolved into being the same way and for the same purpose, and thus all moralities will share similarities even if some have other elements that arise due to their different complexities.

As I draw on the evolutionary account, Darwin, and §6.1.4, less complex moralities are not proto-, quasi-, or inferior morality.<sup>244</sup>

These studies show varying complexities of moral behaviour within nonhumans such as capuchin monkeys, chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, orang-utans, marmosets, macaque monkeys, lemurs, (other primates), elephants, wolves, coyotes, hyenas, (other canids), dolphins, whales, mice, rats, crows, felids, ungulates, amongst others (Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.78; Sachs, 2010:p.625; Rowlands, 2012:pp.4-7). As an in-depth justification of each would require fully reiterating every source, I only briefly explain each example.

Sympathy, compassion, altruism: This is one of two main directors of moral behaviour among primates (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.20) and is one of the major behaviours considered moral in nonhumans (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.ix-x&2). Evidenced in primates (especially monkeys, chimpanzees and bonobos), elephants, canids, whales, dolphins, and rats (Allchin, 2009:pp.594-595; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.3&17; Stone, 2006:p.60; Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.77-78&162; de Waal, 1996:p.40-41&57&211; Crisp, 2008:p.238; Shapiro, 2006:pp.360-361&364; de Waal, 2006:pp.33-36; Waller, 1997:p.343; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130; Putz, 2009:p.615).<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> I shall also set aside the discussion on the difference between ‘pro-social behaviour’ and ‘morality’, as the former is simply any behaviour that benefits society, and thus can be done without thought or intent. The latter, on an evolutionary account, at minimum requires the intent to do the action based on the moral value or principle or sentiment (etc.) that is held. While morality can thus be pro-social behaviour given its social aims, pro-social behaviour can also be unintentional behaviour, such as performed by a drone. Thus, given the evolutionary account, research on nonhuman cognitive capacities, evolutionary continuity, and that similar behaviours, in similar situations, that have evolved facing similar circumstances ought to be interpreted in the same way, interpreting all nonhuman behaviour as unintentional seems parsimonious by evolutionary standards. Further, as this would require that nonhuman behaviour would have to be interpreted in an almost mechanical way, without any emotion, relation, and so on within nonhumans, which all research into the nonhumans that I shall consider shows is false, provides further reason to reject this conception.

<sup>245</sup> I provide numerous citations to indicate the scope of evidence within the literature as well as providing concrete examples. These citations are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg, however, within the literature. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to outline all evidence.

Allchin cites the example of Binti Jua, a female gorilla, who “rescued a 3-year-old child that had fallen into her enclosure. [She] cradled the unconscious boy...as she did her own child, growled at another gorilla who approached her, and then carried the boy...to a door where the zookeeper could retrieve [him]” (Allchin, 2009:p.594). Flack and de Waal cite their primatological studies, noting: “juvenile chimpanzees... restrict the degree of force they use in wrestling matches while playing with younger juveniles and infants...Monkeys and apes also adjust their behaviour in the presence of disabled group members...The adjustment may include increased social tolerance...or intervention on behalf of disabled individuals who seem unaware of when they are involved in a dangerous predicament” (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.17). Stone similarly cites evidence that “chimpanzees actively comfort other chimpanzees who are distressed...group members may approach to console [targets of aggression], embracing or grooming the ‘victim’...[Chimpanzees] also show more positive behaviour towards the victim of aggression than towards the perpetrator” (Stone, 2006:p.60).

Frans de Waal also cites examples of dolphins saving drowning humans and saving companion dolphins by biting through harpoon lines or hauling them out of nets they are entangled in (de Waal, 1996:pp.40-42). Whales put themselves between hunters’ and injured companion whales or attempt to capsize boats (*Ibid*). Other examples are whales’ concern for each other being so strong that it leads to distress at separation that only reunification cures, the protection of injured pack members, and the beaching of the whole pack in an attempt to aid an injured member (*Ibid*).

Paul Shapiro cites research showing: (i) “chimpanzees are capable of understanding when another chimp is dying and will...avoid disturbing [her], but also...caress and otherwise comfort her” (Shapiro, 2006:pp.360-361), (ii) “[d]olphins will go to lengths to make sure that injured dolphins are kept afloat to prevent them from drowning” (*Ibid*), and (iii) “cases in which individuals sacrifice their own interests in order to help others” (*Ibid*). Regarding this latter,

Shapiro cites a laboratory 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. Once they understood the dilemma, most monkeys routinely refused to pull the chain” (*Ibid*). This behaviour was so strong that one macaque “chose to starve for nearly two weeks rather than harm another of his species” (*Ibid*). Moreover, “it was not just a desire to avoid harming others that led the monkeys to starve, but also a sense of empathy for them. Macaques who knew what it felt like to be shocked—from prior experiments—were even less willing to pull the chain” (*Ibid*).<sup>246</sup>

Jane Goodall notes instances where chimpanzees, despite being unable to swim, have “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 [her] to fall into the water” (de Waal, 2006:p.33). Similarly: “Washoe, an adult male chimpanzee, saw three-year-old female Cindy jump the fence of their enclosure and fall into a moat. Washoe...likewise jumped the fence and, despite his innate fear of water, stepped into the moat and pulled the drowning infant to safety” (Putz, 2009:p.618).

Allchin also cites studies regarding marmoset monkeys, who “are cooperative breeders and strongly interdependent socially. When given an opportunity (with no personal reward)...they provide food to other individuals, even without reciprocity or genetic relatedness...Unsolicited, other-regarding behaviour may thus occur without the more sophisticated cognitive structures found in chimps and humans and without explicit reciprocation” (Allchin, 2009:p.595).

Finally, Shapiro notes that wolves adapt their compassionate/caring/sympathetic behaviour: “[W]olves are commonly seen to be very devoted and caring parents...mother

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<sup>246</sup> Shapiro also notes that “...the researchers concluded that the relative social status or gender of the animals was irrelevant to their willingness to inflict pain on others...” (Shapiro, 2006:pp. 360-361).

wolves often adapt their care-giving to fit particular circumstances as opposed to inflexibly applying the same treatment regardless of whether it would be appropriate” (Shapiro, 2009:pp.360&363)

Most would consider such behaviour as moral, especially on the conception of morality in §6.1.4. Compassion – intentionally aiding another who suffers – is considered to be a moral sentiment (e.g. by Adam Smith and Schopenhauer), of moral value, or even a paradigm moral behaviour (Crisp, 2008:p.240; Guyer, 2012:p.403). Moreover, as the wolf example indicates,<sup>247</sup> social species’ do not display fixed behaviour but alter behaviour based on circumstances; a trait required for morality in §6.1.4. As social nonhumans, with cognitive capacities complex enough for intentional behaviour,<sup>248</sup> that have evolved facing similar circumstances, given the evolutionary account the above examples demonstrate sympathy, compassion, and helping behaviour.

Tolerance: Evidenced in primates, especially among chimpanzees (Allchin, 2009:pp.594-595; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.17; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.7).

In addition to the above, Allchin cites the example of Mozu, “a snow monkey born without hands or feet...[who] could not climb. Still, the other members of Mozu's troop did not move...at a pace that would leave her behind, despite their ability to do so. They seemed tolerant of Mozu's handicap” (Allchin, 2009:p.595).

Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt and van Schaik cite additional studies on chimpanzees that show: “[c]himpanzees exhibit towards infants...an extreme tolerance afforded to no other age-sex class...In sum, infants are above the law...” (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.7).

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<sup>247</sup> And evolution as an evolved behaviour, given that if behaviour is inflexible this disadvantages beings against those that have more flexible behaviour, and thus such beings would be less likely to survive.

<sup>248</sup> And in most of the nonhuman species, such cognitive capacities are relevantly similar to nonhuman capacities, and are at least equal to and even superior than human children up to the age of three.

While tolerance is not a clear moral behaviour, it is often a virtue and connected to acting morally in instances where one should tolerate others. At minimum tolerance is indicative of the possibility of other moral behaviours. It involves self-restraint, understanding and use of different behaviours towards different social members, recognition of others' being accountable, etc. In conjunction with punishment for not being tolerant and helping the injured or disabled this is more suggestive.

Self-sacrifice: Evidenced in primates, rats, and whales (Allchin, 2009:p.595; Shapiro, 2006:p.361; Reid, 2011:pp.11-14; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.96-98).

In addition to the above, most notably the macaque example, Bekoff and Pierce cite a similar experiment: “rats were trained to press a lever in order to get a food reward...When a rat in the first cage pressed the food lever, a surge of electricity would...[give] the neighboring rat an electric shock. [Researchers] found that rats would not push the lever if they could see that a fellow rat would receive a shock...” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.96). Such behaviour is hard to deny as moral or intentional.

Cooperation, helping: Evidenced in crows, marmosets, mice, chimpanzees, monkeys, gorillas, macaques, wolves, rats, hyenas, bonobos, whales, and dolphins (Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.77; Sachs, 2010:p.625; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.3; Allchin, 2009:pp.590&596-597; Bekoff, 2001:pp.85-86; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.55-56&75&83; Shapiro, 2006:p.361; de Waal, 1996:pp.40-41; de Waal, 2006:p.23).

Allchin notes, “given a choice, [chimpanzees] recruit chimps with the best history of cooperation, indicating their understanding of cooperative behaviour...Similar behavior has also been documented in the crow-like rooks of Europe” (Allchin, 2009:p.596). Bekoff and

Pierce cite research that reveals “rats display...‘generalized reciprocity’, providing help to an unfamiliar and unrelated individual, based on the rat’s own previous experience of having been helped by an unfamiliar rat...generalized reciprocity was thought to be unique to humans and perhaps chimpanzees” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.55).

Similarly, “spotted hyena cooperate...to acquire food, even without specific training...hyenas [in experiments also] showed behavioral flexibility while cooperating” (*Ibid*:pp.55-56). Frans de Waal cites examples of whales working together to keep whalers from injured whales by forming protective ‘flowers’ around them (de Waal, 1996:pp.40-41). Cooperative behaviour during play (which ethologists note involves on-going negotiations, agreements, signals, and understanding that behaviours that are normally indicative of hunting or mating are not being treated as such) occurs in many social species, including wolves, elk, and buffalo (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:pp.125-130; Bekoff, 2001:pp.83-84; Denison, 2010:pp.65-68; Bekoff, 2004:pp.500-504).

While some of these examples can be described morally all demonstrate intentional socially interactive behaviour with the aim of co-operation. On the evolutionary account this is necessary for morality to evolve and is part of the conception of morality in §6.1.4. With the other behaviours this supports the possibility of nonhuman morality. Importantly, intentional actions exhibited by primates occur *similarly* in birds and rats. Moreover, purported ‘unique human characteristics’ are possessed by other nonhuman social species.<sup>249</sup>

Reward, punishment: Evidenced in bats, macaque monkeys, fairy wrens, paper wasps, coyotes, chimpanzees, capuchin monkeys, wolves, and other primates (Allchin, 2009:p.597; de Waal, 1996:p.211; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.129; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.9;

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<sup>249</sup> This lends further credence to the evolutionary account’s claims regarding morality, the claim that morality may exist in other social species, and that just because we currently do not know that a characteristic is possessed by another species or individual is not sufficient grounds to conclude that it *is* not possessed.

Coghlan, 2014:p.97; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.15; Bekoff, 2001:p.83; Denison, 2010:p.68; Bekoff, 2004:pp.500-504). Further, nonhumans have been shown to modify their behaviour when facing punishment or consequences, such as in play.

Allchin cites studies showing that “bats [have]...a very simple social organization [involving reciprocity]...bats do not share blood unconditionally. They are more likely to provide food for a bat that has fed them on a previous occasion or that is a frequent roostmate. The bats can recognize distinct individuals and remember past events. They learn to identify cheaters. A bat that does not repay previous "favours" does not get endless handouts” (Allchin, 2009:p.597). Similarly, Allchin notes that macaques “call to the group when they find food. Individuals that fail to call are frequently discovered and...actively punished. They are more likely to be bit, hit, chased, or rolled” (*Ibid*).

Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt and van Schaik cite research showing how “chimpanzees respond negatively in a token-exchange task when they observe how a conspecific obtains a more preferred reward for the same token. Thereupon, chimpanzees frequently refuse to complete exchange interactions...Furthermore...chimpanzees ‘punish’ conspecifics that steal their food” (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.9). Jaime Denison further notes, “[c]ase studies have shown, such as with dogs, that animals will ostracize continual cheaters and will not even engage with them in play once it becomes clear that the cheater is intentionally violating the rules of the game to ‘win’” (Denison, 2010:p.68).

Even though these examples exhibit simplistic punishment, that this is used to regulate social groups is important as individuals alter their behaviour on this basis. This fits the evolutionary account and the adjusting of behaviour is indicative of morality via awareness of what one *should* do. Moreover, for some nonhumans, e.g. wolves and primates, their ‘reputation’ thus influences their behaviour. Some moral theories consider awareness of

‘reputation’ to be morally important, e.g. Smith’s ‘impartial spectator’ (de Waal, 1996:p.33). Given the evolutionary account, this indicates the possibility of morality.

Empathy: This behaviour is one of two main directors of moral behaviour among primates (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.20) and is the main moral behaviour nonhumans perform. Evidenced in rats, monkeys, chimpanzees, elephants, mice, dolphins, whales, social carnivores such as wolves, gorillas, bats, bonobos, Diana monkeys, macaque monkeys, and other primates (Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.17&20; Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.77-78&162; Putz, 2009:pp.615&617-618; Sachs, 2010:p.625; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.ix-x&2&6-7&9&85&94&96-97&99&104-106; Stone, 2006:p.60; de Waal, 2006:pp.23&28-31; de Waal, 1996:pp.53-57&211; Bekoff, 2004:p.498).

In addition to the above, de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani and Parmigiani note that “[c]himpanzees also appear to exhibit empathy, consoling group members who lose a fight through physical contact” (de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.77-78). Putz cites Goodall’s example of Washoe, adding: “numerous cases of empathy involving third-order intentionality leading to selfless behavior have been reported in great apes” (Putz, 2009:p.618).

