ARE ZOOS MORALLY DEFENSIBLE?[1]

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Despite important differences, a number of recent tendencies in ethical theory are united in the challenges they pose for well-entrenched human practices involving the utilization of nonhuman animals, including their use in zoos. This essay explores three such tendencies—utilitarianism, the rights view, and environmental holism—and explores their respective answers to the question, Are zoos morally defensible? Both utilitarianism and holism offer ethical theories that in principle could defend zoos, but both, it is argued, are less than adequate ethical outlooks. For reasons set forth below, the third option—the rights view—has implications that run counter to the moral acceptability of zoos, as we know them. The essay concludes not by insisting that zoos as we know them are morally indefensible but, rather, by admitting that we have yet to see an adequate ethical theory that illuminates why they are not.

A great deal of recent work by moral philosophers—much of it in environmental ethics, for example, but much of it also in reference to questions about obligations to future generations and international justice—is directly relevant to the moral assessment of zoos. (Here and throughout I use the word "zoo" to refer to a professionally managed zoological institution accredited by the AZA and having a collection of live animals used for conservation, scientific studies, public education, and public display.) Yet most of this work has been overlooked by advocates of zoological parks. Why this is so is unclear, but certainly the responsibility for this lack of communication needs to be shared. Like all other specialists, moral philosophers have a tendency to converse only among
themselves, just as, like others with a shared, crowded agenda, zoo professionals have limited discretionary time, thus little time to explore current tendencies in academic disciplines like moral philosophy. The present book, bringing together, as it does, both ethicists and persons professionally involved with the real-world work of zoos, is especially noteworthy, and as befits the objectives of this book, the present essay attempts to take some modest steps in the direction of better communication between the two professions.

After a brief historical section, three tendencies in contemporary moral philosophy—utilitarianism, animal rights, and holism—are described and some of their implications regarding zoos are explained. Not all these tendencies can be true in every respect (for they contradict each other at crucial places), and perhaps none is true in any. Unquestionably, however, these three tendencies are among the most important options in moral philosophy today, so that how they answer the central question I intend to explore —namely, Are zoos morally defensible?— cannot be irrelevant to an informed moral assessment of zoos.

As will become clear as we proceed, my own moral position is not that of a neutral observer. Of the three tendencies to be considered, I favor one (what I call the "rights view") and disagree rather strongly with the other two. For obvious reasons, my characterizations and assessments of these tendencies are in the nature of rough sketches; for more detailed accounts the reader is referred to my works cited in the references and notes.

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CHANGING TIMES

Time was when philosophers had little good to say about animals other than human beings. "Nature's automata," writes Descartes (Regan and Singer 1976, 60). Morally considered, animals are in the same category as "sticks and stones," opines the early twentieth-century Jesuit Joseph Rickaby (179). True, there have been notable exceptions, throughout history, who celebrated the intelligence, beauty, and dignity of animals: Pythagoras, Cicero, Epicurus, Herodotus, Horace, Ovid, Plutarch, Seneca, Virgil—hardly a group of ancient-world animal crazies. By and large, however, a dismissive sentence or two sufficed or, when one's corpus took on grave proportions, a few paragraphs or pages. Thus we find Immanuel Kant, for example, by all accounts one of the most influential philosophers in the history of ideas, devoting almost two full pages to the question of our duties to nonhuman animals, while Saint Thomas Aquinas, easily the most important philosopher- theologian in the Roman Catholic tradition, bequeaths perhaps ten pages to this topic.

Times change. Today even a modest bibliography of the past decade's work by philosophers on the moral status of nonhuman animals (Magel 1989) would easily equal the length of Kant's and Aquinas's treatments combined (Regan and Singer 1976, 122-124, 56-60, 118-122), a quantitative symbol of the changes that have taken place, and continue to take place, in philosophy's attempt to excise the cancerous prejudices lodged in the anthropocentric belly of Western thought.

