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The Role of Animal Reason in Hume's Ethics²

Abstract

Hume's anti-rationalist tendencies towards moral issues can be seen in the parts of his books allotted to animals. However, the problem considering animal reason has not been examined in detail by Hume's interpreters; I think the deficiencies in both his observations and his poor analogies cause this lack of interest. In this paper I want to argue with Hume's view of morality in respect to animals for doing so provides great insight into both Hume's examination of the dominance of reason and his naturalism. Hume uses animals both for stating his theory about reason and for his moral theory. It is assumed in this paper that his assertion to show that morality does not come from relations — therefore reason — fails to be persuasive due to the poor design and choice of his analogy.

Key Words

Hume, moral philosophy, reason, animal, analogy.

Hume'un Ahlak Felsefesinde Hayvan Zihninin Rolü

Özet

David Hume'un ahlakta akılcılık karşıtı eğilimleri kitaplarında hayvan zihnine ve doğasına değindiği bölümlerde de yer almaktadır. Hume'un hayvan zihni ve doğası hakkındaki görüşleri yorumcuları tarafından ayrıntılı bir şekilde yeterince incelenmemiştir. Hume'un hayvan zihni konusundaki gözlemlerinin yetersizliği ve kıyaslarının zayıf olması yorumcuların ilgisizliğinde etkindir. Hume'un ahlak anlayışı hayvan zihni doğrultusunda tartışılacaktır. Böylelikle Hume'un aklın egemenliği ve tabiatçılık konularındaki etkinliği de anlaşılacaktır. Hume hayvanları hem zihni açıklarken hem de ahlak teorisinde kullanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Hume'un hayvan zihni ve doğasından yola çıkarak kıyaslamalarla ulaştığı ahlakın akılcı çıkarımlardan kaynaklanmadığı iddiasının ikna edicilikten uzak, zayıf kıyaslarla ortaya konduğu gösterilecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Hume, ahlak felsefesi, akıl, hayvan, analogi.

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1. A Brief Examination of Animal Reason and its Moral Status

Hume is commonly interpreted as naturalist in his moral understanding and he is known as an anti-rationalist philosopher. He aims to state the position of reason and sentiment in morality. However, in doing this he does not eliminate the ambiguity regarding the meaning of reason in his philosophy. Hume places the rationality of human and animal in his new science of man. He has two aims: first to state his theory about reason, and second, to emphasize his moral theory with respect to animal reason. It is a commonplace of Hume's period that an account of human nature has to distinguish the nature of humans from animals. Hume discusses the issue by similarities and differences between animals and humans.

Animal nature has been an important criterion for defining the place of human in nature. Locating humanity in its place of prominence is usually done by comparison and contrast with other things in nature, especially between human and animal. It is common to use phrases such as "talking animal", "thinking animal", or "tool using animal". Dating back to ancient times the moral tradition distinguishes between the moral and legal standing of animals and humans based on their capacity for reason.

Pythagoras is mainly accepted as the first philosopher to defend animal rights. It is reported in much of the writings about Pythagoras that once when he was present at the beating of a puppy; he pitied it and said "Stop! Cease your beating, because this is really the soul of a man who was my friend: I recognized, it as I heard it cry aloud" (Owens, 1959: 31). Indeed this paragraph is between the original fragments of Xenophanes of Colophon³ but it is claimed to be said by Pythagoras by most interpreters. It is probable that he advises respect for animals, not in the sense of today's understanding of moral status but because he believes in the transmigration of souls between humans and animals. He asserts that since the souls can transmigrate from human to animal people should not kill animals. He is known to have rejected eating animal foods. It is not easy to know whether Pythagoras' theory of transmigration of souls causes his defence of animal rights or vice versa. In any case, it is assumed that he is the one who advocates animal rights in ancient time.