Bekoff and Pierce add, “research on captive Diana monkeys strongly suggests a capacity for empathy, long thought to be unique to humans” (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.6). For example, “individual Diana monkeys were trained to insert a token into a slot to obtain food. The oldest female...failed to learn how to do this. Her mate watched her unsuccessful attempts, and on three occasions...picked up the tokens...inserted them into the machine, and then allowed her to have the food” (*Ibid*). Bekoff, Pierce, and the researchers conclude: “[t]he male apparently evaluated the situation and seemed to understand that she wanted food but could not get it...He could have eaten the food, but he didn’t. There was no evidence that the male’s

behaviour was self-serving” (*Ibid*). Bekoff and Pierce cite similar results with chimpanzees (*Ibid*).

Bekoff and Pierce also refer to a “teenage female [elephant, who]...was suffering from a withered leg on which she could put no weight. When a young male from another group began attacking...a large adult female chased the attacking male, returned to the young female, and touched her crippled leg with her trunk” (*Ibid*:pp.6-7). A similar example is given regarding mice: “[t]wo baby mice had become trapped in a sink overnight...[a dish of water was placed inside and] One of the mice...drank, but the other seemed too exhausted to move...The stronger mouse found a piece of food...and carried it to the other...the stronger mouse moved the morsel closer and closer to the water [as the weaker mouse tried to eat] until the weaker mouse could drink” (*Ibid*:p.85).

Bekoff and Pierce cite an experiment where “[o]ne rat was suspended in the air by a harness and a neighboring rat could press a lever to lower the suspended rat. The suspended animal would...squeak and wriggle in distress. The rats were apparently made uncomfortable by signs of distress in a fellow rat, and would act to alleviate the distress by pressing the lever” (*Ibid*). Similarly, there are “numerous studies indicating that mice and rats show a marked stress response to being in the same room as another rat subjected to decapitation...Witnessing effects have also been documented in mice, monkeys, and...humans” (*Ibid*:pp.96-97).

Frans de Waal cites studies showing that “household pets appeared as worried as the children by the ‘distress’ of family members” that occurred during an experiment to test empathy in human children (de Waal, 2006:p.28). Thus these nonhumans responded similarly to the humans. De Waal also presents an example of empathy reaching beyond species boundaries: “Kuni [a female bonobo] captured a starling...[after attempting to help the bird fly by spreading her wings and throwing her from a tree] Kuni guarded [the starling] for a long time against a curious juvenile” (*Ibid*:pp.30-31).

Other examples include elephants attempting to help fallen and dying members of their group (de Waal, 1996:p.53). Similarly, when an elephant escaped poachers only to die from her wounds, the other elephants “became frantic...and tried to lift her up...Her family tried everything to rouse her...and [one] even went off and collected a trunkful of grass and tried to stuff it into her mouth...Afterward, the others sprinkled earth over her carcass, then went off into the surrounding bushes to break off branches, which they placed over [her] body...” (*Ibid*:pp.53-54). De Waal cites further examples of chimpanzee, gorilla, and monkey distress at the death of loved ones, especially young (*Ibid*:pp.54-58).

That these examples demonstrate empathy is difficult to deny. Neurological research also supports that social nonhumans have the cognitive capacities required for, and do feel, empathy (Ferrari, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.163; Bekoff, 2004:pp.492&498; Putz, 2009:pp.618-619). Moreover, human children develop cognitive signs of empathy around two (de Waal, 2006:p.26). The cognitive capacities of social nonhumans, e.g. primates, canids, and pigs, however, are equal to that of a child of three or four. Given the evolutionary account the implications for such nonhumans developing empathy are obvious. Other examples of empathy may perhaps be shown in news stories of monkeys running into burning buildings to save dogs and cows crying for their young when they are taken away, to the point of chasing the trucks. As noted in §6.1.2 and §6.1.4, empathy is important for social and moral development, and for many theorists it is important to, or the cornerstone of, morality (Simmons, 2014:p.97; de Waal, 2006:pp.20-21; D’Arms, 2011:p.154; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.87).<sup>250</sup>

Fairness: Evidenced as having a concept of fairness and expecting others to act fairly.

Evidenced in chimpanzees, bonobos, capuchin monkeys, other primates, wolves and other

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<sup>250</sup> There are some that consider empathy and compassion to be similar, and thus the examples of compassion cited above may be considered cases of empathy. I shall consider both behaviours more fully in the next chapter.

canids, and rodents (de Waal, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.59-61; Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.77; Bekoff, 2001:p.83-85; Sachs, 2010:p.625; Bekoff, 2004:pp.492&500-504&513; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.ix-x&5-6&115-132; de Waal, 2006:pp.42-49; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:p.9; Coghlan, 2014:p.97; Putz, 2009:p.619; Allen & Bekoff, 2005:pp.125-126&128&130; Denison, 2010:pp.65-68).

De Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani and Parmigiani cite primatological studies which show that “like humans, chimpanzees make generally equitable proposals to their partners in a standard economic game...This suggests that both species value fairness despite immediate economic costs” (de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:pp.77&61). They further add, “[c]apuchin monkeys are so sensitive to iniquity that clumped rewards, which are monopolizable by dominant parties, reduce cooperative tendencies compared to dispersed ones” (*Ibid*:p.59). In another experiment, “two monkeys received either equal rewards for the same task or unequal rewards...individuals receiving the lesser reward were unaffected if both received the same, yet refused to perform or accept the reward if their partner received a better deal. Similar results were found in chimpanzees” (*Ibid*:pp.59-60). Moreover, de Waal, *et al*, also note that chimpanzees possess a concept of second-order fairness, shown via “a study...on chimpanzees, in which not only partners receiving the lesser reward refused to perform or accept rewards, but also partners receiving the better reward. In other words, any inequity, not just the disadvantageous kind, was aversive” (*Ibid*:p.60).

As touched on above, Bekoff relays research on play in social mammals, e.g. wolves, which shows that play involves agreeing to rules which when broken, apologies are made, forgiveness is given, and ostracizing from play or the group is used as punishment. Bekoff claims that this demonstrates a sense of fairness. (Bekoff, 2001:pp.83-85; Bekoff, 2004:pp.500-504; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.115-132). Bekoff also notes: “In domestic dogs there is little

tolerance for non-cooperative cheaters. Cheaters may be avoided or chased from play groups. There seems to be a sense of what is right, wrong, and fair...Even in rats fairness and trust are important in the dynamics of playful interactions...sequences of rat play consist of individuals assessing and monitoring one another and then fine-tuning and changing their own behavior to maintain the play mood. When the rules of play are violated, when fairness breaks down, so does play” (Bekoff, 2004:p.503).

Shapiro cites de Waal, and notes that “[n]ot only do chimpanzees assist one another mutually, they add a system of revenge to deal with those who oppose them... Inclusion of negative acts considerably broadens the scope of the balance sheets they seem to keep on social affairs...beneficial actions [are] rewarded...[and there is] a tendency to teach a lesson to those who act negatively...[A]ltruism is not unlimited: it is bound by rules of mutual obligation...To act negatively toward stingy individuals...suggests a sense of justice and fairness” (Shapiro, 2006:p.364).

The above indicates that some nonhumans have a sense of fairness. Fairness on the evolutionary account is part of how morality evolves. It includes the idea of what *should* be done. Further species that understand, and regulate social interactions via, fairness have the possibility of following a central moral concept; the Golden Rule.

Adding punishment, such behaviour indicates a sense of justice or right and wrong behaviour no matter how simple in form. Bekoff and Pierce argue that justice is not rational, but rather felt (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.132). While questionable, as humans do operate morally without reflection/thought, as per §6.1.4, and as morality can have varying complexities, it is parsimonious given the evolutionary account to rule out less complex forms of justice.

Other moral behaviours: Nonhumans also engage in other behaviours that fit evolved morality.

For instance, chimpanzees and other primates prevent conflict via ‘policing’ behaviour that evidence shows is aimed at maintaining social cohesion and peace (de Waal, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.61; Flack & de Waal, 2000:p.12; Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:pp.9-10). Further, elephants, whales, dolphins, wolves, and primates consider and protect the weak, sick, injured and handicapped, often taking care of them, preventing aggression towards them, and altering their own interests to accommodate them (Flanagan, Ancell, Martin, & Steenbergen, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.78; Bekoff, 2004:p.498; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.97-98&102; de Waal, 1996:pp.40-44&59; Shapiro, 2006:p.361; Reid, 2011:pp.7-11).

These behaviours fit with the evolutionary account of morality. That such behaviour is moral in humans provides additional support that such behaviours are moral.

In sum, given the evolutionary account, the conception of morality in §6.1.4, and the points in §7.1, these behaviours support that some nonhumans are moral.

### **§7.1.2 Important Points and Summation**

In this section I consider three further points regarding nonhuman moral behaviour and then sum up the chapter’s findings.

Most studies show nonhuman moral behaviour within their societies. However other documented instances are inter-species. Some are given above. In addition, instances have been documented with dogs and rabbits, gorillas, elephants, and lions rescuing human children (Allchin, 2009:p.599; Shapiro, 2006:p.367; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:p.1&106-108).

This suggests two important points. First, nonhumans recognize and empathize with need within their groups and across group and species lines (Shapiro, 2006:p.367). This is significant as it is thus possible to recognize need and empathize without centrism, especially

as many nonhumans may not have the capacities for an A(i) analogue. Second, morality can cross species and group lines, through empathy especially. Given the evolutionary account this may be tied with recognizing a bond or similarity with others that increases one's sense of community.

A separate, third, point is that within their groups' nonhuman offspring are above norms, rules, and morality. Young go unpunished and are not judged as adults are, even by non-kin (de Waal, in de Waal, Smith Churchland, Pievani & Parmigiani, 2014:p.53). Harming young is considered harshly by the group (Rudolf von Rohr, Burkhardt & van Schaik, 2011:pp.11-13). This occurs in primates and other nonhumans, e.g. wolves and elephants. This is important as nonhumans are often likened to human children in nonhuman ethics regarding moral responsibility and behaviour. With the evolutionary account, nonhuman behaviour towards their offspring may thus reveal further anthropocentrism due to assuming that morality involves *only* complex cognitive capacities (i.e. *human* morality), rather than morality having different forms of complexity. Human young are thus not considered morally responsible because they do not fulfil *the* criteria for being moral, but because they do not fit *human* criteria and are thus considered special, just as nonhuman young are considered as not fitting *nonhuman* criteria and are considered special. Thus adult nonhumans have been treated as humans are, not nonhumans. This is characteristic of centric thought and reveals approaching nonhuman ethics via the evolutionary account is important.

In sum, the examples of §7.1.1 fit the evolutionary account. With humans such behaviour indicates morality. Some of these behaviours, notably empathy, sympathy, compassion, altruism, self-sacrifice, and fairness, are hard to deny as moral. More so given the evolutionary account, §6.1.4, §7.1, and the rejection of anthropocentrism. As a result, given the evolutionary account there is sufficient evidence to suggest that nonhumans behave morally.

## **§7.2 Objections**

Three objections may be made to this conclusion. I shall consider each in turn.

### **§7.2.1 Anthropocentrism Remains**

In this section I consider that anthropocentrism is involved in the analysis of nonhuman morality, and thus a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic cannot use this. I outline the objection and provide four responses.

One may argue that human morality and values are used to determine if nonhumans are moral and thus the analysis is anthropocentric. Further, the example behaviours are anthropocentric as they are chosen because they resemble human moral behaviour. Thus any principles based upon them involve anthropocentrism.

While this objection appears strong, four responses may be made. First, it is unclear how morality could not be concerned with inter-personal and social interaction, i.e. why a code of behaviour is required unless one must consider how to act regarding another. Consequently, morality must involve determining how one should behave regarding others, as §6.1.4 shows. Thus any behaviour doing this, fits with this understanding of morality. The behaviour in §7.1.1 fits this, the conception in §6.1.4, and the evolutionary account. This alone indicates morality. Human moral comparisons are only given to offer *further* support to this conclusion.

Second, *qua* the evolutionary account and different complexities of morality, nonhumans could have different moral behaviours to humans. Moralities differ based on circumstance, cognitive and affective capacities, social complexities and sizes, forms of communication, environments, cultures, religions, traditions, developments from old

morality, etc. Thus, nonhumans may have moral behaviours/values humans do not, or could not even understand, and vice versa. For instance, there may be a *biological* aversion to incest in nonhumans yet numerous incestuous instances occur. Humans consider incest *morally* wrong via culture or complex consent. Thus there may be moral values/behaviours unique to different moralities due to that morality's evolution. This does not undermine that certain values/behaviours may cross all codes given morality's social basis. My purpose is to consider if moral behaviours cross species, including humans, to thus propose moral values based on all moral beings.<sup>251</sup>

Third, given the evolutionary account and the common conception in §6.1.4 any behaviour that fits with both is moral. The behaviours above do this and thus are moral. Further, as noted in §7.1 similar behaviours and traits, especially among those with similar cognitive capacities, ought to be interpreted similarly. As the nonhumans above evolved in relevantly-similar ways to humans and in some cases are related species, it should not be surprising that behaviours exist in such beings that are similar.

Fourth, even if correct there would be less anthropocentrism than in traditional theories. Nonhumans are considered as intentional agents who can act morally. An *attempt* is made to include nonhumans within the Centre and consider behaviours they *do* use.<sup>252</sup> The behaviour in §7.1.1 exhibits the moral values even if they are thought of as human,<sup>253</sup> and thus it would be less anthropocentric to derive a nonhuman ethic that nonhumans share in than one in which they do not and that relies upon the complex capacities and morality of humans that nonhumans do not share. Further, such a theory could still address anthropocentrism unlike traditional

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<sup>251</sup> I grant there may be differences, but I have similarly avoid human moral values that could be based on things other than the evolutionary account.

<sup>252</sup> Ethological studies, for instance, do nothing but observe nonhumans interacting in their natural surroundings rather than in lab settings. Thus there is no human influence at all. Moreover, as nonhuman morality is still considered controversial and most investigations are anthropocentric, until more research is done non-anthropocentrically and the possibility of nonhuman morality taken more seriously the empirical research to draw on is limited. The challenging of this anthropocentrism and any aid towards this change may well be another impact of this thesis' claims.

<sup>253</sup> Which given that they occur, and evolved before humans, in nonhumans would be a false conception.

theories. Thus even if anthropocentric, it would be less anthropocentric and address anthropocentrism and thus still have advantages.

In sum, this objection does not undermine concluding nonhumans are moral, and even if correct (which is not granted) my position remains less anthropocentric and advantageous.

