

Animal Rights? No, Human Responsibility

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INTRODUCTION

A critical reflection, focused on our limited moral values, is currently being raised within society. Nowadays, few people question equal rights among human beings, without any limit or distinction due to race, culture, origin, sex or age. Is this the same for other human generations, past or future? Should our acts and decisions be limited -or decided- by our ancestors or the future generations' acts? (Intergenerational ethics). How should our decisions affect other species? Different ethical levels have been described in order to estimate our moral capability: Egocentric, Anthropocentric (+/- past & future generation), Sensocentric, Ecocentric... (cf. Riechman, 1995)

«New Century, New Dimensions» was one of the main focuses of the 1st. World Conference on Bioethics held in Gijón (Spain) in June 2000. New dimensions for Bioethics (Casado, 2001) beyond ethics, as well as a global application of the concept (Piedra Herrera, 2001) were demanded. Since Bioethics was proposed to cover the «*Ethics of Human toward Nature*» the concept has evolved around biomedical topics (cf. Alburquerque, 1995, Blázquez, 1996, Casado, 1986), forgetting many other problems related to biotechnology, the environment, etc. At the beginning of this new millennium, human beings need to take a serious and reflexive pause in order to review past actions and face this crucial change of decade with renewed objectives.

Bitter confrontations arise when non-anthropocentric values are discussed in ethical forums. There are still so many human rights to be solved: women, underdeveloped countries, sustainable economy, emigration, racism, foetal rights... that no room for other topics are allowed in our minds. So many human rights are obviated in different areas of our own society (Arias, 2002; Bergel, 2001) as well as in other countries and cultures (Sittenfeld, 2001), sometimes with antagonistic moral principles. Nevertheless we urgently need to progress in our moral sensitivity toward a global conception of Bioethics (Gerin, 2000; Sakamoto, 1999). More qualified people have written about human ethics, especially focused on biomedical topics, the main tendency of present Bioethics. As a Zoologist, non-human animals are my scientific dominion; this is my

focus and this is the topic I feel qualified to write about. And I fear that most problems related to this confrontation may be referred both to human and to non-human beings. It is not really *Who* must be included or not within our moral community (Buyukmihci, 1997) neither if our rights can be extended to other species (Chapouthier, 1998), but a serious and critical reflection about our moral attitudes toward human and non-human beings (Saloña Bordas, 2001).

Human-beings have used non-human animals right from the start. As animals, we make use of the environment and of other organisms to our own benefit; this is inherent to our organic condition. In the same way, other organisms look for benefit in their relationships, sometimes causing prejudice (parasitism, predation) but sometimes with profit for both (cooperation, mutualism). This is only natural. But humans have been able to go further and claim the power to control their environment and cohabitants without any correspondence. Something similar is found in antibiotic organisms. Human beings are presently acting as the main antibiotic of the biosphere and these acts are rebounding against ourselves; pollution, radiation, ozone layer depletion, «mad cows», deforestation, with consequent lost of fertile soil and desert advancing dangerously... (Sterba ed., 1995). How far have we decided to *arrive* through this uncontrolled run into destruction? What will our legacy to next generations be? It is our Responsibility. Are we going to assume it?

...When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Where is the eagle? Gone... (Chief Seattle to US President Franklin Pierce, December 1854)

ANIMALISM VS. ANTHROPOCENTRISM, THE RISK OF A DOUBLE MORAL

Too much is brought in the discussion about both tendencies of moral attitudes. In their defence of animal rights, animalists seem to frequently forget their human condition, arguing and acting against other human beings with the same attitudes they reject.

Defending human rights (just persons *sensu* Partridge, 1999), anthropocentrists usually deny any responsibility toward other species. Animals are considered as objects or, at least, they are said not to be conscious of their existence, unable to be autobiographical, not allowed to be considered as subjects, to have no rights. Only persons, not even humans in general, are allowed to be morally considered. I do not need to recall similar arguments used in too many forums through our history; I fear this is once again chauvinism, at a different moral level but chauvinism. Specieist prejudices similar to other prejudices have been developed against other human beings too, arguing that you will be allowed to have rights if -and only if- you are able to assume a specific moral conception (Boonin, 1999).