Aristotle is mentioned as defining human as rational animal, he states the difference as: "Nonhuman animals live by appearances and memories but have little share in experience, whereas human beings also live by craft and reasoning" (1995: 221) he differentiates human due to attaining science in the following sentences as: "Experience seems to be quite like science and craft, and indeed human beings attain science and craft through experience" (Ibid). For him only humans have intellect and reason to fulfil happiness he regards "neither ox nor horse nor any other kind of animal as happy, since none of them can share in this sort of activity. And for the same reason a child is not happy either, since his age prevents him from doing these sorts of actions" (Ibid, 361). On the other hand, one of Aristotle's students Theophrastus defends that animal can reason, sense and feel like humans do after stating how pain and pleasure happen without distinction of any kind of creatures he writes "For from these have all things been fittingly conjoined, and by their means do creatures think and have delight

³ For the original fragment look part 21 in *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* by Kathleen Freeman, 1948.

and suffer grief" (Stratton, 1917: 75). It is reported by interpreters that he abstains from eating meat. In the *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare* it is underlined that "Unlike his teacher Aristotle, who held that animals could not form part of the moral community because they were incapable of rational friendship, Theophrastus maintained that animals enjoy kinship with humans and therefore deserve moral solicitude." (Bekoff and Meaney, 1998: 333). He is interpreted as modern because of his view that "we owe animals justice, and also that it is wrong to sacrifice animals and, explicitly, to eat meat." (Ibid)

Aristotle's position — that humans are rational and animals not; thus their moral status is different — is more commonly accepted. Under the impact of Aristotle and Christianity St. Thomas Aquinas writes "But although every animal moves itself by its appetites, animals other than human beings do not have free choice. Other animals do not have free choice because an external cause, namely, the power of a heavenly body or the action of another material substance, moves their appetites" (2003: 253). Bekoff and Meaney state that he "held that in the created hierarchy that God had made animals were the intellectual inferiors of humans and were made essentially for human use" (1998: 286). It is also assumed by commentators that Thomas Aquinas thinks that we should be charitable to animals in order not to carry cruel habits over into our behaviour towards human beings.

Descartes believes that animals are mere automata and lack all mental capacity. According to him, animals' acts are instinctual, natural and mechanical. His views on animals depend on two criteria the first one depends on the lack of capacity in forming language he contends that:

I paused here in particular in order to show that, if there were such machines having the organs and the shape of a monkey or of some other animal that lacked reason, we would have no way of recognizing that they were not entirely of the same nature as these animals; whereas, if there were any such machines that bore a resemblance to our bodies and imitated our actions as far as this is practically feasible, we would always have two very certain means of recognizing that they were not at all, for that reason, true men. (Ariew, 2000: 72)

In the following paragraph he continues:

The second means is that, although they might perform many tasks very well or perhaps better than any of us, such machines would inevitably fail in other tasks; by this means one would discover that they were acting, not through knowledge, but only through the disposition of their organs. For while reason is a universal instrument that can be of help in all sorts of circumstances, these organs require some particular disposition for each particular action; consequently, it is for all practical purposes impossible for there to be enough different organs in a machine to make it act in all the contingencies of life in the same way as our reason makes us act. (Ibid)

Consequently he assumes that

the fact that they do something better than we do does not prove that they have any intelligence; for were that the case, they would have more of it than any of us and would excel us in everything. But rather it proves that they have no intelligence at all, and that it is nature that acts in them, according to the

disposition of their organs just as we see that a clock composed exclusively of wheels and springs can count the hours and measure time more accurately than we can with all our carefulness. (Ibid, 73)

Therefore generally “the denial of consciousness is associated with René Descartes, who argued that animals were strictly material bodies, obeying the laws of mechanical physics.” (Bekoff and Meaney, 24).

Kant accepts that animals are perfectly designed, but they lack reason. According to him they have no moral status since they do not act according the principles of freedom under law. Kant states:

If we turn our attention to the analogy of the nature of living beings in this world, in the consideration of which reason is obliged to accept as a principle that no organ, no faculty, no appetite is useless, and that nothing is superfluous, nothing disproportionate to its use, nothing unsuited to its end; but that, on the contrary, everything is perfectly conformed to its destination in life--we shall find that man, who alone is the final end and aim of this order, is still the only animal that seems to be excepted from it. (Kant, 1952: 127)

He also writes:

Among the living inhabitants of the earth, man is markedly different from all other creatures, because of his technical gift for manipulating things (mechanically connected with consciousness), his pragmatic gift (being clever in the use of others for his own purposes), and his moral gift of character (so that he can act toward himself and others according to the principle of freedom under the law). Any one of these three levels can by itself alone distinguish man characteristically from other inhabitants of this earth (Kant, and Van De Pitte, 1978: 238)

Bekoff and Meaney write “Immanuel Kant viewed animals as without self-consciousness and thereby declared them to be inherently unworthy of moral concern.” (1998: 20) According to their view

The rights view takes Kant's position a step further than Kant himself. The rights view maintains that those animals raised to be eaten and used in laboratories, for example, should be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means. Indeed, like humans, these animals have a basic moral right to be treated with respect, something we fail to do whenever we use our superior physical strength and general know-how to inflict harms on them in pursuit of benefits for humans. (Ibid, 42–43).

In time, however, the subject of the placement of humans with respect to animals in terms of reason and the soul has entered a different phase; today to think or write about animals is for the sake of animals. There has been a movement towards animal rights.

It is generally accepted that Jeremy Bentham brings a new perspective to the issue from a utilitarian point. Bentham's new perspective depends on the capacity to

feel pain rather than to reason. He argues that the ability to suffer should be taken as the central point of the problem. He assumes that if we accept the ability to reason as the sole criterion of our behaviour, this would result in applying the same attitude applied to animals towards many people who have mental problems. Hume also points out this problem. For him, because of the reason-criterion most people treat babies and idiots like animals and this is a fault⁴. Bentham offers a change of perspective from “reason” to “suffering”:

What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason?, nor Can they talk? but, *Can they suffer?* (Bentham, 1996: 283, footnote).

He asks humanity to broaden its limits to protect any sensitive being which breathes. Humanity's concern with the rights of animals especially came to a prominence in 1970s. The problem regarding animals has reappeared as whether the moral status of animals is necessarily inferior to that of human beings. Richard Ryder used the phrase “speciesism”. (Ryder, 2005). He uses this term in discussing definitions of value which aim to benefit the members of only a single special species. Steven Wise claims that in order to avoid speciesism “we must identify some objective, rational, legitimate, and nonarbitrary quality possessed by every *Homo sapiens* that is possessed by no nonhuman that should entitle all of us” (2004: 27). When Peter Singer holds that all animals are equal he is “urging that we extend to other species the basic principle of equality that most of us recognise should be extended to all members of our own species.”(2007: 167).

2. Hume's Evaluation of Animal Reason

David Hume discusses animal reason in *A Treatise of Human Nature Book 1*, their moral status in *Book 2* and *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Firstly, I will mention the definition of reason by focusing on its functions stated in Hume's theory. In *Treatise Book 1* Hume divides human reason into three as:

From knowledge, from proofs, and from probabilities. By knowledge, I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas. By proofs, those arguments, which are deriv'd from the relation of cause and effect, and which are entirely free from doubt and uncertainty. By probability, that evidence, which is still attended with uncertainty. (THN, 1, 124).

⁴ In THN 177 Hume calls this fault as “the common defect of those systems”.

However in *Book 3* he claims reason “is the discovery of truth or falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the *real* relations of ideas, or to *real* existence and matter of fact” (THN, 3, 458). After this definition, he underlines two ways how reason has influence on human conduct:

It has been observ'd, that reason, in a strict and philosophical sense, can have influence on our conduct only after two ways: Either when it excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it; or when it discovers the connexion of causes and effects, so as to afford us means of exerting any passion (THN, 3, 459).

Hume means causal inferences when he uses the term “reason” or “understanding,” hence reason is the faculty of reasoning. It is commonly accepted to name these two functions of reason as demonstrative and non-demonstrative. The former is for discovering the relations of ideas and the latter one is for discovering the matters of facts and causal reasoning.⁵ He assigns no demonstrative function to reason in animals.⁶ According to Hume the reason of animals is of the second type which depends on experience.⁷ He thinks most animals can understand (here understanding refers to recognizing the experiences) and can make simple causal inferences. However there is a difference in capacities of the two groups. Human capacity of intelligence stems mostly from experience, memory and causal inference which, therefore, is greater than the animals. He states:

In all these cases, we may observe, that the animal infers some fact beyond what immediately strikes his senses; and that this inference is altogether founded on past experience, while the creature expects from the present object the same consequences, which it has always found in its observation to result from similar objects. (THN, 1, 176, EHU, 105-106).