With relatively few speaking to the contrary (Saint Francis always comes to mind in this context), theists and humanists, rowdy bedfellows in most quarters, have gotten along amicably when discussing questions about the moral center of the terrestrial universe: human interests form the center of this universe. Let the theist look hopefully beyond the harsh edge of bodily death, let the humanist denounce, in Freud's terms, this "infantile view of the world," at least the two could agree that the moral universe revolves around us humans—our desires, our needs, our goals, our preferences, our love for one another. An intense dialectic now characterizes philosophy's assaults on the traditions of humanism and theism, assaults aimed not only at the traditional account of the moral status of nonhuman animals but also at the foundations of our moral dealings with the
natural environment, with Nature generally. These assaults should not be viewed as local skirmishes between obscure academicians each bent on occupying a deserted fortress. At issue are the validity of alternative visions of the scheme of things and our place in it. The growing philosophical debate over our treatment of the planet and the other animals with whom we share it is both a symptom and a cause of a culture's attempt to come to critical terms with its past as it attempts to shape its future.

At present moral philosophers are raising a number of major challenges against moral anthropocentrism. I shall consider three. The first comes from utilitarians, the second from proponents of animal rights, and the third from those who advocate a holistic ethic. This essay offers a brief summary of each position with special reference to how it answers our central question—the question, again, Are zoos morally defensible?

UTILITARIANISM

The first fairly recent spark of revolt against moral anthropocentrism comes, as do other recent protests against institutionalized prejudice, from the pens of the

nineteenth- century utilitarians Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. In an oft-quoted passage Bentham enfranchises sentient animals in the utilitarian moral community by declaring, "The question is not, Can they talk?, or Can they reason?, but, Can they suffer?" (Regan and Singer 1976, 130). Mill goes even further, writing that utilitarians "are perfectly willing to stake the whole question on this one issue. Granted that any practice causes more pain to animals than it gives pleasure to man: is that practice moral or immoral? And if, exactly in proportion as human beings raise their heads out of the slough of selfishness, they do not with one voice answer 'immoral' let the morality of the principle of utility be forever condemned" (132). Some of our duties are direct duties to other animals, not indirect duties to humanity. For
utilitarians, these animals are themselves involved in the moral game.

Viewed against this historical backdrop, the position of the influential contemporary moral philosopher Peter Singer can be seen to be an extension of the utilitarian critique of moral anthropocentrism (Singer 1990). In Singer's hands utilitarianism requires that we consider the interests of everyone affected by what we do, and also that we weigh equal interests equally. We must not refuse to consider the interests of some people because they are Catholic, or female, or black, for example. Everyone's interests must be considered. And we must not discount the importance of equal interests because of whose interests they are. Everyone's interests must be weighed equitably. Now, to ignore or discount the importance of a woman's interests because she is a woman is an obvious example of the moral prejudice we call sexism, just as to ignore or discount the importance of the interests of African or Native Americans, Hispanics, etc. is an obvious form of racism. It remained for Singer to argue, which he does with great vigor, passion, and skill, that a similar moral prejudice lies at the heart of moral anthropocentrism, a prejudice that Singer, borrowing a term coined by the English author and animal activist Richard Ryder, denominates speciesism (Ryder 1975).

Like Bentham and Mill before him, therefore, Singer denies that humans are obliged to treat other animals equitably in the name of the betterment of humanity and also denies that acting dutifully toward these animals is a warm-up for the real moral game played between humans or, as theists would add, between humans and God. We owe it to those animals who have interests to take their interests into account, just as we also owe it to them to count their interests equitably. In these respects we have direct duties to them, not indirect duties to humanity. To think otherwise is to give sorry testimony to the very prejudice— speciesism—Singer is intent upon silencing.