### **§7.2.2 Nonhuman Morality is Absurd**

In this section I consider that *qua* being moral nonhumans are morally responsible and this is absurd. I outline the objection and give three responses.

Some object to nonhuman morality by arguing that if moral then nonhumans must be held morally responsible. We do not hold children morally responsible, and they have similar cognitive capacities and ability to alter behaviour as nonhumans. Holding nonhumans responsible is thus as absurd as holding children responsible. Thus nonhumans cannot be moral.

While appearing strong, four responses may be made. First, the objection assumes anthropocentric morality. It assumes that to be moral one must be a certain type of moral being, one that alters behaviour based on rationally understanding they are wrong. This is revealed by the comparison of nonhumans to children that have not *yet* developed cognitively to act as human adults do, and thus are not moral *qua* human morality. This ignores different complexities of morality on the evolutionary account and judges nonhumans *qua* humans. When this is understood there is no reason to consider that nonhumans cannot be moral, and held responsible, *in their morality* – as the above examples show they are – even if they are not responsible in more complex moralities.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> It must also be recalled here that on the evolutionary account I outlined in the previous chapter, it was stressed that different complexities of morality are not to be understood as resulting in better/worse, superior/inferior, or more perfect/less perfect moralities. On the account I outlined it was stressed that different complexities of morality only means that there are different types of moral complexity, not that these are better or worse, or even more/less evolved. It was noted there that evolution is not to be understood as a scale. Thus my response here does not imply that different complexities of morality form a hierarchy – they are just different complexities. (As

Second, children may not be held *as* responsible as adults yet they are not *free* of moral responsibility. Children are conditioned via rewards and punishments to behave in certain ways. They are chastised for doing wrong, praised and felt proud of acting laudatory. Nonhumans are treated similarly. Dogs are treated as if they know right from wrong, which ethological evidence on wolves supports. It is therefore unclear that nonhumans or human children are not morally responsible.

These two responses reveal that certain complexities of morality may, because of their complexities, be considered with different levels of responsibility. Nonhumans consider their young to not be as responsible within their moralities as adults. Adults are treated as fully responsible, and behaviour towards individuals alters depending on this. Nonhumans therefore hold each other morally responsible. Human children do the same amongst each other, yet when mixed with those of more complex moralities they are not considered *as* responsible. Thus those with more complex moralities hold those of simpler moralities responsible for actions they can understand, govern, and alter their behaviour regarding.<sup>255</sup>

This presents a third response: it is unclear holding nonhumans responsible *is* absurd. Those with complex moralities can help or guide those with less complex moralities to understand or change, and thus to develop more complex moralities. Human adults do this with children and dogs. It also seems plausible that this was involved in domestication, with humans and nonhumans learning rules of behaviour. Consequently, while humans would not have to hold free-roaming nonhumans morally responsible for what they cannot understand, or have not yet understood, humans may still attempt to help nonhumans develop more complex

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was explained in the previous chapter, moral complexity is partly evolved from how the morality needs to fit with the social structures and numbers of capacities/issues groups have, thus some moralities work for some and not others – but this does not imply better or worse.) Nonhuman and human morality may thus be a different complexity, but neither is better or worse.

<sup>255</sup> Again, this does not imply a hierarchy of such morality. All that this means is that as societies are not homogenous and comprised of beings who all have the same moral complexity, that when different beings with different moral complexities interact judgements made within the more complex morality toward those who do not have that same complexity are either not adequate or are made more leniently because of this difference. No attribution of value is given because of this difference, as occurs in a hierarchy.

moralties.<sup>256</sup> Similarly, just as adult humans and nonhumans step in to stop their young doing something immoral, it may be consistent for humans to prevent nonhumans from doing something such as kill unnecessarily even if there was no moral responsibility on behalf of the nonhuman.

Relatedly, many nonhumans consider that they have responsibilities outside their group just as humans do (Shapiro, 2006:p.367). Humans will save a nonhuman, and nonhumans will save humans, etc. Further, many of the nonhumans above understand that they would be or are responsible for harming another of their group. Wolves are socially ostracized if they harm others during play without making amends. Consequently, nonhumans may be held morally responsible for actions they *do* understand, e.g. deliberately harming another when they are capable of not (Shapiro, 2006:p.365; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009:pp.16-17). Still, nonhuman morality is likely less complex and thus less responsive to additional circumstances than human morality. As such, nonhumans may not know they do wrong or they may be acting morally acceptable for them. Thus while humans could hold nonhumans morally responsible, this would require careful and contextual consideration, and in regard to each morality involved, to avoid anthropocentric colonialism.<sup>257</sup>

In sum, this objection does not show nonhuman morality as absurd. Additionally, the responses demonstrate that the evolutionary account is important for nonhuman ethics. It enables a more accurate representation of nonhumans and reveals possibilities usually not considered.

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<sup>256</sup> Though this would take a long time, it is consistent with evolution and understanding of human-nonhuman interactions and learning. I shall also return to this as more than a response to an objection and as anthropocentric in §8.1.5. Here it is put forward solely as a response to the objection that nonhuman morality is absurd *qua* responsibility.

<sup>257</sup> This, however, is just the same problem that anthropologists have raised for ethicists regarding interactions between different cultures. It is not, therefore, indicative of a problem that proposing morality among nonhumans would face alone.

### **§7.2.3 Instinct, not Intentional**

In this section I consider that nonhuman behaviour results from instinct not intentional action, and thus is not moral. I outline the objection and provide three responses.

One may object that the examples cited do not show nonhumans acting intentionally, only instinctually (Shapiro, 2006:pp.359-363). Thus the actions do not fit with the conception in §6.1.4 and are not moral. While no example provides direct evidence of the inner mental state of intention there are three reasons to believe the behaviour is intentional.

First, being instinctual does not entail an action is not intentional. For instance, the ultimate cause of human actions may be genetic or biological, or involve an instinct, e.g. aiding family members, injured, endangered, or requiring help. Yet this need not entail the act is not performed intentionally and that the human could not have resisted the instinctual cause. Similar then for nonhumans.

Second, humans and social nonhumans are not mechanical. While researchers are unsure about ascribing intent to some pro-social species, none of those above are such species. Research shows that such nonhumans can, and do, act with intention (*Ibid*:p.363). Further, as noted in the empathy examples, neurobiology shows that such nonhumans possess the capacities and undergo similar electro-chemical responses in similar parts of their brains as humans when moral situations arise. We can never be certain other minds exist, yet most do not question that humans act intentionally<sup>258</sup> and thus there is little reason to presume nonhumans also do not; unless a higher standard of evaluation is used for them. Suggesting different explanations for similar behaviour, that evolved similarly, serves similar purposes, in similarly social beings that have relevantly-similar capacities, especially for closely related species, is uneconomical and suspect. More so given the evolutionary account. The burden of

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<sup>258</sup> Whether intention relates to autonomy I shall not consider here.

proof is therefore on the objection, especially as mechanistic thinking regarding, and denial of traits/attributes to, nonhumans has been debunked (*Ibid*).

Third, the empathy and cross-species moral behaviour examples reveal an interesting insight. For nonhumans, who are arguably unable to develop a form of A(i), do not doubt others' intentionality or minds' existence. Empathetic and helping behaviour, even toward non-group/species individuals, suggests that nonhumans act on the belief that whatever acts similarly is intentional – a trait that likely evolved to aid in avoiding, or succeeding at, predation and reproduction. Nonhumans have no difficulty ascribing intent to others, and neither do most humans with nonhumans. Thus this objection may have anthropocentric origins.

In sum, the objection does not show that nonhuman behaviour should not be interpreted as moral.

### **§7.3 The Evolutionary Account, Nonhuman Morality, and Nonhuman Ethics**

In this section I sum up that nonhumans can be moral, the importance of this for me, and outline two reasons why nonhuman morality is important for nonhuman ethics.

The evolutionary account and the above examples provide sufficient reason to conclude that many nonhuman animals are moral. From this, less anthropocentric moral values may be derived by considering nonhuman and human morality.

Before doing so, I outline two reasons why considering nonhuman morality is important for nonhuman ethics. Several benefits have been noted throughout chapter six. Here I provide two more.

First, Jaime Denison <sup>259</sup> argues that considering nonhumans only as morally considerable rather than as agents able to regulate their behaviour, and thus as moral agents, is

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<sup>259</sup> Whose only aim is to consider if nonhumans are moral agents, not construct a moral theory.

anthropocentric (Denison, 2010:pp.69-70). Thus a less anthropocentric position must consider nonhumans as moral. Moreover, without considering what values constitute nonhuman morality, i.e. by only considering morality from a human perspective, any moral principles or criteria for moral considerability could be anthropocentric. At minimum not doing so would be characteristically centric. Many feminists argue that women's ideas/views must be included to combat androcentrism that does not represent women in how theories are made or applied. Similarly, not considering nonhumans as intentional moral beings, or their values, is anthropocentric.<sup>260</sup>

Second, considering nonhuman morality considers nonhumans *as nonhumans*, i.e. how *they* work and think, what matters to *them*, how *their* societies and morality work, rather than homogenizing nonhumans as 'those sentient creatures', as occurs with traditional approaches. This has important implications. We may learn *from* nonhumans, and they from us. Humans and nonhumans are in a larger, interacting society and thus one group should not decide how all should live.<sup>261</sup> Finally, considering nonhumans as having different, yet equal and full *moral* lives, may aid in considering nonhumans to have equal and full *lives* with preferences, desires, and needs.<sup>262</sup>

All of this impacts the debates. For instance, whether we should intervene to stop predation is considered via what humans think rather than what nonhumans also want. Others argue that intervening is anthropocentric as we impose our moral beliefs on the more-than-

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<sup>260</sup> As an important, yet side, note, given this most nonhuman ethics positions have another reason to be anthropocentric. For instance, Singer and Regan both exclude nonhumans as moral agents (Singer, 2011:pp.92-96; Singer, 1993:p.71; Regan, 2004:pp.152-153). This is done based on a commitment to the more complex kind of morality that humans display and judging nonhumans in comparison (Reid, 2010:p.16; Singer, 2011:pp.92-96; Regan, 2004:pp.152-153). Both of these reasons mean Singer and Regan, amongst other positions, involve more anthropocentrism. I highlight this here as without the investigation of chapters six and seven, this claim would have been unsupported in chapters four and five.

<sup>261</sup> While this may require further research into how best to accomplish this, and improvements in current methodology, the attempt to address and avoid anthropocentrism (as clarified) will not only aid in this but also ensure that the focus on aiding nonhumans and including their perspectives and lives within all considerations is not lost or subordinated to humans'.

<sup>262</sup> As may be recalled from my response to Singer in chapter four.

human world. The above shows morality/moral values evolve and are not bound to one species or social group, morality is not human or static and thus separate to what occurs in the more-than-human world, and nonhumans do not reject intervention (intervention occurs, even across species) and often seek or may want intervention (Horta, 2013:p.118). For instance, free-roaming nonhumans seek human aid, food, or co-habitation,<sup>263</sup> prey run from predators, etc. Recognizing needs and desires, or that they are intentional feeling animals, can further reveal if/when nonhumans would want intervention, just as with children.<sup>264</sup> Further, nonhumans intervene for humans and each other, as evidenced throughout §7.1.1 and §7.1.2. That they can determine when to intervene, usually via empathy, means we can also. Thus morality should include the perspectives/desires of nonhumans, and it can be more anthropocentric not to intervene if this results from dismissing these findings.<sup>265</sup>

In sum, nonhuman morality is important for nonhuman ethics.

#### **§7.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, given the evolutionary account there is sufficient reason to conclude that many nonhumans are moral. This is important for combating anthropocentrism and for nonhuman ethics. In addition to the reasons outlined and considering nonhumans as moral, drawing on this may be beneficial as considering all moral behaviour may yield moral values that are less anthropocentric by being based on all moral codes.

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<sup>263</sup> Countless instances of this are recorded in news articles and the literature, ranging from cats and dogs, to birds, sea lions, rhinos, sharks, and many more. Ravens have been documented capturing human attention to lead the human to their trapped mate and also going to humans for aid with injuries. Similarly, this was noted in how domestication began in §6.2.

<sup>264</sup> We can recognise when nonhumans want aid often, as we can humans. We may get this wrong sometimes but it is parsimonious to believe that we cannot have reasonable belief in many instances that nonhumans would appreciate aid.

<sup>265</sup> As argued in §3.1.4.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### TOWARDS A LESS ANTHROPOCENTRIC NONHUMAN ETHIC

A less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic must avoid A(i) and A(ii) as much as possible, and address both, not just A(ii). Thus the principles for how one should act and the criteria for moral considerability must not be solely based or focus mainly on, nor be biased towards, humans or human ideas. Basing the principles upon values shared by *all* moral beings – human and nonhuman – will thus reduce anthropocentrism. This method, I argue, provides less anthropocentric grounds for how one should act, as well as considering nonhumans as active, rather than passive, beings with contributing perspectives.<sup>266</sup>

This methodology also applies to moral considerability. The conventional approach of arguing, (i) from humans to nonhumans, and (ii) from what criteria to who that criteria includes, e.g. why are humans considerable and then seeing which nonhumans share this, is therefore rejected to avoid a human Centre. Accordingly I begin ‘outside’ a human-Centre and propose a ‘bottom-up’ moral considerability that includes all beings unless sufficient reason can be given for excluding them. Thus while humans are included they are not at the Centre.

Taking the principles and moral considerability together, I argue that this ethic is plausible, applies to a wider range of nonhumans, and addresses the problems regarding anthropocentrism.

Two clarifications must be made. First, I avoid the term ‘moral agent’, as this simplifies morality, as I argue below, and due to the controversial nature of the term and its implications. Second, I treat moral considerability separately from the ability to act morally. When referring

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<sup>266</sup> As was noted in §6.2

to the latter I do *not* intend that this gives additional moral value, status, or considerability. I thus address ‘how one should act’ separate to ‘which beings one should act morally towards’.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In §8.1.1 I outline moral values shared by humans and nonhumans, *qua* chapter six, and narrow these down to three. I then clarify the meaning of these three. In §8.1.2 I use these values to put forward four principles to guide moral behaviour and explain how these work. In §8.1.3, I propose a ‘bottom-up’ moral considerability, i.e. all beings are included unless sufficient reasons can be given to exclude them. I argue this fits with the principles, the rejection of anthropocentrism, and is plausible. In §8.1.4 I sum up the position and argue that it is plausible. In §8.1.5 I illustrate how the position works as a nonhuman ethic in regard to the debates. In §8.2 I outline differences with other accounts and some of the position’s implications, especially regarding the problems in chapter three. I conclude by summing up and claiming that my position is less anthropocentric, addresses anthropocentrism, and thus has advantages as a nonhuman ethic.