According to Hume it is an evident truth that animals have thoughts and reason just like human being and he says in *Of Animals and Reasons*:

⁵ Hume uses the terms as “demonstrative or probable reasonings” for the dual function of reason in THN, 1, 163. In the following pages he defines reason as “nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations.” THN, 1, 179. Also in EHU he writes “ALL the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, Relations of Ideas, and Matters of Fact.” EHU, 25.

⁶ In THN, 1, 178 Hume notes that “Beasts certainly never perceive any real connexion among objects”.

⁷ First, it seems evident, that animals as well as men learn many things from experience, and infer that the same events will always follow from the same causes. By this principle they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and gradually, from their birth, treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, &c., and of the effects which result from their operation. EHU, 105.

Next to the ridicule of denying an evident truth, is that of taking much pains to defend it; and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endow'd with thought and reason as well as men. The arguments are in this case so obvious, that they never escape the most stupid and ignorant. (THN, 1, 176, EHU, 105-106).

He holds that animals can understand and reason but at an inferior level. His main point in defence of this idea concerns self preservation which is mainly shaped by keeping away from pain and attaining pleasure. He declares that our actions for reaching ends are conducted by reason and we are conscious of this. Therefore he assumes that other creatures that are performing similar actions, and directed by similar ends, make us believe the existence of a similar cause. He thinks:

The resemblance betwixt the actions of animals and those of men is so entire in this respect, that the very first action of the first animal we shall please to pitch on, will afford us an incontestable argument for the present doctrine. (THN, 1, 176, EHU, 105-106).

He is sure about the resemblance between the actions of animals and human beings and tries to prove this with simple observations. Moreover, he makes some derivations from his observations. He holds that if our external actions are similar to those of animals, then their internal actions are similar, too. Therefore, he assumes if our internal actions resemble each other, then the causes will resemble each other also because the causes provide the actions. So the causes which are derived from the same reasons should also resemble each other. Thus, when explaining common mental operations of human beings and animals the same hypothesis would be applied to both.

When any hypothesis, therefore, is advanced to explain a mental operation, which is common to men and beasts, we must apply the same hypothesis to both; and as every true hypothesis will abide this trial, so I may venture to affirm, that no false one will ever be able to endure it (THN, 1, 177).

He constructs analogies between humans and animals in order to state the similarities both in their nature and in the method of explaining their nature. It is obvious that the resemblance of our external actions may be a clue about our internal actions, however the claim of applying the same hypothesis to the both, implies some implicit assumptions. I argue that there is no observation which can provide us with the undeniable assumption that where there is a similarity in the external process of a mechanism there should be a similarity in their inner action also. Besides, as Beauchamp also underlines, Hume's explanations about moral judgement depends on an "internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal" (EPM, 173) in humankind. It is only by this internal sense that approval or disapproval of actions can be made. However, for Beauchamp, he thinks animals lack this internal sense, which is the "principle of humanity" (EPM, 272) and "the foundation of morality" (EPM, 273). However, his derivations depend on finding the similarities of both external and internal actions. Hume himself shows the distinction in internal sense; so his assertion that we can apply same hypothesis to humans and animals fails.

