
Animal Experimentation and Bias in Bioethics

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1. Introduction

Current approaches to bioethics are minimally concerned with the issue of animal experimentation. This would be understandable if we were dealing here with a very marginal phenomenon. But this is not the case. In fact, such lack of attention seems puzzling, given the extremely high number of procedures which involve the use of nonhumans.¹ What is more: these procedures are far more common than the practices with which bioethical studies are usually concerned (such as euthanasia, abortion, human cell cloning, research on embryos, on humans, etc.) The reason for such dissimilarity in the attention that these problems receive seems to rest on the very different way in which the interests of humans and nonhumans are commonly considered nowadays. Nonhuman interests are counted as having virtually no import; if they counted for something, no matter how little, they would, at some point, have to be comparable to the weight of some human interests, but this is very seldom the case, and certainly not something that current studies in bioethics reflect.

It is necessary to find out whether such significant differential consideration is justified. If that were the case, current approaches in bioethics would be right. Otherwise, they would need to be deeply revised.

¹ See the data in Commission of the European Communities, European Union, *Fourth Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Statistics on the number of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes in the member states of the European Union* {SEC(2005) 45}, European Union, Brussels, 2005, p. 4; Home Office, United Kingdom, *Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain, 2005*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 2006, p. 18; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture, *Animals Used in Research, 2004*, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, 2005, p. 2. All these documents show that the number of nonhuman animals used for research raises annually to dozens of millions both in the European countries and in the United States.

2. Different Ways in Which Anthropocentrism Can Be Defended

The question that thus arises is whether *moral anthropocentrism*² (the idea that the interests of human beings must take preference over those of other individuals)³ is justified. In order to consider this matter it is first necessary to distinguish the various ways in which this position can be defended. These are the following ones:

I) *Definitional anthropocentrism*. Anthropocentrism is sometimes maintained without trying to give any justification of it.⁴ We can call this position (which has been defended by Posner and Diamond among others) definitional anthropocentrism, since it is based on a mere definition. It simply states that being human is morally relevant *per se*.

II) *Defenses of anthropocentrism by means of reasoned argumentation*. In many other cases, though, anthropocentrism is defended by means of reasons that are taken to be morally relevant. These can be very different in each case, depending on the criterion on which they are based. Such positions can be classified as follows:

² This view should not be confused with other forms of anthropocentrism, such as the epistemic one.

³ It is also important to note that anthropocentrism does not necessarily imply an attitude of loathing of those animals that are not members of the species we have chosen as particularly significant. Therefore, it cannot be identified with what Mason has called *misotheism*, which, in his own words, would mean "hatred and contempt for animals" (Mason, J., *An Unnatural Order: Why We Are Destroying the Planet and Each Other*, Continuum, New York, 1998, p. 163). The use of nonhuman animals in biomedical research does not necessarily imply hating or disliking them, but simply considering that their interests are not to be considered as humans' are (just as it could happen in the case of a stone or a machine). Similarly (as Nelson has defended (Nelson, L., *System of Ethics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1956, p. 142.) rejecting anthropocentrism does not necessarily imply love for nonhumans (although in practice they often come together). It seems it does need being able to feel *empathy* for nonhumans. But to the extent that empathy and love are not synonyms the latter would not be a requirement for rejecting discrimination against nonhumans.

⁴ See Posner, R., "Animal Rights: Legal, Philosophical and Pragmatical Perspectives", in Sunstein, C. & Nussbaum, M. (eds.), *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, pp. 51-77; as well as in Diamond, C., "The Importance of Being Human", in Cockburn, D. (ed.), *Human Beings*, Supplement to *Philosophy* 29, Royal Institute of Philosophy, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 35-62; and *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind*, MIT, Massachusetts, 1995.