We have had to face similar arguments since our origins. I feel that the real origin of humans has to be traced back to their reflections about their superior condition toward other populations; and this is one of the burdens we have inherited. Not just different but superior; so Jews feel themselves superior to other human beings because *They* have been chosen by a Superior Being (*The Chosen People*), Caucasians feel themselves superior to other people (Aryan against Gypsies and Jewish, European emigrants against Amerindians or Australian aborigines...), rh- against rh+¹. Women were not allowed equality until this century; we are still discriminated in many cultures as well as emigrants, aborigines and so many examples of our chauvinism toward people, ideas and cultures that are simply different. It seems that globalisation is acting against minority cultures, grinding them together with standards under 1st World control. In other words, predation against mutual cooperation and co-enrichment, both toward human and with non-human beings. But in the end, one fact will remain: animals will survive without us, while we will not survive without other organisms, be they animals or non-animals.

Based on Aldo Leopold's proposal to increase our moral perception, at least 9 levels of morality have been described (*cf.* Riechmann 1995) (Fig. 1).

The epicentre is our «ego-self» (me & myself) exclusive value, although one may reject egocentrism as a moral attitude.

As we decide to include other individuals in our moral community, the circle grows and the limits of our moral responsibility are expanded

We have a great challenge and it is up to us to face it. Although we may be focused on an anthropocentric moral system we should decide between a

chauvinist anthropocentrism or an altruist anthropocentrism: that is the basic difference proposed as a way to advance toward a more responsible attitude. As proposed by Kemp (1997), we should be able to develop an Anthro-centrifugal Ethic of our moral attitudes toward other organisms, humans and non humans. I invite the moral community to a reflection about the moral level we are open or we are prepared to assume as humans or persons, as you prefer. If this challenge were accepted, we should act properly in order to reach this point with enough dignity. An open and reflexive debate is urged in order to resolve the following dilemmas:

1. Which members will integrate our moral community? Should non-human animals be included in our moral community?
2. How can we develop the legal framework to define rights if we recognise moral value to non-human animals?
3. What should our attitude be toward other members of our community, moral or not?
4. Whose rights should be recognised to establish a legal and juridical frame capable to ensure the fulfilment of those rights with the consequent duties?

Independently from our final agreements, we have no '*carte blanche*' granting human beings absolute power over other animal species or giving us any moral entitlement to use our capability to destroy animals when human rights are not at stake. «We are not the '*petty lords*' of the nature»

ANIMALIST? NOT NECESSARILY

From an anthropocentric point of view, the use



Fig. 1. 9 circles of moral responsibility: egocentrism (·) < group < ethnic < present < intergenerational < primates < sencocentrism < ecocentrism < cosmocentrism (*sensu* Riechman, *Ibid*)

of non-human animals as objects available in nature for our service has been assumed without premises along our evolutionary history. Nevertheless, opinions against this attitude have been frequently expressed. As the main argument, the fact that animals are sentient beings, and due to their suffering capability must be included in our moral community with the same rights as human beings (sensocentrism *sensu* Regan, 1982)

On the contrary, anthropocentrism has serious difficulties in accepting this argument, reaching an extreme that could be considered racist if the author did not insist from the beginning that he was talking about non-person animals (*cf.* Partridge *op. cit.*). One of the most controversial debate is focused on the use of non-human animals as models for human research. Extremist sensocentrists claim for using human-beings as experimental models just as we use non-human animals. That sounds as radical as any other racist-specieist argumentation, and illegal. Nowadays, legislation does not allow the application of any technique or product (or objects to be used by humans) on human beings, if its security, reliability and safety have not been previously confirmed in non-human animal models. The objective of this «radical» norm is the safeguard of our own human rights (*cf.* Nüremberg Code, 1947).

Unfortunately, Bioethics itself has evolved toward anthropocentric values especially focused on biomedical questions (Boladares Cucurella, 1998). It is not easy to find authors able to develop bioethical topics from sensocentric or ecocentric point of view (*cf.* Sterba, ed. *op. cit.*; van de Veer and C Pierce, 1998; Varner, 1998). There are important legal and curricular gaps that must worry us. There seems to be an important reaction in social sectors, antagonistic to this anthropocentric social model, at least as sensitive as, or close to, a sensocentric or an ecocentric moral approach. This sensitivity is finally arriving in our state as an influence of foreign countries. A profound revision of our national laws and a critical reflection about the treatment given to other animal species are urged. Spain is not much different from other countries in regard to despotic attitudes toward animals in general, sometimes masked as culture or sport. As a first step in our attitudinal changes, Russell and Burch proposed in 1959 what is now known as the «3 Rs principles» which give us guide-lines to go further on in the broadening of our moral values (Russell et Burch, 1959). The «3 Rs philosophy» may be summarized in one: *Responsibility*. A qualitative change that may be applied in all the parcels of our life were human and non-human animals are involved.