Among Hume's interpreters there is debate as to whether Hume positions animals and humans in the same scale with only a difference of degree or he considers they have a difference of kind. For Hume, many philosophical explanations suffer from the fault of being so overly sophisticated that they "exceed the capacity"⁸ of not only animals, but also "children and the common people in our own species"⁹. He asserts that philosophers are making "the same fault" regarding the actions of the mind when considering animals. In order to avoid this fault he makes a distinction between "vulgar nature" and "nature which includes extra-ordinary instances of sagacity" (THN, 1, 177). For the vulgar nature, he gives the example of a dog's avoiding fire, escaping from strangers and yards, and caring for his master. He exemplifies the second kind of nature with a bird's choosing a suitable place and materials for her nest, and sitting upon her eggs for a due time, in a suitable season, comparing this with a chemist taking all the necessary precautions of their trade (THN, 1, 177). He claims that the reasoning of the vulgar nature of animals is not different from that of human nature. They are both founded on the same principles which require the presence of the immediate impressions on their memory or senses. The foundation of both judgements is those impressions. Hume holds that the difference concerning causal inference, which is a function of reason, between human and animals, is one of "degrees of the same faculty," which, according to him, "sets such an infinite difference betwixt one man and another." (THN, 3, 610). On the other hand, the difference concerning demonstrative reason is not a matter of degree. T. L. Beauchamp contends that Hume does not attribute animals with any degree of demonstrative knowledge or any ability to extend their thoughts and imagination through past and future. He holds that from Humean perspective humans are unique in culture, politics, law, and religion. From these dissimilarities he assumes that Hume draws a line separating humans from animals and for him this indicates that "there exist specific differences in kind, not merely differences in degree" in his system. He contends that: "Hume must hold a weaker position than he would if he could carry his degree-of-difference analysis into the moral domain" (Beauchamp, 1999: 327).

Making analogies is a common method especially if one cannot conduct experiments regarding the subject-matter directly. Besides this, analogy is sometimes used to strengthen an assumed supposition. In fact, arguments about analogy still continue to this day: some thinkers argue that argument by analogy is especially useful in "inductive logic" (P.R. Wilson, 1964: 34);¹⁰ whereas some ignore or dismiss it out of hand (Mario Bunge, 1960: 265).¹¹ Wilson mentions in his article that "those who do

⁸ In EHU page 108 Hume writes: But though animals learn many parts of their knowledge from observation, there are also many parts of it, which they derive from the original hand of nature; which much exceed the share of capacity they possess on ordinary occasions; and in which they improve, little or nothing, by the longest practice and experience.

⁹ He also mentions in same book page 106 that: Animals, therefore are not guided in these inferences by reasoning: neither are children; neither are the generality of mankind, in their ordinary actions and conclusions: neither are philosophers themselves, who, in all the active parts of life, are, in the main, the same with the vulgar, and are governed by the same maxims.

¹⁰ See P.R. Wilson, "On the Argument by Analogy" *Philosophy of Science*, 31: 34-39, 1964.

¹¹ See Mario Bunge "The place of induction in science" *Philosophy of Science*, 27: 262-270, 1960 and "Analogy in Quantum Theory: From Insight to Nonsense", *Philosophy of Science*,

discuss the problem generally create the impression that the argument by analogy is not only logically unsound but almost intellectually dishonest, since it appeals to the emotions rather than the mind" (Wilson, 1964, 34). This paper does not intend to discuss the overall question of the usefulness or legitimacy of analogies, except to say that analogies are sometimes helpful to clarify issues even though some argue against the worth of analogy as a methodological tool. Meiland asserts that analogy can be a useful method "under carefully defined conditions". Furthermore it is held by him that "the argument from analogy" cannot be assumed to be usable with every type of subject-matter." He states that:

One must take some conclusions concerning that subject-matter which do seem to be rendered probable by the existence of some analogy in each case and directly verify those conclusions. Once this is done, the argument form can be justifiably regarded as usable with respect to that subject-matter (Meiland, 1966: 564).

Therefore for Meiland, if analogy is acceptable as a method one should at least follow two criteria to set a reliable argument from analogy which means it should not be arbitrary.

3. Hume on the Moral Status of Animal

Following the lead of Norman Kemp Smith, most interpreters have emphasized Hume's naturalism more than his empiricism. From a naturalist perspective, I hold, deriving strong analogies from the animal world can be very important and persuading. So Hume's appeal to analogies from the animal world is at least plausible in his system. However, the analogies which Hume points out from animal world regarding the relation between reason and morality are really not very persuasive and sometimes verge on the bizarre. Take, for instance, Hume's analogy between parricides in humans and "parricide" in trees, which he chooses in order to show that morality is not derived from relations. He writes:

To put the affair, therefore, to this trial, let us chuse any inanimate object, such as an oak or elm; and let us suppose, that by the dropping of its seed, it produces a sapling below it, which springing up by degrees, at last overtops and destroys the parent tree: I ask, if in this instance there be wanting any relation, which is discoverable in parricide or ingratitude? Is not the one tree the cause of the other's existence; and the latter the cause of the destruction of the former, in the same manner as when a child murders his parent? 'Tis not sufficient to reply, that a choice or will is wanting. For in the case of parricide, a will does not give rise to any different relations, but is only the cause from which the action is deriv'd; and consequently produces the same relations, that in the oak or elm arise from some other principles. 'Tis a will or choice that determines a man to kill his parent; and they are the laws of matter and motion that determine a sapling to destroy the oak, from which it sprung. Here then the same relations have different causes; but still the relations are the same: And as their discovery is not in both cases attended

1968, 18: 265-286. His aim in his paper is mentioned in the first page as to discard the thesis that "scientific interpretation and explanation are essentially analogical."

with a notion of immorality, it follows, that that notion does not arise from such a discovery. (THN, 3, 467).

Here, the problem of poor analogy is revealed explicitly. What matters in an analogy is how well the analogy mirrors the facts. Here, Hume constructs an analogy between the relation of fathers and siblings, on the one hand, and trees and seeds, on the other. Hume takes the seed falling from a tree as the sibling of that tree, and equates the deterioration of the parent tree as the seedling grows up to a murderous act perpetrated by the seed. He constructs an analogy between the tree-seed and the father-sibling relationship calling them the “very same act.” The two relations that are compared are the natural death of the tree as its seed grows up and the sibling’s intentionally killing his father. I think it is obviously seen that, if an analogy is made between tree-seed and father-sibling relationship, it should be between the father gradually growing old and dying while the child grows up, rather than any deliberate killing of the father by the child.¹² He uses this analogy to prove that we do not derive moral rules from relations. I contend that his assertion to show that morality does not come from relations depends on this weak analogy. Therefore his assertion fails to be persuasive due to the poor design and choice of his analogy.

Hume is aware of the vicious circle of reason; still he wants to show that morality is neither the discovery nor the production of reason, via an analogy between inbreeding in dogs and incest among humans. He uses this analogy in order to show that if we assume that we can discover morality from actions by our reason we should conclude a similar definition of morality in animals for the same actions in them. He argues in *Treatise*:

But to chuse an instance, still more resembling; I would fain ask any one, why incest in the human species is criminal, and why the very same action and the same relations in animals have not the smallest moral turpitude and deformity? If it be answer'd, that this action is innocent in animals, because they have not reason sufficient to discover its turpitude; but that man, being endow'd with that faculty which ought to restrain him to his duty, the same action instantly becomes criminal to him; should this be said, I would reply, that this is evidently arguing in a circle (THN, 3, 467).

I claim that the analogy which Hume uses between animal incest and human incest is also weak. With regard to this issue, Stephen R. L. Clark argues that Hume’s incest argument is “open to rebuttal” (1985: 117). According to him it is so poor that most commentators skip it in silence. First of all Hume makes an error by asserting that the inbreeding of dogs is “the very same act” as incest in humans.¹³ He states:

If “animal incest” and “human incest” are acts of same kind, then they are equally evil, or equally indifferent. To disapprove of the act when done by dogs would be

¹² Moreover, I think there is no causal relation at the third level of causal power in the case of the sapling and tree.

¹³ I think this assumption also disproves Beauchamp’s assertion of the difference in kind. What is implied by “the very same act” shows no difference in kind.

as silly as approving of assault when performed by whites but not when performed by blacks.