II.1) *Defenses of anthropocentrism as a universally valid view.* Some approaches have defended that anthropocentrism is relevant in a universal and neutral way, i.e. independently of our particular situation. They defend that if a moral agent from a different planet landed on Earth, she would have to accept humans' interests as more important than those of other animals. There are two ways in which this idea can be maintained:

II.1.1) *Defenses of anthropocentrism that allude to individual abilities.* Several views have defended anthropocentrism by arguing that only humans have certain abilities that are necessary in order to be morally considerable. Examples of these are complex intellectual capacities, linguistic command, freedom, moral agency or the possibility of having positive and negative experiences, among others (defenders of this view include Descartes, Frey, Leahy, Ferry and Narveson).⁵

II.1.2) *Defenses of species-linked discrimination that allude to metaphysical reasons that are not open to corroboration.* Other views have rested on the idea that humans' interests are more important than those of others for reasons that have to do with certain metaphysical assumptions regarding their ontological status. Some of these are based on religious beliefs (as the ones held by Reichmann, Vidal or Harrison),⁶ others are grounded on the idea that there is an axiological order in the universe in which humans occupy a place higher than the one in which other animals belong (as it has been defended by Aristotle, Ferré or Machan).⁷ According to these views having such status does not necessarily entail the display of certain capacities. For this very same reason, the question of whether humans actually possess it remains open.

⁵ Descartes, R., *Discours de la méthode*, Vrin, Paris, 1930; Frey, R., *Interests and Rights: The Case against Animals*, Oxford, University Press, Oxford, 1980; Leahy, M., *Against Liberation: Putting in Animals in Perspective*, Routledge, London, 1991; Ferry, L., *Le nouvel ordre écologique: l'arbre, l'animal et l'homme*, Grasset, Paris, 1992; Narveson, J., "On a Case for Animal Rights", *The Monist*, n. 70 (1987), pp. 31-49.

⁶ Reichmann, J., *Evolution, Animal 'Rights' and the Environment*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 2000; Vidal, C., "Bioética de la experimentación con animales", *Cuadernos de Bioética*, n. 7 (1996), pp. 454-61; Harrison, P., "Theodicy and Animal Pain", *Philosophy*, n. 64 (1989), pp. 79-92.

⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254a-1256b; Ferré, F., "Moderation, Morals and Meat", *Inquiry*, n. 29 (1986), pp. 391-406; Machan, T., *Putting Humans First: Why We Are Nature's Favorite*, Rowman & Littlefield, Oxford, 2004.

II.2) *Defenses of species-linked discrimination that allude to relational factors.*

Finally, some positions have not been based on the idea that human interests are in themselves more valuable than others'. They have rather defended that we have reasons to give priority to the satisfaction of human interests because of the relation that we, as humans, have with other fellow humans. This is sometimes defended by claiming that we are emotionally tied to humans in a way in which we cannot be tied to other animals. Other examples of this kind of view appeal to possibilities for interaction, biological relations, social reproduction or our situation in the web of power relationships (as defended by Whewell, Becker, Scanlon, Gray, Benson, Wenz, Petrinovich, Goldman, Williams, or Hume).⁸ An interesting instance of this position is the one that defends the relevance of belonging to a species whose members usually have certain individual capacities (although this criterion appears to refer to individual capacities, it is ultimately defined by a certain relation: mere species membership –as defended by Scruton, White or Bookchin).⁹

3. An Assessment of the Defenses of Anthropocentrism

Once we are acquainted with the different ways in which anthropocentrism can be defended we can analyze whether or not they are justified:

3.1. An Assessment of Definitional Anthropocentrism

A merely definitional stance can be rejected since the very fact that a position of this sort is not defended by means of any further argumentation makes

⁸ Whewell, W., *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England*, London, John Parker, 1852, p. 223; Becker, L., "The Priority of Human Interests", in Miller, H. & Williams, W. (eds.), *Ethics and Animals*, Humana Press, Clifton, 1983, pp. 225-42.; Scanlon, T., *What We Owe to Each Other*, Belknap, Harvard, 1998; Gray, J., "In Defense of Speciesism", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, n. 13 (1980), pp. 22-23; Benson, J., "Duty and the Beast", *Philosophy*, n. 53 (1978), pp. 529-49; Wenz, P., *Environmental Justice*, State University of New York, Albany, 1998; Petrinovich, L., *Darwinian Dominion: Animal Welfare and Human Interests*, MIT, Massachusetts, 1999; Goldman, M., "A Transcendental Defense of Speciesism", *Journal of Value Inquiry*, n. 33 (2001), pp. 59-69; Williams, B., *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Fontana, London, 1985; Hume, D., *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978.