UTILITARIANISM AND THE MORAL ASSESSMENT OF ZOOS

From a utilitarian perspective, then, the interests of animals must figure in the moral assessment of zoos. These interests include a variety of needs, desires, and preferences, including, for example, the interest wild animals have in freedom of movement, as well as adequate nutrition and an appropriate environment. Even zoos' most severe critics must acknowledge that in many of the most important respects, contemporary zoos have made important advances in meeting at least some of the most important interests of wild animals in captivity.

From a utilitarian perspective, however, there are additional questions that need to be answered before we are justified in answering our central question. For not only must we insist that the interests of captive animals be taken into account and be counted equitably, but we must also do the same for all those people whose interests are affected by having zoos—and this involves a very large number of people indeed,

including those who work at zoos, those who visit them, and those (for example, people in the hotel and restaurant business, as well as local and state governments) whose business or tax base benefits from having zoos in their region. To make an informed moral assessment of zoos, given utilitarian theory, in short, we need to consider a great deal more than the interests of those wild animals exhibited in zoos (though we certainly need to consider their interests). Since everyone's interests count, we need to consider everyone's interests, at least insofar as these interests are affected by having zoos—or by not having them.

Now, utilitarians are an optimistic, hearty breed, and what for many (myself included) seems to be an impossible task, to them appears merely difficult. The task is simple enough to state—namely, to determine how the many, the varied, and the competing interests of everyone affected by having zoos (or by not having them) are or will be affected by having (or not having) them. That, as I say, is the easy part. The hard (or impossible) part is actually to carry out this project. Granted, a number of story lines are possible (for example, stories about how much people really learn by going to zoos in comparison with how much they could learn by watching National Geographic specials). But many of these story lines will be in the nature of speculation rather than of fact, others will be empirical sketches rather than detailed studies, and the vital interests of some individuals (for example, the interests people have in having a job, medical benefits, a retirement plan) will tend not to be considered at all or to be greatly undervalued.

Moreover, the utilitarian moral assessment of zoos requires that we know a good deal more before we can make an informed assessment. Not only must we canvass all the interests of all those individuals who are affected, but we must also add up all the interests that are satisfied as well as all the interests that are frustrated, given the various options (for example, keeping zoos as they are, changing them in various ways, or abolishing them altogether). Then, having added all the pluses and minuses—and only then—are we in a position to say which of the options is the best one.

But (to put the point as mildly as possible) how we rationally are to carry out this part of the project (for example, how we rationally determine what an equitable trade-off is between, say, a wild animals' interest in roaming free and a tram operator's interest in a steady job) is far from clear. And yet unless we have comprehensible, comprehensive, and intellectually reliable instructions regarding how we are to do this, we will lack the very knowledge that, given utilitarian theory, we must have before we can make an informed moral assessment of zoos. The suspicion is, at least among utilitarianism's critics, the theory requires knowledge that far exceeds what we humans are capable of acquiring. In the particular case before us, then, it is arguable that utilitarian theory, conscientiously applied, would lead to moral skepticism—would lead, that is, to the conclusion that we just don't know whether or not zoos are morally defensible. At least for many people, myself included, this is a conclusion we would wish to avoid.

In addition to problems of this kind, utilitarianism also seems open to a variety of damaging moral criticisms, among which the following is representative. The theory commits us to withholding our moral assessment of actions or practices until everyone's interests have been taken into account and treated equitably. Thus the theory implies that before we can judge, say, whether the sexual abuse of very young children is morally wrong, we need to consider the interests of everyone involved—the very young child certainly, but also those of the abuser. But this seems morally outrageous. For what one wants to say, it seems to me, is that the sexual abuse of

children is wrong independently of the interests of abusers, that their interests should play absolutely no role whatsoever in our judgment that their abuse is morally wrong, so that any theory that implies that their interests should play a role in our judgment must be mistaken. Thus, because utilitarianism does imply this, it must be mistaken.