SPEAKING FOR THE ANIMALS

This useless debate focused on a potential superiority of human beings against non-human animals seems to have no end. A problem derived from the orientation of the debate may be the main reason for this fruitless situation. Schalow (2000) focuses on our *capability to speak* as the basis of this difference asking 'Who will speak' for them, for non-human animals, assuming their incompetence. Too many anthropocentric attitudes and arguments will increase difficulties rather than contribute to effective solutions of this conflict. A serious and objective analysis of our own attitudes toward other human beings, non-human animals and the environment in general is urged as well as a critical revision of our society model, especially focused on our moral and economical values. Trying to *speak for the animals*, as Schalow requested, I propose a serious revision of the relationship between humans and non-humans. We should develop renewed moral values and attitudes toward other beings, both human and non-human.

Too much ink and paper is being used to argue on behalf or against potential animal rights, moral status or intrinsic values (Chapouthier, 1998; Jaber, 2000; Singer, 1990; Williams, 1991, etc), based on this irrational conflict where humans are the first species with no interest in solving it. Too much risk to be taken; too many privileges to renounce to. Arguing that we cannot be compared to non-human animals due to our language or speaking capability is one the most naive and chauvinist arguments and I would have never expected to read. I am not specialist in philosophy schools, movements or tendencies. The first time I read about Heidegger² was in the paper above mentioned (Schalow, *Ibid*). Nevertheless, I will not focus either on Heidegger arguments or on any other philosophical schools. I will just try to speak for the animals, as too much is being said about non-human animals by people that know animals mainly from what others say about them; other humans, of course.

«A mathematician said once that algebra is the science of lazy people; one never looks for the meaning of *X* but operates with the unknown as he/she knew its value. In our case, *X* represents anonymous people. Making politics is operating with *X* without being worried about its real value. Making History is knowing the exact value of *X* in the equation»³

This sentence perfectly summarises many of our acts and attitudes toward other organisms, humans

and non-humans, that define our lives. It is set in the repression occurred during a very specific period of Russian recent history, the Moscow process, and criticises the dehumanisation of politics after revolution. An evolutionary process that has had the terrible end that we know for this country and many other countries where politics have evolved behind human values' back. In the novelised version of the process, X value is made equal to the infinite, the people, the individuals... that is the organisms; Ø is made equal to the state, the system... that is the species! Now replace the X with living beings and the Ø with The Species, *Homo sapiens* L., 1758 and you will have a direct application of Koestler arguments in this conflict of interests.

We can see birds jumping in open areas without any apparent reason, salamanders showing their backwards, allomons, aposematic colours, wing & legs vibrating every nightfall, dances; many animal «exhibitions» are known ways used by animal species to communicate each other, within and between species. A language that only one species seems to be unable to understand, our own species. The *One* that claims for the exclusiveness of specific human values such as using language to communicate each other, at least if we follow such anthropocentric arguments; this kind of specific chauvinism above mentioned that is catalogued as specieism.

What do we understand about speaking capability? Is this the real basis of the conflict? Is this the main reason to deny non-human organisms their inclusion in a potential moral community? What (as concept) or Who (as individual) is moral or not? Who decides it? Are handicapped people, physically unable to «speak», denied of basic human rights because they are not able to argue on behalf of their rights? Are *exclusive properties*, arguments to be used to exclude specific collectives from specific rights?... Such arguments are not only naive but terribly dangerous. The use of language to discriminate cultures has been too frequently used along our history. Nowadays, many countries are involved in no-way-out conflicts focused on our limited capability of understanding each other, including my country. Is language or speaking capability really a good basis to justify specieist arguments? Even more, are specieist arguments ethically justifiable?

A qualitative change is urged, which may be applied in all the parcels of our life, where human and non-human animals are involved:

- ⇒ Leisure, culture
- ⇒ Tourism

- ⇒ Pets
- ⇒ Food
- ⇒ Research

⇒ Leisure, Culture

Despotic attitudes are present in our society based on a characteristic mentioned before: a sadistic pleasure of feeling superior to everyone that is just different, non-human and humans, maltreating them sometimes to painful extremes. Regarding human beings this is continuously denounced by NGO's such as Amnesty International, but I have to remember that this is not the focus of the paper. I just mention it to insist that there is not a great difference in our attitudes towards those we consider inferior to ourselves, those that just think different, those that just speak different. There are so many examples in my country that are masked as culture, as politics.