⁹ Scruton, R., *Animal Rights and Wrongs*, Metro, London, 1996; White, A., "Why Animals Cannot Have Rights", in Regan, T. & Singer, P. (eds.), *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1989, pp. 119-21; Bookchin, M., *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1990.

its case very weak. Since it is clearly question-begging,¹⁰ it can only be successful if everyone agrees with it, which is not the case.

As for the other defenses of anthropocentrism, we must note another difference between them. According to what we have seen, there is a clear difference concerning the kind of criteria they refer to. This has to do with whether the satisfaction of such criteria can be confirmed or not. In the case of those that appeal to individual capacities or relational factors it is possible to check up whether someone fulfills them or not. But this is not what happens when it comes to those views that allude to certain metaphysical reasons. This means that these views should be assessed separately.

3.2. An Assessment of the Defenses of Anthropocentrism Based on Individual Capacities or Relational Factors

The views that appeal to individual capacities and to relational factors have something in common. In order to be successful, the criteria on which these positions are based must meet two requirements:

- i) They have to be met by *all* those who belong to a certain species, and *only* by them
- ii) They have to be morally relevant

There are reasons to think that none of these conditions will be met by any of these criteria. Two arguments deny this possibility. The *argument from species overlap*¹¹ proves that the first condition cannot be fulfilled. The *argument from relevance* reaches a similar conclusion as regards the second one.

¹⁰ As shown in Plumwood, V. & Routley, R., "Against the Inevitability of Human Chauvinism", in Elliot, Robert (ed.), *Environmental Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989, pp. 104-28.

¹¹ This argument has often been called the "argument from marginal cases." Such denomination, whose introduction is due to one of the defenders of anthropocentrism, Jan Narveson, seems very inappropriate. It means taking as a reference a taxon of human being we would match in a higher or lesser degree. Those who fell beyond the limits set as paradigmatic would be called "marginal." The term "marginal cases" would accordingly refer to those humans that do not meet the paradigm of what is considered to be a "normal" human being. Since that stereotype of human would be defined by the possession of certain abilities which are taken as characteristic of such standard, those that lack them would be the "marginal" ones. This not only means forgetting that the argument also applies when it comes to relations rather than individual capacities. It also forgets the very reason why the argument is presented in the first place, which is to remember that the possession of certain capacities cannot be identified with membership to a certain species. Narveson, J., "Animal Rights", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, n. 7 (1977), pp. 161-78.

a) *The argument from species overlap.* This argument shows that there are humans that fail to fulfill the mentioned criteria, either by lacking certain abilities or by failing to satisfy the needed relational requirements. Let us consider first those criteria that appeal to a certain individual ability (such as, for instance, intellectual capacities, linguistic command or the possibility for having moral or legal responsibilities or duties). There are a number of humans who do not have such capacities. This is the case of those with certain intellectual disabilities or babies (that is, all humans at the beginning of their lives). But (although this has been largely forgotten by the theorists that have dealt with this question) similar conclusions can be drawn in the case of the appeal to relational factors (such as emotional links, possibilities for interaction or social relations). There are many humans to whom nobody is emotionally attached. It might be argued that humans have a universal emotional link between them, i. e., that all humans are fond of the rest of the humanity. However, although some may well have such feelings, it is not difficult to verify that they are not unanimously held by all humans: there are many who do not love all the other members of their species. Besides, we have no possibilities for interaction with most human beings. Just as there are some who may be excluded from social membership. They will be discriminated against if we consider such criteria morally relevant.

In light of this, this argument can be formulated as follows:

1. We must justify our moral decisions on the basis of reasons that are valid in a universalizable way.
2. It is justified to discriminate against nonhuman animals that can feel suffering and welfare on the basis that they do not meet a certain criterion *C* (where *C* may stand for the possession of certain cognitive or linguistic abilities, the possibility for having duties, or relational circumstances such as the fact of having emotional links with us or social membership or reproduction, among others requirements,).
3. It is justified to discriminate against those humans that can feel suffering and welfare that do not meet a certain criterion *C*.