Suppose this line of criticism is sound. Then it follows that we should not make our moral assessment of anything, whether the sexual abuse of children or the practice of keeping and exhibiting wild animals in zoos, in the way this theory recommends. If the theory is irredeemably flawed— and that it is, is what the example of child abuse is supposed to illustrate—then its answer to any moral question, including in particular our question about the defensibility of zoos, should carry no moral weight, one way or the other (that is, whether the theory would justify zoos or find them indefensible). Despite its historic importance and continued influence, we are, I think, well advised to look elsewhere for an answer to our question.

THE RIGHTS VIEW

An alternative to the utilitarian attack on anthropocentrism is the rights view. Those who accept this view hold that (1) the moral assessment of zoos must be carried out against the backdrop of the rights of animals and that (2) when we make this assessment against this backdrop, zoos, as they presently exist, are not morally defensible. How might one defend what to many people will seem to be such extreme views? This is not a simple question by any means, but something by way of a sketch of this position needs to be presented here (Regan 1983).

The rights view rests on a number of factual beliefs about those animals humans eat, hunt, and trap, as well as those relevantly similar animals humans use in scientific research and exhibit in zoos. Included among these factual beliefs are the following: These animals are not only in the world, but they are also aware of it—and of what happens to them. And what happens to them matters to them. Each has a life that fares experientially better or worse for the one whose life it is. As such, all have lives of their own that are of importance to them apart from their utility to us. Like us, they bring a unified psychological presence to the world. Like us, they are somebodies, not somethings. They are not our tools, not our models, not our resources, not our commodities.

The lives that are theirs include a variety of biological, psychological, and social needs. The satisfaction of these needs is a source of pleasure, their frustration or abuse, a source of pain. The untimely death of the one whose life it is, whether this be painless or otherwise, is the greatest of harms since it is the greatest of losses: the loss of one's life itself. In these fundamental ways these nonhuman animals are the same as human beings. And so it is that according to the rights view, the ethics of our dealings with them and with one another must rest on the same fundamental moral principles.

At its deepest level an enlightened human ethic, according to the rights view, is based on the independent value of the individual: the moral worth of any one human being is not to be measured by how useful that person is in advancing the interests of other human beings. To treat human beings in ways that do not honor their independent value—to treat them as tools or models or commodities, for example—is to violate that most basic of human rights: the right of each of us to be treated with respect.

As viewed by its advocates, the philosophy of animal rights demands only that logic be respected. For any argument that plausibly explains the independent value of human

beings, they claim, implies that other animals have this same value, and have it equally. Any argument that plausibly explains the right of humans to be treated with respect, it is further alleged, also implies that these other animals have this same right, and have it equally, too.

Those who accept the philosophy of animal rights, then, believe that women do not exist to serve men, blacks to serve whites, the rich to serve the poor, or the weak to serve the strong. The philosophy of animal rights not only accepts these truths, its advocates maintain, but also insists upon and justifies them. But this philosophy goes further. By insisting upon the independent value and rights of other animals, it attempts to give scientifically informed and morally impartial reasons for denying that these animals exist to serve us. Just as there is no master sex and no master race, so (animal rights advocates maintain) there is no master species.

ANIMAL RIGHTS AND THE MORAL ASSESSMENT OF ZOOS

To view nonhuman animals after the fashion of the philosophy of animal rights makes a truly profound difference to our understanding of what we may do to them. Because other animals have a moral right to respectful treatment, we ought not reduce their moral status to that of being useful means to our ends. That being so, the rights view excludes from consideration many of those factors that are relevant to the utilitarian moral assessment of zoos. As explained earlier, conscientious utilitarians need to ask how having zoos affects the interests people have in being gainfully employed, how the tourist trade and the local and state tax base are impacted, and how much people really learn from visiting zoos. All these questions, however, are irrelevant if those wild animals confined in zoos are not being treated with appropriate respect. If they are not, then, given the rights view, keeping these animals in zoos is wrong, and it is wrong independently of how the interests of others are affected.