Going back to non-human animals, during local festivities in many villages of the Iberian Peninsula people enjoy maltreating, torturing and killing animals, justifying this action as tradition. During the much-discussed and internationally known «Fiesta Nacional» (Bull fighting) the bull is maltreated till exhaustion and finally killed. Not so different to the Portuguese «fiesta», although they do not kill the animal during the act; they do it later thereby extending the bull's suffering period. A new R is needed to solve this problem, Re-education. It will take time. I do not know how many generations will be needed, but we have to work hard to re-educate people in their attitudes toward other sentient beings, humans and non-humans. I cannot find any justification for the pleasure from torture and death.

⇒ Pets

It may be more controversial than the previous aspect of the aggression to animals, as many people that think of themselves as «*animal lovers*» just «*love*» their pets. The pets may be an excellent way to introduce animals to people, especially to children, but a great risk of «anthropization» of the pet may evolve toward a misunderstanding of moral values. For centuries, we have had possessive attitudes toward everything we consider our property: farms, objects, women, children, pets... The payment for an animal supports such prejudices. We may pay for the maintenance of the pet since we adopt it but paying for an animal is as aberrant as paying for any other alived being, human or not. The problem is arriving to unsustainable extremes with the present

tendency to introduce exotic species in temperate areas. Whether it is alive or not, it seems to be our possession and we are allowed to do whatever we want with our properties. Many pets receive luxuries that are denied to other human beings; this is as immoral as human torture or the death penalty. On the other hand, too many pets (as objects, women, children...) are abandoned when we are no longer interested in them. Fashions and time contribute to the traffic of endangered species that are finally abandoned with dangerous consequences to the environment and, sometimes, to other humans and non-human beings. A serious and critical Reflection is urged.

⇒ Tourism

The massiveness of traditional tourism is encouraging more and more people every year to choose alternative routes, more involved in nature, with a rise of ecotourism during the last decade (Higham, 1998). These alternative routes are mainly chosen by people of a certain cultural level with enough economic power to travel to special areas of the Biosphere. Tour operators have immediately reacted, increasing their offer of areas of the planet out of reach a few years before. This has increased the income of multinationals specialised in tourism, rather than enrich local communities. Ecotourism should only be morally accepted if local communities had some control over them and if they shared equitability in the benefits emerging from tourism activities as expressed by Scheyvenes (1999). Governments and Administrations of these areas have a specific responsibility in the supervision of a sustainable development of these alternatives.

Although these tourists form a supposedly select group and locals may be involved and benefit in alternative programs, many papers are denouncing aberrant situations related to this alternative tourism (Gössling, 1999; Duffy, 2000, etc).

Disturbing animals, deliberately or not, is included in these denounces (Carney et Sydeman, 1999; Orams, 2000) related to natural protected areas that are invaded rather than isolated, the main objective of protecting a natural area of specific interest. Once again, a demand for Re-education of locals as well as foreign visitors is urged. Not only foreign people but also local monitors and guides, and many administrations, I fear (*cf.* Fennell et Malloy, 1999). Restrictive laws are not enough to protect an area or an emblematic species if laws are not adequately applied. Punishment is urged to

establish limits in our increasing invasion of pristine areas of the planet and once again, Re-education and Reflection toward a Real Refinement of Alternatives.

Should ethical committees be demanded to refine leisure and educational programs? With extreme urgency.

⇒ Food

Farming, fisheries and aquaculture need an urgent Revision for a more human development of animal production and more involvement in environmental protection programs. (Pyrovetsi et Daoutopoulos, 1989). Animal husbandry cannot be regarded as simple technical-economical enterprise (Fraser et al., 1997) because of the intrinsic biological values involved. If we declare ourselves concerned with animal welfare, the protection of the environment and animal welfare ought to be paid in food production (Grommers, 1996). Vegetarianism is just a personal option and an alternative for adult people but will not solve this problem; as we may appreciate, our relationship with non human animals is not limited neither to food production nor to meat consumption. Meat demand has an important ethno-cultural basis (Moriarty et Woods, 1997) that needs an autocritical revision and animal protein cannot be obviated during specific human development periods. Nevertheless, alternative nutritional models should be assumed and introduced in educational programs at all formative levels. Re-education is urged again and this task does not exclusively affect educators.