According to this, there are two possible ways in which we may proceed regarding the criteria that have been maintained so far to discriminate against nonhuman animals:

- a) We can still maintain them. This means that we will defend discrimination both against nonhumans and against those humans that do not meet the mentioned requirements.
- b) We can reject them, which implies discarding that all these human and nonhuman beings can be used as resources in the described manner.

Some replies have been given to this argument (by theorists such as Paske, Nozick, Francis & Norman, Paton, Anderson, Devine, Dworkin, Rawls or Krebs).¹² These have been examined, and none of them have been found to be successful. Some of them simply refuse to actually assess what the argument presents and therefore either beg the question or turn back to a definitional stance. This is the case of those responses that claim that this argument does not take into account the specialness of being human. Other replies fail to accept that there are no differences between humans as regard the aforementioned criteria, which means departing from a false premise. Finally, others try to introduce some sort of proviso which may grant that all humans will be considered (by claiming, for instance, that we have a duty to act in a benevolent manner toward all humans). Such responses fail to distinguish between humans and nonhumans: no justification is given of why humans, but not other animals, should be given such benevolent treatment. Their argumentation is thus circular.

b) The argument from relevance. This argument is instrumental in discovering what we should take into account in those decisions that we can define as moral, and who should thus be considered. It points out that for any question there are some circumstances that are relevant and others that are not. According to this, we can postulate the idea that every justified differentiation must be based on a factor that is relevant for the distinction it draws. *If* we accept this principle, then, in the same way, we will have to conclude that only the criteria that are morally relevant

¹² See Paske, G., "In Defense of Human 'Chauvinism': A Response to R. Routley and V. Routley", *Journal of Value Inquiry*, n. 25 (1991), pp. 279-86; Nozick, R., *Socratic Puzzles*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 305-10; Francis, L. & Norman, R., "Some Animals Are more Equal than Others", *Philosophy*, n. 53 (1978), pp. 507-27; Rodman, J., "The Liberation of Nature?", *Inquiry*, n. 20 (1977), pp. 83-131; Paton, W., *Man and Mouse*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984; Anderson, E., "Animal Rights and the Values of Nonhuman Life", in Sunstein, C. & Nussbaum, M. (eds.), *Animal Rights, Current Debates and New Directions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, pp. 277-98; Devine, P., "The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism", *Philosophy*, n. 53, (1978), pp. 481-505; Dworkin, R., *Life's Dominion: An Argument about Abortion and Euthanasia*, Harper Collins, London, 1993; Rawls, J., *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1971; Krebs, A. *Ethics of Nature*, de Gruyter, Berlin, 1999.

can originate moral differentiations. Given this premise, the argument goes as follows:

1. Any morally justified differentiation must be based in a criterion that is relevant for it being drawn.
2. Neither features such as linguistic abilities or intellectual complexity, nor relational circumstances such as having certain emotional links with others are what determines that someone can suffer harm or enjoy benefits.
3. Therefore, in such decisions in which what it is at stake is whether someone may suffer a harm or enjoy a benefit, a justified differentiation cannot be made on the basis of features such as linguistic abilities or intellectual complexity, or relational circumstances such as having certain emotional links with others.

When it comes to deciding how our actions can affect others and ourselves in a positive or negative way, it seems that only what will be derived from those actions must be relevant.¹³ Now, circumstances such as being emotionally related to someone are not what determines whether we can be subjects with the ability to experience benefits or harms. Neither do other factors such as the possession of abilities such as rationality, using a language or the possibility of having moral or legal responsibilities. These capacities may determine that we be harmed or benefited in a particular way, but they are not necessary conditions for being harmed or benefited in absolute terms. Therefore, features such as these are not relevant in those decisions that have to do with the way in which that very decision will affect others and ourselves. Of course, we do not need to accept this conclusion if we do not assume the premises on which the argument is based. But that means rejecting that when we have to make a decision we have to take into account what would be derived from such decision, which, in moral terms, means taking into account how those who will be affected by our moral decisions (ourselves and others) will be harmed or benefited by them.¹⁴