Thus, the central question: Are animals in zoos treated with appropriate respect? To answer this question, we begin with an obvious fact—namely, the freedom of these animals is compromised, to varying degrees, by the conditions of their captivity. The rights view recognizes the justification of limiting another's freedom but only in a narrow range of cases. The most obvious relevant case would be one in which it is in the best interests of a particular animal to keep that animal in confinement. In principle, therefore, confining wild animals in zoos can be justified, according to the rights view, but only if it can be shown that it is in their best interests to do so. That being so, it is morally irrelevant to insist that zoos provide important educational and recreational opportunities for humans, or that captive animals serve as useful models in important scientific research, or that regions in which zoos are located benefit economically, or that zoo programs offer the opportunity for protecting rare or endangered species, or that variations on these programs insure genetic stock, or that any other consequence arises from keeping wild animals in captivity that forwards the interests of other individuals, whether humans or nonhumans.

Now, one can imagine circumstances in which such captivity might be defensible. For example, if the life of a wild animal could be saved only by temporarily removing the animal from the threat of human predation, and if, after this threat had abated, the animal was reintroduced into the wild, then this temporary confinement arguably is not disrespectful and thus might be justified. Perhaps there are other circumstances in which a wild animal's liberty could be limited temporarily, for that animal's own good. Obviously, however, there will be comparatively few such cases, and no less obviously,

those cases that satisfy the requirements of the rights view are significantly different from the vast majority of cases in which wild animals are today confined in zoos, for these animals are confined and exhibited not because temporary captivity is in their best interests but because their captivity serves some purpose useful to others. As such, the rights view must take a very dim view of zoos, both as we know them now and as they are likely to be in the future. In answer to our central question—Are zoos morally defensible?—the rights view's answer, not surprisingly, is No, they are not.

HOLISM

Although the rights view and utilitarianism differ in important ways, they are the same in others. Like utilitarian attacks on anthropocentrism, the rights view seeks to make its case by working within the major ethical categories of the anthropocentric tradition. For example, utilitarians do not deny the moral relevance of human pleasure and pain, so important to our humanist forebears; rather, they accept it and seek to extend our moral horizons to include the moral relevance of the pleasures and pains of other animals. For its part, the rights view does not deny the moral importance of the individual, a central article of belief in theistic and humanistic thought; rather, it accepts this moral datum and seeks to widen the class of individuals who are thought of in this way to include nonhuman animals.

Because both the positions discussed in the preceding use major ethical categories handed down by our predecessors, some influential thinkers argue that these positions, despite all appearances to the contrary, remain in bondage to anthropocentric prejudices. What is needed, these thinkers believe, is not a broader interpretation of traditional categories (for example, the category "the rights of the individual") but the overthrow of these very categories themselves. Only then will we have a new vision, one that liberates us from the last vestiges of anthropocentrism.

Among those whose thought moves in this direction, none is more influential than Aldo Leopold (1949). Leopold rejects the individualism so dear to the hearts of those who build their moral thinking on the welfare or rights of the individual. What has ultimate value is not the individual but the collective, not the part but the whole, meaning the entire biosphere and its constituent ecosystems. Acts are right, Leopold claims, if they tend to promote the integrity, beauty, diversity, and harmony of the biotic community; they are wrong if they tend contrariwise. As for individuals, be they humans or other animals, they are merely "members of the biotic team," having neither more nor less value in themselves than any other member—having, that is, no value in themselves. What value individuals have, so far as this is meaningful at all, is instrumental only: They are good to the extent that they promote the welfare of the biotic community.

Traditional forms of utilitarianism, not just the rights view, go by the board given Leopold's vision. To extend our moral concern to the pleasures and pains of other animals is not to overcome the prejudices indigenous to anthropocentrism. One who does this is stillshackled to thoseprejudices, supposing that those mentalstates that matterto humans must be the measure of what matters morally to the world at large. Utilitarians are people who escape from one prejudice (speciesism) only to embrace another (what we might call sentientism). Animal liberation is not nature liberation. In order to forge an ethic that liberates us from our anthropocentric tradition we must develop a holistic understanding of the community of life and our place in it. The land must be viewed as meriting our equal moral concern. Waters, soils, plants, rocks—

inanimate, not just animate, existence—must be seen to be morally considerable. All are equal members of the same biotic team.