"The 35% of the world grain harvest that is fed to livestock, poultry, and fish is converted into animal protein. Simply put, it means eating less feedlot beef and less pork and pore poultry and farmed fish or plant sources of protein. With fish farming may also mean replacing fish monocultures with polycultures following the highly successful Chinese model. For the world's affluent, it means moving down the food chain by consuming less fat-rich livestock products, something they should be doing for health reasons anyway." (Brown, L. 2001)

Consumers should assume their own responsibility and condition meat and fish acceptance by ethical considerations of the treatment of farm animals. We have evolved toward an intensive production, rather than quality of food. Nowadays alternative housing systems remain unresolved (Whittemore, 1995) and postgraduate programs are producing agriculture and fisheries graduates closer to technicians rather than independent scientists. We

are urged to develop specialists more aware of sustainability rather than productivity. This new generation of *animal-producers* should have the chance to develop more concerned farming programs. Nevertheless, it will be the consumers' responsibility to select products of welfare-concerned programs, and the producers' responsibility to supply information about their programs and products. This involves not only the treatment during production, coming full-circle back to more traditional farming activities, but also the treatment during transport and slaughter. High product quality can only be achieved if slaughter animals are treated humanely (Troeger, 1995). This is the responsibility of both, producers and consumers.

⇒ Research

We come to one of the most controversial use of animals for our own profit. Based on the 3Rs-principle, the European Union reviewed our legislation referred to animal experimentation (DOCE, 1999). In section 5, the normative urged to develop ways to reduce the number of animals used in research in the E.U. by 50% by the year 2000. At the time of writing this text, year 2000 is long away gone and my country did never ratify it, along with many other European countries.

On the contrary, the scientific community, always depicted as the only responsible party of this magnicide, is promoting formative courses, symposia and seminars focused on refinement of methods and alternative techniques to Reduce and Replace the animals used in research, advancing our archaic and obsolete laws. A special mention must be made of the Working Group on Alternative Methods GETEMA (Repetto, 2001) and the Web on Alternative methods REMA⁴ (cf. de la Peña et al., 1999) for Spain.

As our administrators seem to be unable to update the regulations on the basis of the animal welfare and alternatives developed, especially controversial is the new moratoria on cosmetic tests recently approved, a debate focused on the implantation of ethical committees is taking place in different cities⁵. Central Administration was invited to give an urgent definition of this figure in order to implement it in our country. We are already waiting for it. Conclusions of the debates are available at the S.E.C.A.L and Altarriba web sites.⁶ Going even further, some Autonomies such as Catalonia⁷ have developed their own legislation based on the European proposal. To assume or to defend the absolute

elimination of animal experimentation is a dangerous exercise of irresponsibility and insolidarity towards human and non human beings. Following Jewish maxima, we should never forget.

"We're not going to be able to eliminate all animal research," said Alan M. Goldberg, Director of the Center. "So, we want to do as much as possible to minimize pain and distress." (cf. Lipson distributed by Querol, 2002)

⇒ Patents and Other Abuses

Is this the last symptom of our illness? Considered nearly as objects, we assume the power to modify the structure of an organism and assume it as private property. A dangerous tendency to knowledge monopolisation from industrial sectors has been denounced, which threatens to undermine the future of Scientific Research (Bergel, *Ibid.*) and Sustainable Agriculture (Azariah, 2000). We have traditionally assumed the right to possess our environment, to modify it, to move species from one continent to another, sometimes with positive results but frequently with terrible consequences. And we rarely assume the latter. We have traditionally been an irresponsible species. The traffic of species, denounced as biological pollution (Lévêque, 2000), arrives nowadays to levels of bio-piracy (Barreira, 2000).

New technologies allow us today to have the gene of a polar salmon introduced into a strawberry and make it flower under freezing conditions (Esquinas Alcazar, F.A.O., 2002). A star argument generally used by many biotechnologists to force us to accept GMOs in our environment is that they could help underdeveloped countries to solve their nutritional problems with better, cheaper and healthy products. This is nothing but a fallacy that time is confirming:

1. *«better»*. An increase in the development of abnormal individuals, abortions and deformed bodies and skulls are confirmed, boosting the suffering in farm animals (Comstock, 2000).
2. *«cheaper»*. Rather than a decrease in food prices, we are accumulating denounces of the GMOs special conditions increasing welfare and security terms with consequent rise of farmer's expenditures and of the product's final price.
3. *«healthy»*. GMOs will increase welfare demands with extreme health security (Mephram et Crilly, 1999) and, as previously detailed, an increase in the development of abnormal and deformed individuals.