### **§8.1 A More-Than-Human Ethic**

Moral theory consist of two elements: how beings that can act morally should act regarding those who are morally considerable, and who is morally considerable. Having considered the evolutionary account of morality, the conception of morality in §6.1.4, and nonhuman morality, I can draw from the moral values and behaviours of all moral beings to put forward less anthropocentric principles for a nonhuman ethic (§8.1.1). This will provide the first element (§8.1.2). From this I will construct the second (§8.1.3), before uniting the two and outlining the position as a whole (§8.1.4).

### **§8.1.1 Clarifying the Principles**

In this section I draw upon chapter six to outline moral values shared by humans and nonhumans. I argue that these can be reduced to three core values. I clarify the meaning of each and conclude that these are non-anthropocentric.

Given the evolutionary account, the conception of morality in §6.1.4, and the examples of nonhuman morality the following moral values and behaviours are non-anthropocentric, as they are not solely human or human-created: sympathy/compassion, altruism, tolerance, self-sacrifice, concern for others, aiding others, fairness, mediation and reconciliation, intervention to prevent harm, protecting less able others.<sup>267</sup> These values<sup>268</sup> are applied to the whole moral community. This community, on the evolutionary account, is not restricted to one's social group, race, sex, or species, but to all those to whom the principles can rightly apply.

Two important points to note. First, these values may not cover all values moralities may have. As moralities vary in complexity, humans, nonhumans and groups may have unique values or undiscovered values that cross codes. The above shows values moral beings share and that fit with the evolutionary account and the conception of morality in §6.1.4. Thus I will use these construct a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic, however the position can be updated if other values are found. Second, when instances include *only* beings within the same morality (e.g. specific human-human or rat-rat groups), and do not affect beings of different moralities, while my position remains those beings' moral codes may apply. For example, with nonhumans, my position applies, with humans only, the more complex human morality may apply in addition; given human situations may require that complexity.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> I use this phrase to include those who are weak, sick, injured, handicapped, or young, in any way in comparison to the rest of the group.

<sup>268</sup> I shall use this as shorthand for 'values, principles, and behaviours' throughout.

<sup>269</sup> I must note that, given the inter-relatedness of life/society/action, such instances would be few and thus practically this would have to be applied carefully.

Having found non-anthropocentric moral values, it is possible to narrow the list down to three – empathy, compassion, and fairness – as the other values can be derived from one or more of these. For instance, altruism, tolerance, self-sacrifice, concern for others, aiding others, conflict resolution, intervention, and protection, are all derivable from empathy when properly understood. Empathy, to briefly clarify,<sup>270</sup> is the taking of, and feeling from, another being’s perspective that one then understands and is moved to react in regard to, *for* the other (Aaltola, 2014:p.246). Theorists argue that this ‘seeing from the first-person of the other’ makes it difficult for one not to act, as one understands the other *as if one were* the other, and thus action occurs.<sup>271</sup> Thus altruism and tolerance, for example, can be derived as empathetic action likely leads to both. Similarly with the other values. Thus most of the list can be derived from empathy. Further, in the examples of nonhuman morality such values were linked to empathy. Thus, empathy is a more primary value.

While compassion may derive from empathy also, a proper understanding of both shows some differences.<sup>272</sup> Thus compassion is considered separate. Compassion also entails concern for others, aiding others, protection, and possibly self-sacrifice. Fairness involves punishment, protection, and perhaps conflict resolution, altruism, and aiding others. Again with a proper understanding fairness may also be derived from empathy. However as fairness can also apply *to* empathy this is considered separate.

I thus focus on these three moral values, though as compassion and fairness can – to an extent – be derived from empathy, this is first among the three. It should be noted that empathy, compassion, and fairness, collectively entail cooperation. This is because together these form the basis for how morality evolved on the evolutionary account. Further, it is difficult to conceive how, taken together – i.e. fairness, consideration of and helping others in bad

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<sup>270</sup> Below I will explain each value in more depth. I give this brief clarification here only for clarity in what follows.

<sup>271</sup> I.e., without imagination or inference. More on this below when I consider empathy in detail.

<sup>272</sup> I discuss this below.

situations, and considering others experiences from their perspective and being moved to empathize – cooperation would not follow.

As these values have ambiguous meanings, possible implications when correctly understood, and to avoid objections regarding their moral relevance, I now clarify each. In addition to the previous chapter, to avoid confusion I briefly explain why nonhumans also possess compassion and fairness, in addition to empathy.

### ***Empathy***

*By 'empathy' I understand the following.* As empathy is defined in numerous often conflicting ways, by empathy I do not simply mean 'cognitive empathy', or *perceiving* that another being is experiencing a feeling (Simmons, 2014:p.99; Aaltola, 2013:p.77). Instead, drawing on the work of Elisa Aaltola and Aaron Simmons, by empathy I understand both a cognitive *and* an affective element, and thus: empathy is perceiving that another is experiencing a feeling, and as a result experiencing or resonating with the other's feeling *from their* view, rather than what we imagine to be their view (*Ibid*). Thus, empathy is to *feel with* another, as if from the first-person perspective. This is distinct from compassion and sympathy, and also care, all of which *feel for* another, as if from a third-person perspective (Simmons, 2014:p.100), even when trying to consider the other's perspective.

Thus empathy is not only about cognitively recognizing that another, as the other, is experiencing a certain state, nor is it simply cognitively *attempting* to see from that other's perspective, though both are involved. Empathy also involves a reaction, experiencing, or *resonating* from this observation. This is not simply one's own feeling caused by the other's state, or a feeling that is similar to the other's state, but the feeling that they are feeling that one feels as if from *their* perspective (Aaltola, 2014:pp.248-249&252; Simmons, 2014:pp.101-

102). Thus, with empathy, even if we were to imagine that another feels a certain way, we feel it *as if we were them feeling it* rather than *us feeling it about* them (Simmons, 2014:p.104). It is this sense of empathy that, Aaltola notes, Hume and Smith intended by ‘sympathy’, rather than the modern meaning of that term, ‘compassion’ (Aaltola, 2013:p.77; Aaltola, 2014:pp.244-246).

This clarification of empathy is important, for rather than simply just the cognitive element, if one feels the same feeling as if from a first-person perspective it is difficult not to act, as the first-person being *would* act (Simmons, 2014:pp.101-102). Moreover, empathy applies to the other’s perspective, values, desires, interests, etc. As Simmons’ notes:

“When I fully empathize with another’s concerns or purposes, I not only acknowledge that the other has purposes which are important to her, but I also experience the other’s purposes from her perspective, seeing and feeling the other’s purposes as she sees and feels them. The other experiences her purposes as worthwhile, important, meaningful, and mattering, as worthy of being fulfilled. Thus, when I experience the other’s purposes as she experiences them, I experience her purposes as worthwhile and mattering too. This means that I will want, to some degree, to help the other fulfil her purposes, not frustrate them...” (*Ibid*:p.102)

Empathy thus challenges centric thought, for as Aaltola notes, it enables us to value and sees others as valuable in themselves, to perceive what it is like to be the other from their view, to love and care not simply *from our* perspective *to* the other but also from *the other’s* perspective, and this radically alters *our* perspective (Aaltola, 2013:p.88; Aaltola, 2014:p.252).

This already provides support for empathy's moral significance, via how it works, its impact, and how moral positions, e.g. Hume's, appealed to the idea. I shall provide additional support, however. Empathy is often considered to be central to morality (D'Arms, 2011:p.154) or an important moral value (Simmons, 2014:p.97). Moreover, research has connected empathy to the ability to form moral judgements (Aaltola, 2013:pp.76-78; Aaltola, 2014:p.252) and some have argued that empathy is the basis for rights, social justice, and respect for persons (D'Arms, 2011:p.154). Empathy also need not involve rationality (Aaltola, 2013:p.78), and therefore fits with the conception of morality in §6.1.4 (i.e. reason need not be involved in acting morally) and some feminist and sentimentalist accounts. Moreover, as a pre-reflective response, that nonhuman animals demonstrate, empathy enables moral interaction between humans and nonhumans, *both* as instigators *and receivers* of moral action, in a way that is less likely to involve A(i).

### ***Compassion***

*By 'compassion' I understand the following.* Being concerned by another's suffering and attempting to alleviate it (Guyer, 2012:p.403). Although compassion is often considered a rough equivalent of empathy, in addition to the difference of perspective, compassion only occurs in bad situations whereas empathy can also occur in good or neutral situations (Crisp, 2008:p.234). Compassion also differs from charity and kindness. Charity does not involve feeling distress at the other's bad situation (*Ibid*) whereas kindness occurs without distress and also occurs in good situations (*Ibid*:p.244). Thus while these values overlap, they are not synonymous – though all involve empathy, as compassion, charity, and kindness involve the

cognitive element of empathy but not the affective. Thus whenever empathy does not occur, compassion<sup>273</sup> can be practiced instead.

For most compassion is indisputably moral, for it is difficult to imagine that being moved to aid another's suffering is of no moral worth or, alternatively, that a person who thought that not aiding another's suffering, when it could be easily done, is not a proper subject of moral evaluation. Further, compassion is generally considered admirable (*Ibid*:p.233), especially as it is often linked to kindness (Regan, in LaFollette, 2003:p.142). Adam Smith, for instance, claimed compassion was the 'original passion of human nature' (Crisp, 2008:p.240), whereas Schopenhauer regarded compassion as the 'real moral incentive' (Guyer, 2012:p.403). Mary Midgley notes that compassion is "recognized and honoured in most human societies" (Midgley, in Singer, 2009:p.5). Moreover, compassion is almost always used in a morally evaluating sense, and usually positively. For instance, compassion is appealed to when considering whether assisted suicide is morally acceptable (Hardwig, in LaFollette, 2003:p.48&55) or when morally evaluating poverty, hunger, and disasters (Dower, in Singer, 2009:p.273). Thus it is reasonable that compassion is a moral value.

Two clarifications must be made. First, some consider compassion to be a more complex moral emotion than empathy. In order to avoid the objection that nonhumans may therefore not possess this capacity, and thus compassion cannot be used on my position, I consider two reasons in support of my use of compassion.

First, as noted above compassion intersects with empathy as it requires the cognitive element. Empathy also requires the affective element, and without this empathy does not occur. Compassion occurs, unlike empathy, when one feels for another due to their bad situation and not because one is feeling from their perspective. One simply reacts because one sees the other in a bad situation and does not want them to suffer. While this reaction may have more complex

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<sup>273</sup> Or charity or kindness.

forms – *qua* different complexities of morality – the emotional response of compassion distinguished from empathy requires nothing more complex than empathy requires, only a difference of *why* one is reacting (i.e. *for* the other rather than *as if one were* the other).

For instance, Roger Crisp clarifies that compassion is, in its least complex form, an almost instinctive distress caused by another’s suffering (Crisp, 2008:p.240). From this, more complex forms arise via additional variables, e.g. cognitive and non-cognitive states (*Ibid*). Beliefs, complex cognitive processes, simple desires to alleviate suffering, understanding the suffering is without cause, understanding who the other is or one’s relationship to them, all can affect the complexity of compassion, but all involve feelings one has for the other who is suffering. As Crisp puts it, albeit in relation to humans, “[c]ompassion is a basic human emotion, like fear or anger, and...we should not be misled by the fact that [it is] often felt in a subtle and sophisticated form or for complex reasons into viewing [it] in an excessively narrow and cognitivist way” (*Ibid*:p.241) This feeling for another who is perceived as suffering, in various forms of complexity, is not beyond many nonhuman animals, especially great apes, and especially given the examples in §7.1.1.

Second, while some, such as Lawrence Blum, claim compassion *requires* complex attitudes, such as the ability to recognize another, imaginative dwelling on the other’s condition, views of shared being (e.g. of being a human), and actively regarding the other’s good (Blum, in Rorty, 1980:pp.507-516), such conditions do not fit with examples of compassion, the above, the evolutionary account, and are given definition in question-begging circumstances. For instance, Blum’s analysis is defined in relation to and on the basis of considering ‘persons’ (*Ibid*:p.507), by which Blum means humans (*Ibid*:pp.507-509). Others’ analyses are not so demanding. For example, for Aristotle and Martha Nussbaum compassion is just distress felt at another’s suffering which they did not deserve and understood as suffering based on how it might happen to oneself (Crisp, 2008:pp.234-235). This need not require

complex reflective understanding of another's suffering or one's own possibilities. Roger Crisp and Brian Carr question even this level of complexity. In their analyses compassion just requires seeing the suffering of another, sympathizing with them, and being moved to action (Crisp, 2008:pp.237-238; Carr, 1999:p.411).

This analysis fits with the idea that a being can recognize another, recognize their situation and emotional state, and emotionally react, both aversely to what is seen and with a desire to help. Given the examples of punishment, reciprocity, altruism, and self-sacrifice, outlined in chapter six, this is not beyond nonhuman animals. The different complexities of compassion just underscores how morality can vary in complexity. This does not entail that less complex compassion is not compassion. This is further supported by, (a) compassion often being mistaken for empathy, (b) the neurological evidence and scientific experiments cited in chapter six that show many nonhumans have the cognitive capacities for empathy, and (c) humans react compassionately just because they see a human/nonhuman in distress and want to help them without the time to think or even without thinking of anything other than helping.

As Roger Crisp notes, "you don't need to believe all that much to feel compassion" (Crisp, 2008:p.237) for "[t]he heart of compassion as an emotion is what we feel at the misery or suffering of others" (*Ibid*). As this basic compassion is part of every form of compassion, unlike more complex understandings, this is what is *necessary* for compassion.

To sum up, compassion is just feeling for another who is in a bad situation and thus being moved to act. This is not beyond the capacities of nonhuman animals and fits with the examples cited in chapter six.