Holists facedaunting challenges when it comes to determining what is right and wrong. That is to be determined by calculating the effects of our actions on the life community. Such calculations will not be easy. Utilitarians, as noted earlier, encounter a serious problem when they are asked to say what the consequences will be if we act in one way rather than another. This problem arises for them despite the fact that they restrict their calculations to sentient life. How much more difficult it must be, then, to calculate the consequences for the entire biosphere!

But perhaps the situation for holists is not as dire as I have suggested. While it is true that we often lack detailed knowledge about how the biosphere is affected by human acts and practices, we sometimes know enough to say that some of the things we are doing are unhealthy for the larger community of life. For example, we do not know exactly how much we are contaminating the water of the earth by using rivers and oceans as garbage dumps for toxic wastes, or exactly how much protection afforded by the ozone layer is being compromised by our profligate use of chlorofluorocarbons. But we do know enough to realize that neither situation bodes well for marine and other life forms as we know them.

Let us assume, then, what I believe is true, that we sometimes are wise enough to understand that the effects of some human practices act like insatiable cancers eating away at the life community. From the perspective of holism, these practices are wrong, and they are wrong because of their detrimental effects on the interrelated systems of biological life.

It is important to realize that holists are aware of the catastrophic consequences toxic dumping and the ever widening hole in the ozone layer are having on individual animals in the wild—on elephants and dolphins, for example. It would be unfair to picture those who subscribe to holism as taking delight in the suffering and death of these individual animals. Holists are not sadists. What is fair and important to note, however, is that the suffering and death of these animals are not morally significant according to these thinkers. Morally, what matters is how the diversity, sustainability, and harmony of the larger community of life are affected, not what happens to individuals.

To make the holists' position clearer, consider the practice of trapping fur-bearing animals for commercial profit. Holists find nothing wrong with this economic venture so long as it does not disrupt the integrity, diversity, and sustainability of the ecosystem. Trappers can cause such disruptions, if they over-trap a particular species. The danger here is that the depletion of a particular species will have a ripple effect on the community as a whole and that the community will lose its diversity, sustainability, and integrity. The overtrapping (and hunting) of wolves and other predatory animals in the northeastern United States often is cited as a case in point (Baker 1985). Once those natural predators were removed, other species of wildlife—deer in particular, it is asserted— are said to have overpopulated, so that today these animals actually imperil the very ecosystem that supports them. All this could have been avoided if, instead of rendering local populations of natural predators extinct by overtrapping and overhunting, the humans had trapped or hunted more judiciously, with an eye to sustainable yield. Although a significant number of individual animals would have been killed, the integrity, harmony, and sustainability of the ecosystem would have been preserved. When and if commercial trappers achieve these results, holists believe they do nothing wrong. From the perspective of holism, the inevitable suffering and untimely

death of individual furbearing animals do not matter morally.

HOLISM AND THE MORAL ASSESSMENT OF ZOOS

Holism's position regarding the ethics of zoos in particular is analogous to its position regarding the ethics of our other interactions with wildlife in general. There is nothing wrong with keeping wild animals in permanent confinement if doing so is good for the larger life community. But it is wrong to do this if the effects on the community are detrimental. Moreover, because one of the indices of what is
harmful to the life community is a reduction in the diversity of forms of life within the community, holism will recognize a strong prima facie duty to preserve rare or endangered species. To the extent that the best zoos contribute to this effort, holists will applaud their efforts, even if keeping individual animals who belong to threatened species in captivity is not in the best interests of those particular animals. In that and other respects (for example, the moral relevance of the educational and research functions of zoos), the implications of holism are very much at odds with those of the rights view and much closer to those of utilitarianism.