But the main argument may be referred to the potential help to underdeveloped countries to solve their nutritional problems.

«Shiva *et al.*, researchers and investigative writers at the Rural Advancement Foundation Int. have all argued in complementary ways. They want to correct the under-laying causes of chronic hunger and environment degradation before we look for simple overlay technological solutions.» (Comstock, *Ibid.*)

Returning to the model of the freezing-flowered strawberry, we have to notice that one of the first applications developed is focused on our cold but well-developed Northern countries. No subsidies are known to increase the production in under-developed countries or to stop desert advance due to an historical deforestation and an inadequate and intensive agriculture. And how can it match up with the actual patent system? Are biotechnological products going to be offered free of charge to 3rd World Countries? Nevertheless, we always forget the main argument in our anthropocentric view of the surrounding world; who is the owner of a gene or its expression, the organism? We are not the owners of other species' gene, really. As I have previously mentioned, we have traditionally predated from other human beings their knowledge, their culture, without mutual correspondence.

«...The theft and patenting of our biogenetic resources is facilitated by the TRIPs (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) of the WTO. (World Trade Organisation) Some plants which Indigenous Peoples have discovered, cultivated, and used for food, medicine, and for sacred rituals are already patented in the United States, Japan, and Europe. A few examples of these are ayahuasca, quinoa, and sangre de drago in forests of South America; kava in the Pacific; turmeric and bitter melon in Asia. Our access and control over our biological diversity and control over our traditional knowledge and intellectual heritage are threatened by the TRIPs Agreement...» (Indigenous Peoples' Seattle Declaration, 1999)⁸

Nowadays we consider ourselves allowed to do the same with all living beings. Once again predated, parasiting the environment, and polluting it. A new term has to be technically and legally introduced, related to the biological pollution and this is genetic pollution. Are multinationals and biotechnologists going to assume any responsibility? What about consumers? As potential consumers we will have to assume our own responsibility as well as the ecological risk. With regard to this last aspect,

short-term ecological experiments have been done under high-controlled conditions and in reconstructed communities. It is therefore not strange that the results are the object of multiple interpretations and controversies. (Naeem, 2000). Conclusions relating transgenesis to natural inter-breeding, at our present knowledge level, show an absolute lack of prudence and frankness. Demanding the right to patent GMOs is a new way to corrupt science and scientists. During the 1st world Conference of Bioethics I proposed a comparative model, focused on literature and on one of our most emblematic classics «Don Quijote de la Mancha». Let's imagine our Hidalgo Knight recycled as a fireman (present literature is full of adapted classics), a small change, just a gene but enough to change the expression (function) in a new environment, a reforested Iberian Peninsula. Now, you will have our fireman fighting forest fires in our country, as I am terribly worried about deforestation, lost of fertile soil and desertification... and I defend windmills, they are an alternative source of energy. I will demand the copyright of my new novel, do you agree?

Definitively, we have developed an absolute absence of shame and solidarity to our main gene suppliers, non-human organisms and people from the 3rd World Countries. Potato, maize, tomato and many other basic foods in 1st World Countries were imported from underdeveloped countries without any correspondance to them, just predation and destruction. «Although developing countries own 80% of biodiversity, developed countries accumulate 80% of richness» (Esquinas, *Ibid.*)⁹. This is simply immoral and ethically unacceptable.

«Something is rotten in the state of Denmark» (Othello, by Shakespeare). Just in Denmark?