¹³ See Bernstein, M., *On Moral Considerability: An Essay on Who Morally Matters*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

¹⁴ Note that this argument does not imply accepting any particular conception of the good, accepting only a formal view of harm and benefit as relevant. In particular, it does not assume a hedonist stance, nor an eudaimonist one. Besides, it is compatible both with a subjectivist and an objectivist viewpoint. Suppose we adopt a perspective centred on the satisfaction or frustration of preferences rather than on the objective experience of something positive or negative. In that case, for our theory to be plausible we must hold that every time we have any of these experiences we develop a

This argument shows, therefore, that only the capacity for having positive and negative experiences appears to satisfy the requirement for relevance. In fact, we have good reasons to consider that having this capacity is a criterion both necessary and sufficient for being morally considered. Hence, if this was an ability that all humans and no other animal had, then it would certainly provide an adequate justification for anthropocentrism. However, this does not seem to be the case:

i) Firstly, there are some humans that fail to satisfy it (recall the argument from species overlap).

ii) Secondly, many nonhuman animals do satisfy it (as theorists such as Dawkins, Griffin, Rollin or Robinson have argued).¹⁵ There is a strong cumulative argument based on behavior, evolutionary logic and, particularly, physiology, to conclude that this is the case. The charge of anthropomorphism against this conclusion actually back-fires. For the claim that all the expressions of suffering and welfare have to be human-like has no good reason to support it and seems certainly anthropomorphic itself.

3.3. An Assessment of the Defenses of Anthropocentrism Based on Metaphysical Criteria Whose Satisfaction Is Not Open to Corroboration

Finally, there are some defenses of anthropocentrism that are based on the idea that humans have a particular status which makes them ontologically superior. This would be so due to their possession of a certain property such as “dignity” or another similar one. There are two problems with this line of reasoning:

i) The presence of such alleged properties (or other similar conditions which determine the possession of some privileged status) cannot be discovered anywhere. They cannot be identified with any individual capacity (otherwise, there would be humans who would lack them). The available evidences actually indicate

preference for it to continue or stop. Given this, the criterion for being harmed or benefited according to a theory based on preferences will be the same as the one defended by an objectivist theory.

¹⁵ Dawkins, M., *Animal Suffering*, Chapman and Hall, New York, 1980; and “From an Animal’s Point of View: Motivation, Fitness, and Animal Welfare”, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, n. 13 (1990), pp. 1-61; Griffin, D., *Animal Thinking*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1984; and *Animal Minds*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1992; Rollin, B., *The Unheeded Cry: Animal Consciousness, Animal Pain and Science*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989; Robinson, W., “Some Nonhuman Animals Can Have Pains in a Morally Relevant Sense”, *Biology and Philosophy*, n. 12 (1997), pp. 51-71.

that there is no such property that distinguishes humans from nonhumans and thus no rational belief can bear out such a view.

ii) There is no consensus concerning the kind of solution that should be given to this question, not only between different religions (consider Jainism), but often also between those who share some common religious beliefs. For instance, among Western theologians, although many have denied any consideration to nonhuman animals, others have defended the opposite view.¹⁶ And something similar happens in the case of the defense of anthropocentrism from a metaphysical viewpoint. All this clearly undermines the plausibility of a position of this sort. This is also an interesting point because it means that those who do not accept anthropocentrism do not have to deny their religious or metaphysical beliefs in order to maintain such a position.

4. Speciesism

Rebuttals to the defences of moral distinctions on the basis of sex or ethnic descent led to the coining of terms such as sexism and racism. In line with this, the failure of the defences of anthropocentrism suggests the existence of what could be described as a speciesist attitude towards those who do not belong to the human species. We could define speciesism as *a discrimination against those who are not members of a certain species*.¹⁷ This characterization is informed by the meaning that the aforementioned expressions ('racism', 'sexism'...) generally receive. They are used in such a way that they do not only refer to discriminations on the basis of ethnic features or sex alone. If someone claims that women, or, say, orientals, should not be considered equally by arguing that they are mentally inferior, that would be (nowadays) defined as sexism or racism. Whether this is accurate or not, it seems that it must be the reference for a proper definition of speciesism. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that this definition only depicts as speciesist those species-related moral differentiations that are unjustified. If a distinction between members of different species is justified it would not be considered speciesist according to it.¹⁸

¹⁶ Contrast the theological defenses of anthropocentrism with the views in Linzey, A., *Animal Theology*, SCM Press, London, 1994; or Fuchs, S., "Enhancing the Divine Image", in Armstrong, S. & Botzler, R., *The Animal Ethics Reader*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 224-26.