Some people who accept a holistic ethic are skeptical of the real contributions zoos make to species protection. It is appropriate for all of us to press this issue since, despite the claims sometimes made on behalf of zoo programs whose purpose is to reintroduce endangered species into their native habitats, for example, the rate of success might be far less than the public is led to believe. Philosophically, however, there are deeper, more troubling questions that need to be considered. Of the many that come to mind, only one will be discussed here.

Holism—or, to speak more precisely, the unqualified, unequivocal version of holism sketched above,[1]—takes a strong moral stance in opposition to whatever upsets the diversity, balance, and sustainability of the community of life. Unquestionably, it is the human presence and the effects of human activities that have by far the most adverse effects on the diversity, balance, and sustainability of the life community. Now, as we have seen, the holist's response to such effects when these are allegedly caused by nonhumans (for example, by an overabundance of deer) is to recommend a limited hunting season, to cull the herd, and thereby restore ecological balance. Why, then, should holists not advocate comparable policies in the face of human depredation of the life community? In other words, why should holists stop short of recommending that the human population be culled using measures no less lethal than those used in the case of controlling the population of deer? Granted, the latter is legal, the former not. But legality is not a reliable guide to morality, and the question before us is a question of morals, not a question of law. And it is the moral question that needs to be pressed.

Given the major tenets of their theory, holists cannot meet the challenge this question poses by insisting that humans are in a different moral category from deer and other wild animals. Like every species, each individual is a member of the biotic team, and no species—anymore than any individual—is of greater importance in the ecological scheme of things than any other. It is therefore a palpable double standard to permit killing deer, who (let us assume) cause some environmental damage, and to prohibit killing humans, who cause much, much more.[2] In other words, either holists mean what they say, or they do not. If they do not, then there is no reason to take them seriously. If they do, then they cannot avoid embracing the draconian implications to which their position commits them.

Let us assume that holists mean what they say and that they should be taken

seriously. Our question, then, is whether to agree with them. One can only hope that few will do so. One would also hope that a moral position authorizing policies that have all the markings of species genocide will find few partisans. Granted, the environmental crisis is a crisis of monumental proportions, and granted, human beings are the major cause; nevertheless, a morally acceptable approach to this crisis needs to rest on some basis other than the biocentric egalitarianism that helps define holism.

The relevance of the preceding to our central question is analogous to the earlier discussion of utilitarianism. As was true in that earlier case, it is no good attempting to defend zoos in particular by appealing to a moral outlook that is morally unacceptable in general. Thus, because holism is not a morally acceptable outlook, it is not an acceptable basis for assessing the moral justification of zoos.

Those who believe that zoos, as they presently exist, are morally defensible, therefore, will have to find a moral outlook that parts company both with holism and with utilitarianism. The rights view, of course, is a third major option. But that view, for reasons advanced in the preceding, is highly critical of zoos, on grounds that they violate the right of wild animals to be treated with respect. This essay concludes, therefore, on the following cautionary note—if or as one hopes to marshal a moral defense of zoos, one will have to articulate, defend, and competently apply some theory other than the three surveyed on this occasion.

NOTES

Parts of this essay previously appeared in Tom Regan, The Thee Generation: Reflections on the Coming Revolution (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1991).

1. Some of the major problems faced by J. Baird Callicott's revised holism (1993)—in particular, questions about tradeoffs between such disparate sorts of values as the good of one's family and the good of an ecosystem—are analogous to those faced by utilitarianism. Space prevents a detailed discussion of these views on this occasion.

2. Holists might reply that unlike deer, humans have free choice and can be educated so that they choose with an ecological conscience; thus, we should wait until massive educational efforts have been made, then see whether people change their behavior appropriately, before instituting lethal solutions. Again, programs that reduce the rate of human population growth might be preferred over those that recommend reducing the population that already exists. A fuller (and fairer) discussion of holism would be obliged to consider just how well founded these options are.

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