FINAL REMARKS

It is not easy to understand a society that maltreats fauna in many activities of life, getting upset only because of the use of non-human animals in biomedical research, clonation or transgenesis. Despite tendentious information and obsolete laws, we are advancing toward a restriction in the use of animals in biomedical research, researchers are called to a refinement in their techniques, and alternative methods are proposed to replace animals as research models. On the contrary, not much is advancing concerning an improvement in farm animal welfare, traffic of species or tourist invasions in protected areas. We have no prejudice in buying a pet, a souvenir with dried insects or skeleton

fragments, eating meat or fish without asking ourselves about the origin of this protein, the situation and status of the species or feeding alternatives. We all demand tasty and healthy food, leisure, medicines... but anti-vivisectionists increase their virulence in their attacks to the research community; sometimes with naive reactions, like *liberating* animals into an environment to which they are not adapted and should not be. The Press often acts irresponsibly, publishing tendentious articles about biomedical research and accusing researchers of being solely responsible for a hypothetical massacre whose results benefit us. Just a brief mention to a comment made after a debate focused on 'The Great Ape Project'

«I have got always surprised with this fact, that just those who work directly with animals have to justify activities whose results involve the whole society» (de la Cueva, 2000).

We always forget that it has been this society which has regulated, through its laws, the use of non-human animals in biomedical research¹⁰. But this fact should not be used as an argument to justify any attitude toward other organisms. A serious and reflexive change is urged in our attitudes toward humans and non-humans. To return to the circles of moral levels, I propose a new dimension for a better understanding of our situation. Making a simile with a trophic pyramid, we can order the moral levels filling them adequately to support our position as a «*unique and special*» species that is able to assume this responsibility toward other organisms (Fig. 2A).

Me < my group < ethnic < present < intergenerational < primates < sensocentrism < ecocentrism < cosmocentrism



Fig. 2A: The 9 levels of moral responsibility full of moral values including (or not) other organisms and cosmos.

Nevertheless, if we are unable to keep the «lower» levels of the pyramid full of contents, the system will be unable to support us. The model will not work. We will have no future (Fig. 2B).



Fig. 2B. What we have really reached, an empty and unsustainable pyramid.

But we must know that we can find different solutions for the same problem. We have a second option. If I want something to be filled, a pyramid does not work, as we have observed. What we really need is a mug. Just turning the pyramid upside-down and we will have something similar to a pliable cup extended, ready to be filled with moral contents. (Fig. 3).

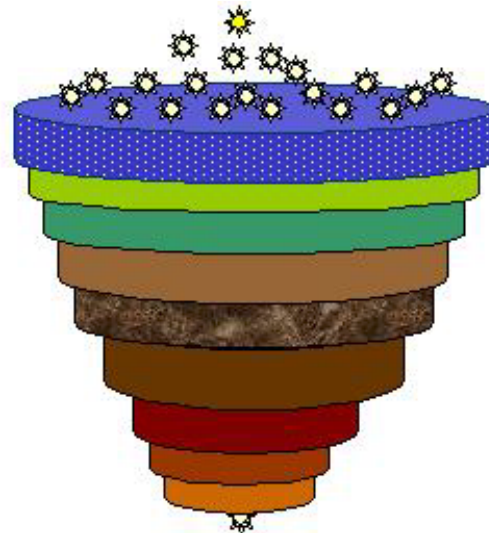


Fig 3. A cup, filled with contents and values



Fig. 4. The Biosphere, a spherical project. No other project of similar dimensions and characteristics have been confirmed to be feasible.

Now we will be able to fill it with moral values; other human beings, other animals, other organisms...

We will be unable to fill a level if we have not filled the level immediately inferior, beginning with our own. Without a cup filled of moral values, no future will be sustainable.

Humans are not the Top of Creation, we are the basis of the System. A corrupted basis or a Responsible one; that is the real dilemma and on this our decision should be taken.

Finally, place your cup close together to those of other human beings and we will be able to develop a sphere. (Fig. 4) A Sphere of values with human beings as a centre of an anthropo-centrifugal ethics as proposed by Kemp, *op. cit.*

CONCLUSIONS

In order to face the challenge of increasing our moral perception to new dimensions toward a new millennium, serious doubts are raised as a basis for reflection:

1. Should non-human animals be included in our moral community?
2. Does it involve similar legal and ethical treatment, both to human and to non-human animals?
3. Must it be equal for all species? What about non-sentient organisms?
4. Definitively, what moral level are we prepared to assume?

My answer to the first questions is «not necessarily». This is not the main problem. The key answer must be focused on the last question, on a personal

compromise as a person and as a species. As we observe daily with human beings, we are far from a real equality in rights and legal applications, despite we accept and assume this equality for humans. This and many other questions may take years and papers of pseudo-philosophical debates without content and without solutions. What we really need, and what society demands, are solutions, not empty words or theories. We will continue with nonsensical debates if laws do not evolve and adapt to social demands, covering ways to

1. clearly restrict the potential use of non-human animals at all levels: leisure, production, transport, research, conservation, etc.
2. draw up and apply guide-lines toward a real fulfilment of laws,
3. develop ethical committees with authority to ensure legal efficiency, with a profound revision of our moral principles, re-education of our attitudes toward other organism and personal compromise in our attitude toward nature that are urged.