What is more; if we accept these acts as the very same kind, there is still a mistake regarding analogies of the relations from the perspective of humans. Hume has two classes to compare; animals and humans, the relation is the incest, and the result of incest is evaluated by humans. Hume is standing in the human class and judging in another class. However, he should look at the animal class to evaluate what kind of responses is given by animals to incest, in order to state whether animals approve or disapprove it. At this point, it is worth mentioning the study of Jane Goodall and her well-known research on the behaviours of chimpanzees. After thirty years with the chimpanzees of Gombe, she wrote her experiences regarding them. In her book she mentions incest and shows that even chimpanzees abstain from it. She reports:

This led to the most extraordinary series of incidents; Goblin, who was now nineteen years old, suddenly evinced an incestuous sexual interest in his mother.... One day... Goblin approached Melissa and summoned her with vigorous shaking of vegetation. She ignored him at first and then, when he persisted, she threatened him.... Melissa was beside herself with fury and, as Goblin displayed away, she stamped after him, screaming until I thought she would choke. He left then...Goblin's unnatural behaviour utterly changed the relationship between Melissa and her son....After Goblin's attempts to mate his mother, however, relations between them very strained and tense. Not only did they stop spending time together, but Melissa actually seemed to be frightened of her son (Goodall, 1991: 144).

Without making any generalizations about animals on this issue, it is nevertheless clear that while incest is not seen as evil by some animals such as dogs – Hume supposes--, still other animals, even in the wild; do not seem to approve of it. Goodall mentions some more examples one of which concerns cannibalism in chimpanzees. She writes:

Passion approached to within ten yards, then stood staring at the tiny infant. Gilka instantly began to scream loudly, looking back and forth from Passion to the big males. As though they understood what was going on, the males charged over and, one after the other, attacked Passion. (Goodall, 1991: 65).

Obviously she does not mention any obligation yet the help from males to the attacked mother against the cannibalistic assault of the other female shows that (at least some) chimpanzees do not tolerate cannibalism.

I will state one more example from *The Herring Gull's World*. Niko Tinbergen reports that: "Herring Gulls are monogamous. This monogamy is very strict indeed. We have observed several times how stray birds... tried to "seduce" already mated birds. In no case was such a bird accepted" (1971: 102) This behaviour clearly states that the animal world has its rights and wrongs in their way of understanding, of course, not in the way human do.

Also pertinent to this, Clark mentions some kinds of deformity which results from inbreeding. He quotes from Leonard Williams the deformities of inbreeding in dogs: "The small terrier is suffering from dislocation of the eye...A number of dachshunds are becoming paralysed as a result of spinal trouble, and toy poodles are prone to a slipping kneecap. All this is due to unscrupulous inbreeding" (Clark, 1985: 121).

Clark concludes from the awful results that: "inbreeding is indeed an evil" (Ibid, 121). Hume's fault is taking the actions into consideration from a human perspective which mean inbreeding in dogs is not taken into consideration. I argue that Hume could have had the right to evaluate the action from a human standpoint if he had assessed the results of action in terms of environmental concern. Hume misses these points and goes on with his assertion linking it to the degradation of reason again. He insists that before reason can perceive this turpitude, the turpitude must exist; and consequently is independent of the decisions of our reason, and is their object more properly than their effect. According to this system, then, every animal, that has sense, and appetite, and will; that is, every animal must be susceptible of all the same virtues and vices, for which we ascribe praise and blame to human creatures (THN, 3, 467-8).

Hume holds that men and animals are similar in the incestuous relation in spite of the fact that they are different in moral character. He thinks that reason is essential neither to set moral rules nor to live in accordance with morality. His main endeavour is to show how reason has an inferior status in moral understanding. From this passage Knut Erik Tranöy contends that Hume has assumed that: "whatever is discovered by reason must be independent of reason for its existence" (1959, 96). However, Tranöy holds that there is no necessity to reject the notion that reason could be able to discover its own effects. Hume's assumption is that humans have sufficient reason to discover the evil character of incest but this implies that immoral character must antecedently exist. According to Tranöy this argument does not eliminate the possibility that the moral turpitude of animal incest can still exist although no animal could discover it. Tranöy explicitly points out that Hume's assumption regarding reason in respect to morality is contradictory. Firstly, Hume draws the line between human reason and animal reason with respect to the degrees. He then attributes no moral understanding to animals and no issue for reason and finally claims that we neither discover nor produce morality from reason. Therefore, argues Tranöy, the significant difference in morality between human and animal must depend on something other than reason otherwise it is hard to account for human morality. Obviously morality is through sympathy and sentiments in humans. Hume holds that animals have sympathy systems like humans. Sympathy is the necessary condition for moral sentiments but it is not sufficient alone. As animals also have sympathy and moral sentiments, they must have moral understanding. However, for Tranöy, Hume never attributes morality to animals, so the difference must lie somewhere other than sentiments. According to Tranöy "The capital point is that we could not possibly have this feeling and distinguish it from other feelings of a different nature without some antecedent cognitive operation." (Ibid, 96) Tranöy argues that Hume's theory about the analogy between human and animal in morality requires some cognitive operations which contradict the Humean position towards reason. He states that Hume has to appeal to "human reason in order to establish his moral sentiment as a specifically *moral* sentiment distinct from other