¹⁷ Discrimination can be defined as *an unjustified disadvantageous differential consideration of someone's interests*.

¹⁸ Surely the most common type of speciesism is its anthropocentric version. Nonetheless, speciesism can also discrimination against individuals who are members of species other than the human one (as pointed out in Dunayer, J., *Speciesism*, Ryce, Derwood, 2004, p. 5). Speciesism is not a

Other points to clarify concerning what is speciesism are the following ones:

i) Firstly, it is not the species,¹⁹ but the individuals who are members of them, that are discriminated against by speciesism (as it has been pointed out by Linzey and Johnson).²⁰ There is a common confusion regarding this point. This may be due to linguistic expression (as we sometimes refer to 'species' in an irreflective way when we want to mean its members). Often, however, this also shows what seems to be an anthropocentric bias by virtue of which nonhuman animals usually are considered not as individuals but as mere live exemplifications of a species.

ii) Secondly, speciesism should not be confused with the acknowledgment that animals of different species have different needs (something which seems somehow obvious).²¹ There is no reason why different needs should imply different consideration in the sense of *less* consideration.

5. Conclusion

Currently, issues affecting nonhuman animals are usually considered unworthy of significant attention within the field of bioethics; thus, they are not properly examined.

synonym of anthropocentrism (*pace* Ryder, R., *Victims of Science: The Use of Animals in Research*, Davis-Poynter, London, 1975, p. 5; Waldau, P., *The Specter of Speciesism: Buddhist and Christian Views of Animals*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 38). It will be speciesist if we arbitrarily decide to take into account the interests of, say, birds, and fail to do so when other animals' interests are at stake (contrast with this the view expressed in Hettinger, E., "The Responsible Use of Animals in Biomedical Research", in Miller, H. & Williams, W. (eds.), *Ethics and Animals*, Humana Press, Clifton, 1983, pp. 115-27). As a matter of fact, when we analyze the various forms of moral differentiation between nonhuman beings, we can discover that, even if not strictly anthropocentric, they seem to have their root in an anthropocentric attitude (see for instance Bekoff, M., "Deep Ethology, Animal Rights, and the Great Ape/Animal Project: Resisting Speciesism and Expanding the Community of Equals", *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, n. 10 (1998), pp. 269-96). The reason to consider this is not only that they include within its realm those nonhuman animals whose characteristics resemble those that are commonly regarded as typically human, but also that they are based on the same criteria that are usually referred to by those who intend to justify anthropocentrism.¹ Therefore, there are reasons to believe that such views are the result of what we can characterize as a sort of *extended anthropocentrism*.

¹⁹ It could be claimed that the definition of 'species' involves different problems. However, this is not the question we are dealing with here (but see Dupré, J., *Humans and Other Animals*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2002).

²⁰ Linzey, A., "Speciesism", in Linzey, A. & Clarke, P. (eds.), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 788-91; or Johnson, E., "Animal Liberation against the Land Ethic", *Environmental Ethics*, n. 4, (1981), pp. 265-73.

²¹ But see Midgley, M., *Animals and Why They Matter*, University Georgia Press, Athens, 1983, pp. 98-99.

But, as we have seen, there are no sound grounds for this attitude. All the defenses of anthropocentrism have been found to be unsuccessful. Anthropocentrism must thus be rejected as an unacceptable position. The idea that humans must be favored over other sentient beings irrespectively of whether their interests are more significant must be considered a speciesist one. In light of this, it seems that the current double standard to consider human and nonhuman interests is no longer tenable.

Bioethics should not be biased. Hence, it should not take into account species membership as a reason to consider which topics are important, let alone the way in which they are appraised.