Otherwise, this paper and many others will be a waste of time and a waste of lives, human and non-human. My opinion is that the basis of the problem is not potential animal rights but real human responsibilities that we are not assuming; responsibilities as consumers of organic goods with suffering capability. Bioethics and specialists related to this field have to assume an urgent commitment to develop a new moral conscience giving adequate and impartial

- ⇒ INFORMATION to the society,
- ⇒ EDUCATION to professionals (farmers, researchers, lawyers, journalists, etc.)
- ⇒ LEGISLATION according to new times and new values.

This is the least we must do if we want to go into the new century with high moral.

We still have a lot of work to do, but it is our Responsibility. We may never reach an agreement about the concept of the moral community or about whether other organisms than persons have or have not similar rights. But we may reach an agreement; ethics seems to be this, reaching moral agreements and solving ethical dilemmas. We may accept a fact, that the human being is different from other organisms; neither superior nor inferior, simply different. A handicap that humans have is our inability to correctly interpret many phenomena related to Nature. One of these misinterpretations may be related to our concept of intelligence that excludes other animal species. Difference does not mean inexistence and difference is not a scientific argument, neither a

legal one to exclude anybody from a potential moral level. Nevertheless, We may consider ourselves as the Only Species in this Biosphere that asks itself about its existence. But, if we already want to be «*The Chosen Species*» (Arsuaga et Martínez, 2000), we have been chosen for the supervision of our environment, not just for its predation. Perhaps nobody will be there in the future with an invoice claiming compensation for our acts. But this is our real difference; we are here to claim it.

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I would finally like to dedicate this paper to all the victims of a nonsensical violence, humans and non humans. This symbol, a blue ribbon, was for years a way to demand freedom and a pacific solution to the violence in the Basque Country; “*Nunca más*”



KEYWORDS Human. Non Human Animal. Bioethics. Moral Values. Animal Rights

ABSTRACT A critical reflection focused on our limited moral values and on our attitude toward human and non-human organisms is proposed. I fear that most of the problems of our traditional confrontation about on our moral capability, must be referred both to human and non-human organisms. It is not a question of Who should be included in our moral community but a serious and critical reflection of our moral attitudes toward humans and non-human beings. The basis of the problem is not potential Animal Rights but real Human Responsibilities that we are not assuming, responsibilities as consumers of organic goods with suffering capability. We must assume an urgent commitment to develop a new moral conscience, giving adequate impartial information, education and legislation, according to the new times. At least if we want to go into enter the new century with raising moral. We may never reach an agreement about the concept of moral community or about whether organisms other than persons have or have not rights similar rights to that owned by persons, because they are not «subjects of duty». But we may reach an agreement; we may accept a fact, that human beings are really different to other organisms; simply different. If we really want to be

«The Chosen Species» (cf. Arsuaga, 2000) we have to face the fact that we have been elected for the supervision of our environment, not just for its predation. Perhaps nobody will be there in the future with a bill claiming compensation for our acts. But this is our real difference; we are here to claim for it.

NOTES

1. A peculiar tendency shown in Basque population toward a natural dominance of rh- blood type has become to be used as proof to defend segregationist arguments.
2. Martin Heidegger, Messkirch, Schwarzwald, Deutschland. 1889-1976. cf. Britannica Micropaedia pp. 800-802
3. Reflexion made by Rubachof, politic prisoner, to Ivanof, his hangman, in Arthur Koestler novel «*El cero y el infinito*»
4. <<http://tox.umh.es/rema>>
5. i.e. SECAL, Madrid, 13th June 2000; CIPLAE, Barcelona, 7th-9th November 2002 among others
6. Sociedad Española para las Ciencias del Animal de Laboratorio, <<http://www.secal.es>> Fundación Altarriba, <<http://www.altarriba.org>>
7. In Spain these regulations are transferred to Autonomies.
8. http://www.igc.org/csdngo/Indigenous/indig_seattle.htm
9. Nüremberg Code, *Ibid*, Helsinki agreement on biomedical research, etc.

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Societal Responsibilities in Life Sciences
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