Second, given the subtle distinction between compassion and empathy, and how we cannot be definitively certain whether any circumstance is one or the other in nonhumans, one may object that compassion is unnecessary or question whether nonhumans possess it. First, compassion *is* distinct from empathy and the two apply in different instances. Thus it is not

unnecessary. Second, compassion is connected to empathy, being compassionate is not beyond beings that can be empathetic, and some of the examples in chapter six fit with compassion. It is thus plausible that nonhumans can be compassionate. This latter is supported by Rousseau, Smith, and Schopenhauer's claims that compassion is a natural and 'primitive' (i.e. basic and almost natural) trait (Loewy, 1995:p.466), and that even those outside of nonhuman ethics, such as bioethicist Erich Loewy, consider "[t]he empirical fact that at least most human and some nonhuman higher animals feel compassion is beyond reasonable doubt" (*Ibid*).

In sum, compassion is a moral value and as there is a difference between empathy and compassion both support my use of compassion.

### ***Fairness***

*By 'fairness' I understand the following.* Fairness is a more difficult concept to define given that several differing definitions are used. For instance, a common understanding is 'impartial or just behaviour without favouritism or discrimination'. This can clearly apply to social and moral situations. Other definitions add that fairness 'is between people who comply with the rules of a joint effort', 'arises due to balancing mutual restrictions of co-operators' (Kim, 2013:p.796), 'is the tendency to distribute benefits equally, not dominate or exploit, during mutually agreed upon social interactions' (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.125), 'is the focusing on how people fare relative to others with a concern for equality or that none receive more than they deserve' (Borchert, 2006:pp.335-336), or 'is the violation of expectations reached by mutual agreement' (Allen & Bekoff, 2005:p.130).

Given these differences, fairness is either something that arises via agreement or it is simply the view that one party is worse off than another without deserving to be. This fits with the idea that whatever one's society one can feel that another society is not treating one fairly.

Essentially fairness is the equality of interests or individuals being considered rather than self-interest taking precedence when there is no reason to favour anyone.

Three points require considering. First, fairness is not only an obligation according to Rawls (Kim, 2013:p.795) but is also connected to justice (Borchert, 2006:pp.257-258). This is clear given my clarification and by considering that Rawls' definition of justice is primarily about fairness and equality, and prohibiting practices and institutions that, as Heather Widdows notes, disadvantage the already disadvantaged (Widdows, 2011:pp.78-79). This obligation can be meant in a moral sense, such as in H. L. A. Hart's Principle of Fairness (Kim, 2013:p.796), social morality (Bekoff, 2001:pp.84-85), and theories on moral responsibility (Eshleman, 2014). Moreover, there is no reason that justice or fairness must only apply to those in agreement or within a singular society, given that justice is about fairness for those that are undeservedly disadvantaged among proper entities of consideration. This fits with a common understanding of justice as everyone should have their due. Thus for social justice, the proper entities would be society, and for moral justice, whomever is morally considerable.

Second, fairness is considered to be the result of sympathy which precedes it (Donovan, 1996:p.86). Moreover, there are studies that link empathy with feelings of injustice (Hoffman, 2014:pp.230-254). Consequently fairness and justice can be derived from or connected to empathy and compassion, and also apply *to* both given its aim to equal those considered. Josephine Donovan, for instance, cites H. B. Acton's observation that "a certain amount of sympathy<sup>274</sup> is required...to even notice that someone else is in need of help" (Donovan, 1996:p.86). Donovan adds, "one can...have no morality, no justice even, without first having sympathy...for without [sympathy] there would be no helping, and hence no beneficence, and help and beneficence are necessary for morality" (*Ibid*). If justice requires fairness, and justice requires empathy, and if morality requires empathy, then fairness is linked to empathy. Thus

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<sup>274</sup> By 'sympathy' is meant 'empathy' here, *qua* the conflation of these terms discussed above. This is clearly shown in the paragraph before this quote in Donovan.

fairness as a moral value likely derives from empathy and compassion, but can then apply to these to further them in a way that fits with the social aim of morality.

Third, some may contend that fairness requires complexity of understanding nonhuman animals do not possess. This objection, however, is contrary to the ethological and neurological evidence and the scientific studies cited in chapter six. There it was shown that many nonhumans live in complex societies governed by social norms and rules,<sup>275</sup> including rules regarding what each deserve or should have and punishment and retributive behaviour based on unfair treatment. Great apes and social carnivores, such as wolves, are clear examples of this. While there may be different complexities of fairness, there is ample evidence for at least some nonhumans to have understanding of behaviour that fits with the clarification of fairness above. Thus on the evolutionary account it would be parsimonious (and anthropocentric) to withhold this from these nonhumans.

In sum, the values nonhumans use morally can be reduced to three. I have clarified the meanings of these three, given reasons for their being moral, and shown that nonhumans can possess them. I conclude that these three values are non-anthropocentric and are appropriate for constructing a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic.

### **§8.1.2 Towards Less Anthropocentrism: The Principles**

In this section I use the three values to put forward four principles for guiding moral behaviour. First, I briefly sum up the values, how they are non-anthropocentric, and what this can mean for my nonhuman ethic. I then respond to an objection regarding other values nonhumans share. Next, I tie the three values into the social aim of morality before summing up what the values

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<sup>275</sup> This was stated, and cited, in the previous chapter.

mean for how one should act. I then formulate each principle in turn, showing how each works. Finally, I sum up how moral beings should act based on these principles.

Having identified empathy, compassion, and fairness as moral values that occur across moral beings (nonhuman and human), these values can be used to construct a less anthropocentric nonhuman ethic. This is because none are based solely on humans or support human superiority or centrality, and each has been arrived at via the evolutionary account and nonhuman morality. This reduces anthropocentrism in how the theory is created. Moreover, this de-Centring of humans allows for a nonhuman ethic that is an equal interaction amongst all moral beings as part of one moral community rather than just how ‘we’ should act towards or consider ‘them’.

Before outlining the principles an objection to using these three values may be raised, in that there are other values that nonhumans share in, e.g. filial love, loyalty, violence, and selfishness. Thus it may be asked why these three should be accepted rather than all.

In response, the evolutionary account and the evolved purpose of morality must be recalled. It was observed that social nonhumans also follow the pattern of how morality evolved and the social cohesion purpose of morality. Violence and selfishness do not fit with either. Moreover, as noted in chapter six, nonhumans are less violent and selfish than commonly believed and their own moralities generally exclude both. Thus violence and selfishness are excluded. The same applies for filial love, for while this is involved in the origin of morality, and thus may be involved in morality to some extent, both the evolutionary account’s aim at social cohesion, and nonhuman examples of empathy and fairness over and above, and in regard to beings other than, kin, indicates that this value – while likely is *a* moral value – is not as important to those moralities. Similarly for loyalty. The three values above however are those central to moralities that nonhumans and humans have and that fit with the evolutionary

account. Further, they are those from which most others can be derived. While I have granted that moral codes can involve other moral values, it is these three that fit this aim.

Having clarified this, I will briefly illustrate how the three values tie in with the social aim of morality. At minimum the aim of morality, on the evolutionary account, is for individuals to govern their behaviour based on moral value in regards to others. The evolutionary purpose of morality was to ensure social interaction and thus the evolutionary prosperity of the individual (and as a consequence the group).<sup>276</sup> Cooperation and the betterment of all are deducible aims from empathy, compassion, and fairness. The former was shown above, at the beginning of §8.1.1, whereas the latter follows from what I have argued in the clarification of empathy, compassion being the aid of those suffering, while the nature of fairness is the equality of all *based on what all would accept*, and this clearly involves the attempt to better all involved.

Having established how the values work towards social betterment and cooperation, I now turn to how one ought to govern one's behaviour. Based on the three moral values and the social aim of morality: moral beings ought to govern their behaviour based on empathy, compassion, and fairness, regarding those who are morally considerable,<sup>277</sup> to ensure the betterment of all, *for the beings themselves from their view* rather than how others see them. I will now outline each principle in turn before summing up the position's claim regarding moral behaviour.

*The principle of empathy.* Moral behaviour is primarily governed through the use of empathy. We perceive that the other being is experiencing a feeling/state, recognize the other as another being, and consequently we resonate with the other's feeling/state *from their view*.

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<sup>276</sup> Though as was noted, as morality evolved into varying forms of complexities due to differing variables, this idea and the purported aim of morality likely also evolved into varying understandings that, while keeping the minimum aim of morality, likely altered to present ideas such as virtue, and so on.

<sup>277</sup> Who this is, as yet in this chapter, has not been shown. I will return to this in §8.1.3. For the formulation of the principles the specifics of this are currently irrelevant.

We *feel with* the other what *they* are going through from *their* first-person perspective. On this level we understand what it would be like to be them in that situation, emotively respond to this, and thus are moved to action for them. As Elisa Aaltola clarifies: "...when witnessing an animal screaming in pain, we can first, on a very immediate level, feel the pang of [her] pain and fear in our very core, and then move away from this experience, anchored on sheer resonance with the other, toward a meta-level that is no longer a pang, but rather an emotive response toward that pang...[that is] colored with one's own experiential response. Hence, what was a flash of fear becomes sorrow sketched on top of the faint remnants of fear..." (Aaltola, 2014:p.251). Thus empathy *qua* empathy directs us towards, and makes us open to, the other, without intention, and we feel what the other feels and we react to this *for them* (*Ibid*:pp.247-248).

Two important points must be noted. First, the emotive and experiential responses are not reason-based conceptions or thoughts, but rather an immediate physical understanding, in the sense of our natural pre-reflective understanding, of what something is like. Thus, when empathizing with pain we resonate with the other's feeling of pain and have an emotive response that is coloured by our own experiential feelings of pain. Thus it is not something thought about or based upon reason, and thus is not exposed to A(i). For example, humans and nonhumans experiencing empathy witness the other in pain, and then immediately and pre-reflectively have a reaction – feel that pain, in their core as Aaltola states – and then from that they resonate with that feeling and have their own emotive response towards it (which is empathy). After this we can *then* react cognitively.<sup>278</sup>

This explains why nonhumans can react empathetically, even towards other species. Similarly with human children. This fits with the current research in empathy (cited above) on humans also. The claim is further supported by the evolutionary account and empathy amongst

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<sup>278</sup> This can be quickly or slowly.

nonhumans. First, given the evolutionary account, empathy is the origin of morality (as Aaltola argues, empathy is what opens us up to the other and centres us to be other-directed rather than self-directed (Aaltola, 2014:pp.246-247&252)), and as nonhumans also have empathy and arguably do not have an A(i)-analogue, it is unlikely that empathy involves A(i). Second, as nonhumans use empathy and can recognize other species' needs, and this same capacity evolved in us similarly, it is possible that we too can avoid A(i) in empathy. Moreover, it is possible for empathy to reach beyond types (e.g. species, etc.). I grant that the 'human' pre-occupation with rational thought, and what Val Plumwood defined as 'rationalism' (Plumwood, 2008:p.4), may often result in mistakes that are biased by A(i). Even so, as in all moral theories, striving to do better is what matters. As a result, empathy as described is possible.

Second, this kind of empathy appears only to relate to physical or emotional responses and seems to require the immediate perception of the other. This is not entirely correct, however, as one's reaction is towards what the other is feeling. Thus if we perceive the other's feeling is towards something other than physical stimuli, we still perceive they *are* feeling, resonate with their feeling, and have our emotive response towards that feeling. Thus whatever causes the feeling in the other, we react as if we were them. For example, as noted in the clarification of empathy, empathy can occur in regard to goals, values, concerns, etc. Thus when empathizing with another's concerns or values these are taken as mattering for them just as ours do for us (Simmons, 2014:p.102).

In situations where we cannot directly perceive another or where we can perceive another but they express no state things are more complicated. First I shall address beings that we recognize as similar to us (e.g. other humans and many nonhumans) and then beings less similar (e.g. slugs, jellyfish, etc.).

When we cannot directly perceive another that is similar to us, e.g. over the phone, we can still have empathetic reactions to their feelings via sound, finding out more information, or imagining their situation (*Ibid*:p.104). This does not require our attributing anything to them from our own mental cache, but rather simply conceiving of the situation that they are in and thus resonating with the emotion that they are/would feel in that situation (Simmons, 2014:pp.103-104; Aaltola, 2013:p.88; Aaltola, 2014:p.252).

When such a being is displaying no state at all (i.e. no body language, sound, or visual cue), however, it is unlikely that we would truly be able to understand how they are feeling and thus react correctly towards them. However, given the similarity, we can attempt to recall similar situations that the being was in before, consider biological knowledge of that being, or recall what beings that are relevantly-similar have done before, and use this for an empathetic response. This would not be perfect and could be subject to A(i), and as a result these instances must be treated similar to those beings that are significantly different to us.

Dissimilar beings, where it is unlikely that we could perceive a possible state or a clearly non-anthropocentric understanding of their inner state, are more problematic for empathy alone. Compassion and fairness remain possible however. To combat these limitations of empathy, to avoid anthropocentrism, and to determine when to properly employ compassion and fairness, I propose an addition to the three principles that I call the ‘precautionary principle’.

*The precautionary principle.* The precautionary principle of ‘erring on the side of caution’. This principle is justifiable given (a) the definition of morality on the evolutionary account, and (b) the aim to govern behaviour with empathy, compassion, and fairness, for the other, for the betterment of all. Where we cannot be sure of the other, and *qua* attempting to avoid applying anthropocentrically-biased assumptions to the other, we should assume the most cautious and beneficial decision *for the other* that we can. This avoids anthropocentrism

as no state is ascribed to the other and no claim is made that what we are doing is what is right for the other or what they would want. We can then apply empathy, compassion and fairness, without claiming that what we are imagining is what the other is feeling or that we know what the other requires. We are simply doing the best we can, ‘just in case’, in an honest attempt to try to consider the other *as the other* and aid them.<sup>279</sup>

As an example: should we help a jelly-fish on the beach?<sup>280</sup> As it is difficult to perceive the jelly-fish’s sensational state, and assuming that we know little about jelly-fish, then using the precautionary principle we should move the jelly-fish back to the sea (without harming ourselves as much as possible). Not knowing whether they can suffer pain, we again apply the precautionary principle and avoid using sharp sticks. In this example we are not presuming anything about the jelly-fish nor ascribing anything to her. Only considering the options and, knowing jelly-fish usually live in water, doing the best we can just in case to aid her. Thus we avoid anthropocentrism in our compassion, or empathy if we use the precautionary principle to imagine that the jelly-fish *could* be suffering.