feelings of pain, pleasure, and, sympathy” (Ibid, 100). I hold that Hume’s ethical theories are crucially dependent on rational functions in spite of his very contrary assumptions. This is also shown by other interpreters from different perspectives¹⁴.

Another point is that in Hume’s view, causal relations both for humans and animals are derived from experience of constant conjunction. Both species learn from experience and he gives examples from dogs and horses being able to learn from their owners the actions that call for punishment and reward. Nevertheless, in his article Juan-Carlos Gomez aims to show how the Humean understanding of experience which is based causality is contradicted by scientific observations. He claims:

More surprising is that the monkeys had no direct experience of using knives, dyes or other tools. And.... their vicarious experience of seeing human visitors cut food with knives, drink with glasses or dye with paint was very limited, if any at all. It seems that the monkeys have either fabulous capacity for vicarious learning of causal relations in one-off events or... a natural tendency to draw novel causal inferences from their general knowledge of objects including objects they have never handled (Gomez, 2006: 539)

Therefore, for Gomez, it is possible to show that causality is not a kind of relation which is derived from experiences, but may be an implanted ability even in the animal world. Gomez criticises Hume for lacking a naturalist view unlike Kemp Smith and his followers. It is mentioned before, Hume is deemed to be naturalist in moral issues besides his empiricism however Hume’s naturalism is also “open to rebuttal”.

Finally, I want to touch on the lack of the attribution of a role or a meaning with regards to Hume’s assumption that inbreeding and incest are “the very same acts”. Although the relations seem to be same, they are indeed not even similar. Actions become meaningful only with the motivation and intention within them. Their results provide another clue to evaluating them. When a dog copulates with its daughter, as Clark claims, it has no intention to abuse a defenceless infant. There is no negative result such as being shunned by society or self-reprimand. Ascribing a meaning to the acts does not arise from the eyes of the beholder as Hume assumes; what’s more, even if incest does not produce such bad results as it does in human society, it is still not accepted in chimpanzee society. Hume in his attempt to exclude metaphysical arguments leaves out the meanings of actions in their particular environments or societies.

4. Conclusion

I contend that, although making analogies from the animal world is a common method in naturalistic ethics since it can be very persuasive, Hume’s empiricism is beyond his naturalism in this subject. Actually missed a good opportunity in this regard, he may have been able to construct a more persuasive argument if only he had used a

¹⁴ See Annette Baier *A Progress of Sentiments* especially p: 278. She writes: “Hume’s project all along has been not so much to dethrone reason as to enlarge our conception of it.”

better analogy. In fact, if he had never given these analogies it would be better for him; because these analogies have been seriously attacked and have made his assumptions controversial and defective. Ironically Hume is very confident: "This argument deserves to be weigh'd, as being, in my opinion, entirely decisive" (THN, 3, 468) However, it will not be wrong to assume that Hume's naturalism is not successful, as Norman Kemp Smith (1964) and Howard Mounce (1999) hold.

In this paper, we have seen that because of his poor analogies Hume has failed to establish an anti-rationalist naturalist foundation for his new science of man with respect to animal reason in morality. His assumption that morality does not come from relations –therefore reason– fails to be persuasive due to the poor design and choice of his analogy. His naturalism considering the weak analogies from animal world also falls short of convincing.

ABBREVIATIONS

THN : A treatise of Human Nature (1, 2, 3 show the book number)

EHU : An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding in Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals

EPM : An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals in Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals

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