As another example, should we help a spider out of a bath that she cannot climb out of, wash her down the drain, or leave her? Again assuming one does not empathize with the spider, we apply the precautionary principle. Doing so, some may empathize, yet for those that cannot, compassion can then be applied. Even though we are not sure the spider can feel pain or fear, we should err on the side of caution, and thus just in case be compassionate and help the spider. Thus, while the spider’s repetitive struggling may cause empathy, if not, the precautionary principle can provide a non-anthropocentric means to do the best we can *for her*.

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<sup>279</sup> This, it should be noted, fits well with allowing for the possibility of different evolutionary paths that lead to similar experiential capabilities – e.g. that suffering may occur despite different/no similar nervous systems. Further, this principle enables differences and similarities to be taken into account, or at least allow that there could be either, and thus shows a willingness to *try* to consider these and the being as *they are* rather than how we think they are. This at least carries less anthropocentrism.

<sup>280</sup> For the purposes of this example I am assuming jelly fish are morally considerable as I have not yet defined the bounds of moral concern. My purpose here is only to clarify the use of the Precautionary Principle, not to assert any moral considerability.

*Brief summary and the principle of compassion.* Moral beings should regulate their behaviour towards others using empathy. When unable to empathize, we should use the precautionary principle, and if still unable to empathize, use compassion with the precautionary principle. This can be done given the nature of compassion as aiding another that is suffering or in a bad situation, and using the precautionary principle to judge that the being is experiencing such. The limits of empathy however are not so common. When one begins to consider other beings as others that are experiential and equal to oneself empathy naturally occurs.<sup>281</sup> For instance, conceiving of a slug as an experiential other equal to oneself, and seeing that the slug responds to being touched by curling up, is likely to cause an empathic response of either fear or self-defence given the behaviour. If one does not consider the slug as an ‘other’, or equal to oneself, or as experiencing, then one is less likely to have such a response. As with the spider, however, few have difficulty interpreting nonhuman behaviours such as fear, and thus would have empathic responses. In the instances that this does not occur, the precautionary principle is applied and either empathy or compassion are used.

Compassion is also used when one does not respond with the affective element of empathy, but only the cognitive. Thus, when one recognizes that another being is in an experiential state, but does not resonate with their feeling, then compassion – guided by the precautionary principle – should guide our behaviour. With humans this is common, such as when one does not resonate with what another human is feeling, and thus does not *feel with* them, but instead recognizes their situation and is moved to *act for* them to help them. For example, although one can, one *may* not resonate with the affective element when witnessing a charity’s plea documentary, but may instead be moved to act out of compassion.

*The principle of fairness.* This focus on empathy and the precautionary principle entails a focus on prioritizing the perspectives of others. When empathizing and using the principle

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<sup>281</sup> Further, there are numerous examples of how empathy can be strengthened or taught.

one considers the other from their perspective or, in the latter case, attempts to do the best for the other *as the other* by erring on the side of caution. It is important to note that it does not follow from this that one loses oneself or that the other becomes the priority over oneself (Aaltola, 2014:p.249). For (a) the same principles must guide the other within their perspective, and thus towards us, and (b) morality applies to all morally considerable beings, and thus in addition to empathy and compassion, fairness is applied to all such beings.

It was noted above that fairness derives from empathy and compassion but is also applied to both. Thus, fairness comes into play not only *within* moral deliberation based on empathy and the precautionary principle, but also *applies to* morality as a guide to ensure that the other principles fulfil the aim of ensuring the betterment of all. Fairness is thus used by each moral being when choosing how to govern their behaviour, applies to all moral beings to ensure that deliberation and all beings are not disadvantaged, and applies to situations that empathy or compassion cannot resolve.

For example, in the case of medical experimentation on monkeys one would consider the monkey's reactions, empathize, and from the monkey's perspective experimentation should not be undertaken. However, humans may object that the perspectives of the humans that would benefit from the experiments should be empathized with. Thus it may not seem clear how one should act. However, with the addition of fairness we can see that what the humans are asking of the monkey is unfair based upon the definition of fairness, for the monkey herself receives no benefit and, *qua* empathizing, is clearly not wishing to be part of the experiment. Thus it would be morally wrong to force the monkey to be experimented upon. A similar process can be applied to human situations to prevent exploitation and instrumentalisation.

To sum up, the three principles with the precautionary principle work together to form the guiding values for moral behaviour, with the aim of the betterment of all *for the beings themselves*. Only when each is satisfied is an action undertaken. To sum up the claim on how

moral beings should act: moral beings should be as empathetic, compassionate, and fair as possible to all who are morally considerable, erring on the side of caution in regard to the other's capacities, desires, needs, and interests whenever there is room for doubt, and doing all that they can to consider the other *as the other* from *their* perspective.

### **§8.1.3 Towards Less Anthropocentrism: The Morally Considerable**

In this section I outline my claim regarding moral considerability. I do this by first replying to an objection and then drawing on the principles and social aim of morality. I then clarify why my position is not posited as an environmental ethic. Finally, I respond to a pragmatic objection before summing up.

My claim regarding which beings are morally considerable arises via a two-fold manner; first, by considering a problem, and second, by considering the principles and the aim to reduce anthropocentrism.

Using empathy and compassion morally is often objected to on the grounds that both are contingent and biased (Crisp, 2008:p.245; Simmons, 2014:p.106). It is argued that we empathize or have compassion only with those we consider like us or are in close proximity to.

In discussing the principles most of this has been addressed. For instance, the correct understanding of empathy,<sup>282</sup> seeing the other as an equal experiential being, the precautionary principle, the addition of fairness, and the attempt to address anthropocentrism, all combat contingency and bias. Moreover, the objection only shows that we need to combat contingencies and remove biases, which can be achieved by educating ourselves to see others and be tied to others in a moral way. The definition of empathy and the above discussion

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<sup>282</sup> As was noted in the discussion on empathy above, a correct understanding of empathy means that one sees from the other's perspective and takes on their first-person perspective, and thus is moved to act as if they were the other. It is this that is the origin of the equality mentioned here.

provides some means to accomplish this. Similarly, the evidence in §6.2 regarding how humans and nonhumans share societies and the arguments made there for how humans should consider themselves connected globally with others, would also further aid in challenging contingency and bias. Understanding the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of the world, humans within the more-than-human world, and humans with nonhumans, provides another means. However, to fully avoid this objection I suggest that, in addition to the other replies, we use the moral community as a source of connection that all humans can draw on to help combat bias and contingencies.

Given the rejection of anthropocentrism I cannot establish this moral community by arguing out from humans as other nonhuman ethics' have done. The question is, then, how can acceptable criteria be found? I answer simply: no criteria are acceptable. To avoid centric thinking and anthropocentrism we must reject the idea of a Centre altogether.

Given the social aim of morality, the principles themselves, and the scope the principles have – especially the precautionary principle – the best means to avoid anthropocentrism, and to fulfil the aim of nonhuman ethics<sup>283</sup> is that, instead of arguing 'top-down' for which beings should be included, as traditional approaches argue, we should instead argue from the 'bottom-up'. By this I mean that every being is included within moral considerability and those who wish to exclude a being must argue for this exclusion. Given its rejection, any such arguments cannot appeal to anthropocentrism and further must keep to the four principles above. If sufficient reason can then be given for why a being should not be considered, then this would be justified.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Detailed in §3.1.5 and the introduction.

<sup>284</sup> The possibility of excluding nonhuman animals this way however is unlikely given both the precautionary principle and the attempt to look from others' perspectives for them. Empathy and the precautionary principle then make it improbable that any nonhuman could be justifiably excluded when attempting to avoid anthropocentrism.

A clarification of this claim is important. My aim is to consider anthropocentrism *within nonhuman ethics*, not environmental ethics, and to resultantly put forward a nonhuman ethic, not an environmental ethic. For this reason I wish to stipulate that by ‘all beings are included’ I only intend beings that are nonhuman animals in the general zoological sense. Thus I am not including plants, inanimate ‘nature’, bacteria, etc. This is purely a stipulation of my intent and I acknowledge that the theory could easily be expanded into an environmental ethic. However my aim in this thesis is to consider how to reduce anthropocentrism within nonhuman ethics. The reason for this stipulation is that while there may be problems empathizing with some nonhumans, this is not common as most people can conceive of such beings having their own perspectives. While plants may have perspectives this is not a common belief, and thus, due to space and clarity of my main argument, focusing on nonhuman animals provides a clearer focus for this thesis’ aim.<sup>285</sup> More importantly, nonhuman ethics’ focus is on nonhuman animals and the issues they face. Given my aim and my concession that a ‘next step’ could expand my theory beyond this, this limiting of scope seems reasonable.

To sum up this section’s claim. For the second element of an ethical theory, on my position all nonhumans are morally considerable, and as I aim to be less anthropocentric, all morally considerable beings are of equal value and consideration. Thus when attempting to govern their behaviour moral beings must consider their actions regarding all nonhuman animals.

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<sup>285</sup> Moreover, in proposing an environmental ethic other issues must be considered that are beyond the scope – and space – of this thesis. For instance, whether the biosphere itself is a living organism, or whether the environmental ethic ought to consider ecosystems or just traditional entities such as plants, etc. The need to consider these would require far more space than is possible, and considering the central aim in this thesis is anthropocentrism in nonhuman ethics and how this is problematic for nonhuman ethics, focusing on expanding my position to an environmental ethic is inappropriate. This, however, does indicate a possible future contribution of the position.

The obvious objection to this is that such sweeping considerability is impractical. While I grant that my position requires humanity to alter many practices this move is not implausible for three reasons.

First, even if my position were not yet fully practicable, like many moral theories – e.g. Aristotle’s and Kant’s – it could serve as an Ideal, like a road map to guide where we are heading and on which to base present decisions in order to reach the goal. Other ideals we hold and positions similarly propose an Ideal to which we work towards, that guides present decisions, and alters<sup>286</sup> our behaviour and practices as we work towards that Ideal. World peace, is one example, as is Donaldson and Kymlicka’s zoopolis, or Alastair Cochrane’s cosmozoopolis. On the evolutionary account morality is a changing process that takes time to alter. Thus, at worst, we may currently be immoral due to being imperfect, physical beings in the circumstances we are currently in.<sup>287</sup> Moral perfection is an Ideal, and unlikely on the evolutionary account, but we can still work towards the Ideal, and continually put as much of the position into practice as possible, striving to become better. The effect on nonhuman ethics and the alterations required for human practices would still be significant, even if not every insect could be considered.<sup>288</sup> For instance, adopting the position could still affect practices like meat-eating, hunting, and nonhuman experimentation given the principles applying to all nonhuman animals.<sup>289</sup>

Second, fairness comes into play and those considered via empathy cannot be expected to automatically overrule the perspective of another. The social aim of morality is to enable interaction and balance between the interests of the individual and others. Nor, as the medical experimentation example indicated, do numbers override the individual by default. Thus many

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<sup>286</sup> Or at least attempts to alter.

<sup>287</sup> I do not mean ‘may’ here in the sense of a moral allowance, but rather a description. We would still be wrong, we just do the best we can as the imperfect beings in an imperfect existence.

<sup>288</sup> I do not mean here that such beings would be disregarded as we could not achieve the position fully. I only mean that we must try our best to consider all such beings, but we may fail as we head along the roadmap.

<sup>289</sup> The latter I have outlined above, and the others I shall discuss more in §8.1.5

of the interactions that may cause problems, may – with consideration and alteration of practice – be avoided. Humans have wondrous ingenuity when forced into having to solve seemingly-impossible puzzles. While I do not claim that this would resolve all instances, it would be pessimistic to claim that many could not be found a solution to. For instance, increasingly nonhuman experimentation is being shown unnecessary as more non-animal methods are devised. Food and clothing alternatives are increasingly available and just as viable as ‘animal products’. Alternative farming techniques are being devised that harm less nonhumans. All of these would likely advance faster and be more reliable due to necessity if my nonhuman ethic were adopted.

Third, similar objections have been made regarding slavery, fair consideration for the poor and working class, and child employment. Such objections, however, were insufficient to reject the moral change and weaker once that change began and alternative ways of living were adopted. While there would be significant challenges and change, these problems are not insurmountable.

In sum, all nonhumans should be included morally unless non-anthropocentric reasons that fit with the principles can be given to exclude them. While challenging, this claim is plausible and follows from the principles, the social aim of morality, and from a practical response to an objection.

#### **§8.1.4 Summing Up the Position**

In this section I sum up the whole position. I outline the position and briefly illustrate how it works. I then provide three clarifications before summing up the core idea in a general guiding concept.

To sum my position up: all animals (human and nonhuman) are morally considerable, unless non-anthropocentric reasons that fit with the four principles can be given for why a being should be excluded. The principles that should guide behaviour are empathy, compassion, fairness (within, and applied to, deliberations), and the precautionary principle of erring on the side of caution.

Thus humans and nonhumans are considered empathetically, compassionately, fairly, and by erring on the side of caution. While empathy is the primary means of moral interaction, when there are problems empathizing, the precautionary principle, compassion, and fairness are employed. Fairness is employed within moral interaction and to moral interaction. *Qua* the evolutionary account I draw on, the aim of moral interaction is the betterment of all, and *qua* empathy; for themselves. The moral community is of equal value. Additionally, given chapters six and seven, morality has different forms of complexity. Different codes only apply to those who fulfil the criteria of those codes. However, my position is derived from values shared among moral codes that, *qua* the evolutionary account, form the basis for more complex moralities. Thus, my position is to be considered primary, especially when interaction between beings that belong to different, or no, codes occurs. When consideration is being made just between those within a certain form of morality that code may then apply. This is important as beings' similarities and differences must be considered to avoid centrism. Thus when humans and nonhumans interact different complexities are involved and my position should be used. When 'normal' humans interact the same form of morality is in play, and so this code may then apply *in addition* to my principles.

This is in line with common practice and intuitions. For instance, humans and nonhumans treat their young differently to adults. Others who cannot follow the code are

likewise granted leeway. Similarly, humans hold nonhumans responsible for certain actions but not others, e.g. for harming someone but not for being unable to stand up for civil rights.<sup>290</sup>

Three clarifications must be given. First, nonhumans can be morally responsible. As argued in the previous chapter this is not as controversial as first appears. We already hold nonhumans morally responsible for actions we believe they can control, e.g. dogs in our families. Further, nonhumans also do this with each other, and arguably with us, e.g. dogs often refuse to socially engage with us when we do something wrong and then forgive us, just as wolves do with each other. Moreover, *qua* the evolutionary account and the different forms of morality, nonhumans are not all held to the same standard or the same violations of similar principles. Many may not yet have developed a sense of expanding their social borders, or have capacities to do so, or they may have other instincts which prevent their interaction. A myriad of reasons may occur. However, given the evolutionary account we could still interact with other animals morally and perhaps encourage them to develop wider moralities, as argued in §7.2.2.

Is this anthropocentric? I argue no for three reasons. First, morality on the evolutionary account aims at cooperation and the betterment of all for survival, and (a) this fulfils this aim, and (b) all moralities accord with this aim. Second, humans and nonhumans already interact with each other, and are interconnected and interdependent,<sup>291</sup> and thus there is no homogenous separation, but rather a mutable, inter-species society with no borders. Third, nonhumans interact with others outside of their (moral) groups – e.g. predators hunting prey, nonhumans interacting with humans, etc. – and thus force themselves upon others. This interaction may be unwanted or desired by any party. In either situation, as in such interactions with humans, mediation is required, just as nonhumans (and humans) do within their societies. Given that the principles are derived from *all* moral codes, are values that those nonhumans live by, and

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<sup>290</sup> I would likely dispute this latter, but here I appeal to general human behaviour only.

<sup>291</sup> As argued in §6.2.

morality aims at greater cooperation, such interactions are not based on human values, but on values that are nonhuman and evolutionary. More so given that nonhumans – e.g. dogs – have had much to teach humans on developing interspecies ethics. Thus it is at least possible to aid nonhuman moral development in non-anthropocentric ways.

Second, although my position has ‘universal’ principles, in the sense of principles that all moral beings should follow, it is also sensitive to context. The use of empathy, compassion, fairness, and the inclusion of the others’ perspective *as the other* allow for the specifics of a situation to be considered. Thus what is concluded in one situation *need* not, though it may, apply to every situation.

Third, as my position involves the taking of another’s perspective as their perspective *qua* empathy and the precautionary principle, one may ask how this differs from the thought experiment Singer employed and I rejected in chapter four. The answer is threefold. First, Singer used his experiment to establish his hierarchy of value, whereas my claim is not about value but rather how a moral being should interact with another morally considerable being. Second, the taking of another’s perspective is proposed due to empathy rather than rational reflection, the former of which is an unchosen, pre-reflective reaction that is not subject to A(i).

Third, the precautionary principle, and the caveats about ‘trying to do our best’ and not ascribing anything to the other, are always applied when we do not use empathy or cannot fully understand another’s state and yet must consider them. Moreover all actions are taken with the aim of considering, and *acting for*, the other *as the other*. This is completely different from how Singer’s experiment worked and the claims he made, both in the experiment and his conclusions. Consequently the consideration, and taking, of the perspective of the other is done tentatively, pre-thought in most cases, always with emphasis on the other, and with a different aim, and thus is not subject to the same objections.

In sum, having outlined my position its core can be summed up as being empathic and compassionate, towards all nonhumans and humans, for those beings themselves, in a way that is fair to all and aims at the bettering, and cooperation, of all. In a very loose sense, in our interactions we should tread lightly and empathetically, by thinking of the other as an equal being one is tied to in a moral community.

### **§8.1.5 As a Nonhuman Ethic**

In this section I illustrate how my position works as a nonhuman ethic. I consider the position in regard to the experimentation, meat-eating, hunting, and zoo debates in turn. I then outline three final considerations, and conclude that my position is at least as viable as other nonhuman ethics’.

Nonhuman ethic theories generally seek to consider how nonhuman animals can be included morally and how we should treat them. My position also does this, though as I argue in §8.2 it also goes further by responding to the problems in chapter three. As other ethics have sought to respond to the debates, to illustrate that my position may work as a nonhuman ethic I will do the same. I consider each debate in turn.

First, regarding the debate on experimentation, I have indicated at the end of §8.1.2 how my position impacts this issue. In short, the principles, the taking of another’s perspective, and the broad and equal moral considerability would prohibit non-consensual use of any being for the benefit of another; human or nonhuman. Similarly, as outlined there, just as with humans numbers would not outweigh the individual.

Second, the impact on using nonhumans as food should also be clear. It is unlikely, on this account, that one could conclude that the intentional raising and killing of nonhumans, and

perceiving nonhumans instrumentally, would be any more acceptable than with humans or oneself.

Third, regarding the hunting debate my position has interesting applications. It should be clear that using my position hunting would not be morally acceptable. However, this same conclusion also applies to nonhuman predation and suffering in the more-than-human world, as we must consider both the predator and prey's perspectives, and thus intervention would be the likely moral outcome. This would not mean that the predator is held as morally responsible as the human hunter, for the human's morality allows for different capacities than the predator's, and thus understanding and restraint. For us, considering predation between beings within the moral community means only that we must do our best to prevent harm.

This may sound preposterous, however two main replies may allay this concern.<sup>292</sup> First, theorists (e.g. Steven Sapontzis and Oscar Horta) have pointed out that we actually do this often (Sapontzis, 1987; Horta, 2010; Horta, 2013). For example, we prevent cats killing birds and vaccinate and drop food pellets to feed free-roaming nonhumans. These theorists<sup>293</sup> also provide numerous arguments why this is possible, desirable, and even implied by already accepted human ethics (Horta, 2010; Horta, 2013).

Second, as previously noted my position does not imply all change can occur at once. Significant changes require time and thought. Until then we should do the best we can. While Sapontzis and Horta illustrate several practical ways we can prevent killing and aid free-roaming nonhumans, attempting to provide new ways for nonhumans to live could be a beginning. Thus we could provide food to prevent hunting, international aid to starving nonhumans or those affected by natural disasters. As with our own behaviours, with enough time and serious consideration it is possible to at least attempt intervention on my position.

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<sup>292</sup> In addition to the arguments given in §3.1.4 and §7.2.2.

<sup>293</sup> And an increasing number of nonhuman ethicists within the literature

One may object that this implication interferes with the ‘good life’ of nonhumans, part of which involves hunting and killing. Moreover, as nonhumans themselves have moral codes, within their moral codes hunting may be acceptable. Not considering the former and dismissing the latter is anthropocentric.

First, regarding the former, the idea of a ‘good life’ for any being includes the assumption that a way of life is static or should not change. For if a life can change then so can its ‘good life’, and there is therefore no reason that the one ‘good life’ should be preferred over the other, and thus that it should not be changed. Second, some nonhumans’ ‘good lives’ within *their* group involve behaviour that harms others in *their* group, and is not accepted by those within the latter group. Thus one ‘good life’ can impinge on, and oppress, others. With the first point this adds to why they may be changed. Third, humans and nonhumans do not live in radically separate communities whose moral implications do not overlap. Thus ‘good lives’ and actions are not above moral question.

If choosing which ‘good life’ occurred was solely down to humans deciding, this could involve anthropocentrism, however responding to the second problem resolves this. As noted in chapter six, moralities alter and change, grow and include others. Further nonhuman moralities that are focused primarily on their groups often, *due to the values they have*, e.g. empathy, lead to nonhumans acting morally towards others outside their moral groups. Morality is thus not something that is static or remains fixed around one group, and crosses groups via values such as empathy, and therefore the ‘good life’/what is acceptable can change as moralities develop. Similarly, just because a morality is one way does not mean that it must remain so.

Taking both responses together, it therefore *need* not be anthropocentric to change codes and ‘good lives’, especially given that one group and their ‘good life’ is impinging on

another and that the moral community is inter-related and interacts. As in §3.1.4, whether it is anthropocentric depends on why intervention occurs.

Second, more importantly the nonhumans being preyed upon are not within the moral codes of the predators nor do they want to be hunted and killed. Thus even if the predator's 'good life' were as assumed, and moralities were distinct, predation is one group harming another. This alone could justify intervention. More so if moralities evolve, as one can then attempt to alter behaviour and moral codes to prevent such inter-group harm.

Further, given the social aim of morality, and that all groups interact, are interdependent, and are interconnected, no group interaction is outside of a society, and thus the morality I propose would permit the aid of developing new moralities and 'good lives' as there would be social conflict.<sup>294</sup>

Fourth, the final debate discussed was zoos, and again the impact of my position should be clear. Given current information, few nonhumans are healthy or living the best lives that they could *for them* in zoos. Additionally, as noted in §3.1.6, zoos often do not consider the importance of relationships to nonhuman animals, how their societies function, or even what their ('natural') environment means to them, their values/norms, and the happiness/well-being of *their* life. Further, most are kept for *human* reasons, e.g. financial, educational, entertainment, or research reasons, dispose of or sell 'extraneous' nonhumans, and support legal and illegal trades that instrumentalise nonhumans and disrupt/do not consider their perspectives and relationships. As such, zoos would not be morally acceptable.

One may argue that these nonhumans would not be better off in the more-than-human world or that they would actually not prefer it. However, in these cases zoos would still be the wrong option as a rescue centre aimed at providing all the nonhumans need and love, or better

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<sup>294</sup> Of course practicalities (as noted above) and the needs of all nonhumans must be considered (e.g. nourishment), however practically these can and are possible with planning and in current intervention (as Horta shows in concrete examples of humans dropping food pellets to starving nonhumans in the wild).

yet a *home* based on these conditions, would be the morally better (and still plausible) option. Such options currently exist. For example, ‘sanctuaries’ (e.g. monkey sanctuaries) that are designed around the needs of the nonhumans and activities that they enjoy and give them space and freedom to act as they would ‘naturally’ as much as possible. This rejection of zoos is strengthened given my position rejects instrumentalizing others, which (as noted in §3.1.6) is the primary function and economic basis for zoos. Thus, even if nonhumans fit this category the alteration of how we consider them and prioritize their needs would still mean rejecting zoos.

In sum, my position can function as a nonhuman ethic at least as well as others regarding the debates. Three final considerations should be made.

First, my position goes further than others on some issues. For instance, on Singer’s account, so long as a nonhuman does not suffer then nothing is wrong with killing and eating them or keeping them in zoos. Furthermore, Singer has also claimed that nonhuman experimentation can be justified in certain conditions. My position however differs from these conclusions, but also goes further. For considering the other not only *as* the other, but also as *an* other, means that even if the other is not suffering, instrumentalizing them by leaving them in a zoo for the sole (or major) purpose of others’ entertainment would violate fairness and the taking of the other’s perspective. The consideration of what the other would want for themselves, as equal to what we want for them, is something my position grants and Singer does not. Regan, conversely, could grant all but the latter, as so long as the nonhuman’s rights are not violated the intentional betterment of their situation is not considered. On my position, however, nonhumans need to be considered for what they need and as the beings with perspectives that they are. This is due to my theory focusing on more than just equality, as Regan and Singer do, but also on perspectives.

Second, given the rejection of anthropocentrism and the use of empathy, the precautionary principle, fairness (and to an extent compassion), no being on my position is interchangeable with any other. Each being, nonhuman and human alike, is a unique individual with perspectives and value of their own. Thus one cannot replace one nonhuman with another to rule out any moral wrong (as Singer does). This would significantly impact human practices – including nonhuman experimentation and how companion nonhumans are treated and the laws protecting them – and arguments against nonhuman ethics’ claims, such as those attempting to maintain a practice due to replaceability (as has been argued against Singer).

Third, in cases of conflict, one may ask how my position proceeds. The answer is via the same principles. Given the principles and that humans and nonhumans are considered equal, conflict cases would likely involve compromises given that one is considering the other as the other from their perspective *and for the other*. As with human conflict cases, rarely are the interests of another completely discarded when considered equal and their perspective weighs as much as one’s own. In instances where all parties are equal, this would likely involve a compromise by each, given how fairness applies to moral deliberation in my position. In most instances, however, humans have greater adaptability and also more power and this must also be taken into account as this can unbalance the parties. Essentially, as feminist nonhuman ethics and ecofeminist positions maintain, context is important to conflict cases and thus universal responses cannot be made (Slicer, 1991:p.113). Given my focus on empathy, rejecting centrism, the precautionary principle, and fairness, however, the context would be governed by an aim to aid the other, as the other, and for the other, as much as possible and not prioritize the self in compromises.

For example, the apparent conflict of spiders or mice sharing the same space as humans can be resolved by a compromise. Each animal requires, and prefers, their space to live, eat, and sleep in most cases, however living together without harming the other is a compromise.

The human is adaptable, and current means of human living focus entirely on the human and do not consider that no ‘human’ dwelling is ever without nonhumans. Such considerations could mean that the nonhumans are left be as long as they do not harm the humans, and vice versa, which in most cases does not happen.<sup>295</sup>

These three considerations are just minor differences between my position and other nonhuman ethics’. My aim has been to show that my position works as well as others and thus is at least as viable. I turn now to a more full explanation of the differences.

## **§8.2 Implications and Differences**

In this section I outline how my position differs from other accounts in positive ways and provides new implications. I identify eight differences or implications, most importantly the reduction and addressing of anthropocentrism, before summing up the advantages of my account.

First, my position reduces anthropocentrism. First, the position does not involve A(ii) as humans are not favoured over nonhumans (or the opposite) or considered more valuable and no hierarchy is involved. Thus whatever can apply to one being can also apply to any other, depending on the context.

Second, it significantly reduces A(i) as the principles are derived from humans *and* nonhumans, after considering morality as an evolutionary development, and thus nonhuman values, social norms, and behaviours played an equal and pivotal role in creating the position. Additionally careful consideration to include nonhuman perspectives *as their perspectives*, including in every moral deliberation, has been given. Nonhumans have also been considered as (those) nonhumans, and the allowance has been made that more information/interaction

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<sup>295</sup> It is far more common for humans to harm nonhumans in such instances than the other way around.

about and from them can alter the theory. Empathy rather than a reason or human-based approach has been used. Moreover, my position rejects the Centre in centric thought.<sup>296</sup> First, by not arguing from humans to nonhumans but rather from all moral beings. Second, by attempting to combat stereotyping of nonhumans, especially in regard to their being passive beings. Third, by considering both humans and nonhumans from the same evolutionary perspective yet allowing for differences and similarities. Fourth, by showing and accepting the relationship and importance of connection between humans and nonhumans. Fifth, by equalizing the agency of nonhumans. Thus my position has attempted to combat centric thought more than other accounts, especially as other positions – even accounts that promote empathy as a moral value<sup>297</sup> – derive their positions and principles from human morality and then apply them to nonhumans. While my position may not be entirely free of anthropocentrism, it is less anthropocentric and at minimum provides a step towards removing anthropocentrism completely.

Second, my position addresses anthropocentrism. First, the position, via how it has been constructed, how anthropocentrism has been reduced, and its focus on anthropocentrism, already addresses some anthropocentrism on this basis. Second, how the position works, (i.e. how the principles, moral considerability, social aim of morality, and focus on rejecting anthropocentrism operate and how these apply), addresses the problems of anthropocentrism discussed in chapter three. For instance, my position does not entail the counterintuitive conclusions in §3.1.1, for nonhumans need not sacrifice themselves or their values/perspectives for humans. That my position combats centricism has been outlined above.

More importantly, my position combats the problems caused by A(i) outlined in §3.1.4, given the emphasis on empathy, the precautionary principle, and fairness, and thus perspective

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<sup>296</sup> As outlined in §3.1.2.

<sup>297</sup> Though I am not currently aware of any that specifically posits such as the basis for a nonhuman ethic, rather than just as something we ought to use towards nonhuman animals, and I have not found any that either links the principles I have posited together or derives them or empathy as I have.

inclusion as well as the considering of others *as the other* and their values as *they* value them. Further, unlike traditional approaches my position considers both A(i) and A(ii) to be important to be addressed. In addition to how this section reveals this, I provide the following examples. My position removes biases by including nonhuman perspectives and values. Resulting claims will be more representative of, and fair to, nonhumans. For the same reasons, and as nonhumans are considered unique individuals, incorrect beliefs are challenged, e.g. how nonhumans are defined, what is natural for them, etc. The lives of nonhumans, their preferences and values, are not evaluated *qua* humans. Their preferences, norms, tastes, likes/dislikes, needs, wishes, etc., must all be considered *qua* the principles. All of this impacts society's operation and structure, norms, laws, nonhuman political agency and involvement, nonhuman mobility in and through society, living space, etc. Ideas of human/nonhuman differences and separation are challenged, as are their A(i) effects. Species profiling would be challenged, as would practices and A(i) ideas regarding intervention and the debates. A(i) itself is challenged via how empathy works, and the position's focus on perspectives and the other as the other, as both alter one's own perspective.<sup>298</sup> Finally, A(i) norms can be identified and rejected via how the theory works<sup>299</sup> in conjunction with including nonhuman perspectives and the principles, especially empathy. Using these and taking the other as the other, considering nonhuman perspectives *from their perspective and for them* would reveal norms and entail challenging them. My position thus addresses anthropocentrism, both because it focuses on A(ii) *and* A(i) and as this guided its construction. This allows anthropocentrism to be addressed via how the position is applied and via how it works internally, *qua* the principles, moral consideration, the social aim of morality, and the focus on rejecting anthropocentrism.

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<sup>298</sup> As was explained when outlining empathy in §8.1.1.

<sup>299</sup> As described in how the position reduces anthropocentrism, e.g. the focus on rejecting anthropocentrism, the inclusionary and equal moral community, taking individuals as the individuals and as unique and interrelated, perspective inclusions, etc.

By combating A(i), my position additionally challenges the A(i)-A(ii) relation. The position also allows for responses to the debates that do not rely on anthropocentric assumptions that justify opposing positions. Moreover, my position undercuts many claims in the debates by rejecting anthropocentrism. Finally, my position fulfils the aim of nonhuman ethics more fully given the rejection of biased beliefs, being more justified (by not relying on anthropocentrism), involving a fairer approach to nonhumans and nonhuman issues (especially by including the other as the other), and results in aiding nonhumans in a greater way – given these inclusions and the ability of the position to respond not only to A(ii) problems but also A(i) problems. Thus my position addresses anthropocentrism, unlike or more than current positions.

Third, the proposed moral considerability not only reduces anthropocentrism and avoids a Centre, but also presents a new means and methodology for considering others not yet taken. Moreover, this method of granting that all should be considered and then justification given for why they should be excluded resonates with the intent of ethical arguments that reject division (e.g. nationality, race, gender, sex, sexuality, etc.).

Fourth, my position includes nonhumans that other theories leave out. It considers the life of the nonhuman as their life rather than in relation to a disembodied principle. This ties the position closer to the nonhumans it considers and what is important to each animal (nonhuman and human), rather than idealized criteria that are derived and suspended above all individuals by human insight and perspectives. This also fits well with many feminist and ecofeminist approaches.

Fifth, while unable to consider this in detail, as noted in §8.1.3, with clarification, some changes, and further defence my position may be able to be extended into an environmental ethic. The means for positing moral considerability could include at least plants. While much work would be required, this questions the traditional distinction between nonhuman and

environmental ethics and illustrates how the two can unite. Importantly it is the method of ascribing moral considerability which opens this possibility up. As this is posited to avoid centric thought, the implications of what this means for the distinction may be interesting.

Sixth, on the evolutionary account it was shown that morality, evolving as cooperation rather than competition, provides greater survival value. It was noted that this is likely why morality is of such social importance. Cooperation thus does not favour centric thinking, for this divides rather than coheres the group. This is arguably why, as Singer notes, liberation movements have increasingly occurred and why, as Singer and Midgley both note, ethical boundaries widen throughout history and centric thinking is challenged in modern societies. Cooperation favours fairness, considering others, unity, helping, love, tolerance, and empathy. This and the aversion to centric thought not only support my position but also further justify my claim that nonhuman ethics must reduce and address anthropocentrism.

Seventh, nonhumans are included as moral beings rather than ‘moral patients’. While some morally considerable nonhumans may not have yet evolved moral behaviour, many – especially those focused on in the debates – have. Further, on my position nonhumans and humans interact in a global community, those with the capacity to do so must recognize this and their interconnectedness, thus I offer more than just a one-way interaction (i.e. us-to-them) but a multiple one (i.e. each being to many others) and on a small and large scale.

In addition to the above implications this raises the possibility that human interaction with nonhumans ought not to be ‘active agent to passive being’, but rather ‘one society to another’ and ‘one active being to another’. The chance of moral interaction between human and nonhuman is a real possibility<sup>300</sup> and the need to interact as with another culture, learning and attempting to communicate, opens up areas for study and debate, as well as supporting ethological research over laboratory experiments. This has the further implication that humans,

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<sup>300</sup> A claim that should not be shocking, though likely is, given how it plays out in every interaction with companion animals in our families and how ‘domestication’ occurred as outlined in chapter six.

through intensive breeding out of traits, etc., may be guilty of wronging nonhuman species and incurred not only a duty to protect them but also a moral debt.

Eighth, as nonhuman suffering in the more-than-human world must be taken seriously, especially in cases of war and natural disasters, given the UK NHS my position opens up the conception that an NHS-style development should be instituted for nonhuman animals. Similarly, a nonhuman-focused 'red cross', or even section of UN forces to protect nonhumans in human conflicts, may also be considered.

In sum, my position is as viable as other nonhuman ethics' but also reduces and addresses anthropocentrism, differs in many ways, impacts the debates in new ways, provides new implications, and broadens the social and moral universe to include nonhumans.

### **§8.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, drawing on the previous chapters' arguments I suggested that three moral values are common to nonhuman and human moralities. I posited these as the basis for non-anthropocentric moral principles. I claimed that all nonhuman animals are included morally unless non-anthropocentric justification in line with the principles could be given for their exclusion. I considered my position in relation to the debates and other nonhuman ethics, before implications and differences were outlined and how my position reduces and addresses anthropocentrism was explained.

As my position reduces and addresses anthropocentrism, and is at least as viable as other nonhuman ethics, given the previous chapters I conclude that this offers a nonhuman ethic with several advantages compared to current positions.

## CONCLUSION

### *Summing Up*

In this section I briefly sum up my thesis. In this thesis I have clarified anthropocentrism, shown why it is unjustified, and illustrated why it results in problems for nonhuman animals and nonhuman ethics. I argued that nonhuman ethics traditionally focuses on human chauvinism (which A(ii)<sup>301</sup> reflects the intended intuition of) and do not consider how A(i)<sup>302</sup> also results in problems, thus that A(i) should also be addressed.<sup>303</sup>

I then considered other nonhuman ethic positions and argued that they involve, and in some cases do not address, anthropocentrism. I concluded that a less anthropocentric position would thus have advantages as a nonhuman ethic. By drawing upon the evolutionary account of morality, I argued nonhumans are also moral beings and was thus able to draw moral values that all moral beings share and create principles for a nonhuman ethic. Moral considerability was then posited from outside any centre and shown to fit with these principles. This position was argued to be as viable as other nonhuman ethics, but also has new implications and can address anthropocentrism both due to how the theory works and is constructed, and in what it may accomplish. I concluded that this ‘more-than-human ethic’ fulfils the aim of nonhuman ethics, is less anthropocentric than current positions, and aids more nonhumans in more ways. Thus this position provides advantages as a nonhuman ethic.

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<sup>301</sup> I.e. considering humans as more or the most important, significant, superior, or central entity that exists. (As outlined in §1.4.2).

<sup>302</sup> I.e. interpreting or regarding the world (or something or everything) in terms of human values, experiences, norms, or thoughts, or in a way that assumes the human as default, common sense, or in a way that is dismissive of anything non-human. (As outlined in §1.4.2).

<sup>303</sup> It was also noted in Chapters three and five that other positions that seem to consider anthropocentrism fail to consider the taking of human norms, values, thoughts, etc., and focus solely on the Centre being ‘the human’. This results in missing anthropocentric ideas of ‘nature’, for example.

## *A More-Than-Human Ethic: Implications and Value*

In this section I highlight why my thesis (the position I posit and my claims throughout) is important and has interesting implications.

First, my claims that anthropocentrism is unjustified and problematic and that nonhuman ethics must avoid (as much as possible) and address anthropocentrism are important for two reasons. First, nonhuman ethics has not considered anthropocentrism. Given my findings this should be remedied. Second, current positions perpetuate problems for, do not address all problems for, and inadequately consider and represent, nonhuman animals by not avoiding (as much as possible) or addressing anthropocentrism. This also requires resolving. Both would impact the current ‘political turn’<sup>304</sup> given how political theories predominantly argue from human models to incorporate nonhumans.<sup>305</sup>

Second, my ethic would complement a political application – especially one positing a cosmopolitan approach (perhaps, Alastair Cochrane’s cosmozoopolis or emerging cosmopolitan-anarchist approaches).

Third, my thesis includes claims not used in current approaches. First, the inclusion of nonhumans as active, *moral* beings (and their values, norms, etc.) – both in the construction of my position and in themselves. Second, positing ‘bottom-up’ moral considerability. Third, using several principles (not one) to determine moral interaction, and including a principle such as the precautionary principle aimed at reducing A(i) and A(ii). Moreover, the first challenges most traditional approaches that consider nonhumans as passive or moral patients, or that interactions with nonhumans cannot be moral. The second, and its rejection of using criteria,

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<sup>304</sup> The current shifting from ethical approaches to political-based approaches considering nonhuman animals within the literature.

<sup>305</sup> And currently draw on human-based ideas of territory allocation that are vastly weighted in favour of humans.

has not been proposed, combats centric thinking, reflects the aim of nonhuman ethics better, avoids excluding humans and nonhumans due to choosing criteria, and could be used to shift the burden of proof from nonhuman ethic positions to those defending practices involving nonhuman animals. If one must show why nonhumans should *not* be considered rather than why they *should*, this would make it difficult to base a position on prejudice.

Fourth, my claims open up three avenues for further research. First, challenging anthropocentrism and using my position can challenge pre-conceptions regarding nonhumans and the behaviours this influences. For instance, nonhumans are portrayed within literature, the media, law, and society in ways that lead to differential treatment. An example of ‘dog breeds’ was given in §3.1.4. Wolves are portrayed as killers, threatening, dangerous, and as if they will just attack because of their ‘nature’. These preconceptions often lead to fear, hatred, and the killing of wolves, despite being false.<sup>306</sup> Similarly, policies/laws allow nonhumans to be killed based on the ‘type’ of dog they are. My claims regarding anthropocentrism, in addition to my position, reveal policy-making, laws, and media portrayals require change to consider and learn of the other as the other.

Second, the implications for ethics and society of evolution and considering humans as animals should be explored more. For instance, this opens the avenue for exploring the human *animal* without anthropocentrism. This could provide explanations for certain psychological or social behaviours from an evolved animal perspective, and thus that there may be animal (not just biological) causes as well as human-culture/social causes. Similarly, with the impact of human and nonhuman beings on the health, life, and development of each other – especially due to the interconnected nature of societies – and how such societies and effects could develop via empathetically-led moral interactions.

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<sup>306</sup> The outreach group, Living with Wolves, who work with Mark Bekoff and Jane Goodall cite these examples. As cited in §3.1.4 also.

Third, given nonhumans are active agents, who can be moral, have societal norms, interact with humans in a moral way, and must be considered via empathy, another research avenue is whether this ever means that bestiality could be morally permissible. Similarly, nonhuman moral and sexual behaviour may add to our sexual ethics.

Fifth, current policies on nonhuman experimentation and other uses require clarification via the definition of anthropocentrism and my position. Both would have a significant effect. This would also impact debates on ‘in-vitro’ meat and genetic manipulation of nonhumans and humans.

Sixth, most importantly all of my claims throughout this thesis would impact nonhuman animals greatly. Given that trillions are used and killed, and not allowed the best lives they could have, *per year*, this effect is the most far-reaching, real-world, and morally fundamental my thesis has.

In sum, my claims throughout this thesis, and my position, are new, offer further research, and have a large effect. While fully realising my position may be a gradual process, my claims can be taken seriously and implemented as much as possible, making for a more empathetic world that engages with and includes all beings (as themselves). Future generations may look back and wonder at our treatment of nonhumans as we now wonder at past treatment of humans. Let them look back and see the beginning of the end of anthropocentrism and a more empathetic evolution of the human animal.

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