Original Article

The Chicken Fallacy and the Ethics of Cruelty to Non-Human Animals

Akande Michael Aina[1] and Ofuasia Emmanuel[2]
1. Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria, Email: ainaakande@yahoo.com
2. Department of Philosophy, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun, Nigeria, Email: ofuasia.emma@gmail.com

Abstract: The ideological underpinning that guides our interaction with non-human animals needs revision. The traditional outlook, according to which humans have a higher moral status vis-à-vis non-human animals, is now otiose. If these claims are to be justified, what ideological framework would serve this end? What are the moral implications of endorsing the view that humans possess no higher moral status than non-human animals? This work takes as foundation Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which affirms that humans emerged from the long chain of evolutionary history, where non-human animals have been the carriers of the genes that shaped humans. A revisit to the discourse on the moral implication of humans' cruelty to their ancestors and neighbours becomes pertinent. This essay goes against the mainstream and dominant perspective that non-human animals exist to serve human ends and as such can be treated with disdain. The thesis of this paper goes beyond Peter Singer's submission that sentience is the basis for conferring moral worth on non-human animals. It affirms that in addition to sentience, good neighbourliness is a factor in determining the moral worth of non-human animals. It submits that cruelty to reared and domesticated animals may produce violent and wild species of these animals' kind in a future evolution, thereby endangering the lives of future human generation, through negative alteration of genes. In the end, this paper proposes the principle of biological altruism as a suitable norm for determining the moral worth of non-human animals.

Keywords: Chicken fallacy, Moral worth of Non-Human Animals, Darwinism, Cruelty to Animals, Domestic animals.

Introduction: In *The Problems of Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell provides a very useful anecdote whose consequence extends to the relation between non-human animals and humans on the one hand and the foundation and limitations of inductive reasoning on the other hand. Whereas Russell intends to show the problems arising out of inferring uniformity of behavior in nature, his narrative also point to a very serious problem regarding the relationship between human and non-human animals, especially the domesticated animals who are our neighbours. This essay tells an anecdote which we shall refer to as the Chicken Fallacy[1]. The Chicken Fallacy derives from the fourth chapter of the afore-mentioned book, where Russell ponders:

> Domestic animals expect food when they see the person who usually feeds them. We know that all these rather crude expectations of uniformity are liable to be misleading. The man who has fed the chicken every day throughout its life at last wrings its neck instead, showing that more refined views as to the uniformity of nature would have been useful to the chicken…The mere fact that something has happened a certain number of times causes animals and men to expect that it will happen again. Thus our instincts certainly cause us to believe that the sun will rise tomorrow, but we may be in no better a position than the chicken which unexpectedly has its neck wrung[2].

Although the Chicken Fallacy clearly outlines that man and animals can reason inductively, it does wish away the moral issue of whether or not animals should be thus treated (i.e. having the neck wrung or be killed), after exhibiting traits of loyalty and protection as it is with other domestic animals like cats and dogs. In other words, the discernment in the anecdote instigates the tendency to conclude that animals are not rational; that they are lacking in value outside those that promote human good. Peter Singer's lamentation that "the view that the effects of our actions on nonhuman animals have no intrinsic moral significance"[3] has hitherto become canonical and immaculate. In the foregoing excerpt from Russell and from other similar real cases, the dispute over the moral worth of animals is roused. Hence, it is pertinent to query: Do humans not betray the trust, albeit in whatever crude sense, reposed in them by domestic non-human animals? Will the fallacious reasoning of the chicken make other chickens within the cage or those of the future evolutions become cautious or preventive in their relationship with humans or not? These probes dovetail further into some other more pernicious moral posers: Firstly, which values and principles should guide our interaction with non-human animals? Secondly, how do we weigh our interests against those of other non-human animals as fellow occupants of this planet? More importantly, is the employment of non-human animals for research and food justifiable?

Through the use of the method of analysis and interpretation, the above crucial questions will be discussed in five divisions, the first being this introduction. In the second section, the paper exposes the popular views on the moral status of non-human animals. When the section critically assesses the popular arguments over the moral status of non-human animals, the study agrees with Arthur L. Caplan that "purposiveness rather than sentience is a property that suffices for conferring moral worth upon entities"[4] but goes further in the third part to justify this stance from Darwin's Principle of Natural Selection[5]. In the fourth section, our theoretical framework (Evolutionism) is assessed critically. The section maintains that the values and principles guiding human interaction with non-human animals need revision from a Darwinist perspective. The paper then concludes that the interests of non-human animals as fellow earthly occupants need to be given befitting consideration so that our actions do not endanger the survival of domestic species and that of future *Homo sapiens.*

On the Moral Status of Non-Human Animals: The debate over the moral status of non-human animals is not a recent development. It seems trivial and commonplace to believe that humans do not have any moral obligation towards non-human animals. For the sake of clarification, this paper employs the term 'non-human animals' to indicate animals both in the

domestic and wild sense. It also suggests that the difference between humans and non-human animal is a matter of degree rather than kind. Now, the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions made the verdict that in any circumstance humans have more worth than non-human animals (Gen. 1:28, Al-Qur'an 2:47). Aside references to passages of the revealed scriptures for support, some church fathers have promoted this outlook. St. Augustine claims that animals are lesser beings compared to humans when he denies that the law of God does not apply to them but "altogether for our sakes."[6] Further, St. Augustine believes that animals are lacking in the possession of a rational soul. St. Thomas Aquinas holds a similar stance that human treatment of animals is a matter of irrelevance since God has already given the former dominion over all entities[7]. Philosophers are not left out of this discourse. Aristotle, for instance, sees nature as a hierarchy where the most rational occupies the summit. According to him:

> Plants exist for the sake of animals, brute beasts for the sake of man – domestic animals for his use and food, wild ones (or at any rate most of them) for food and other accessories of life, such as clothing and various tools.
> Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all animals for the sake of man[8].

As a consequence of the foregoing, Aristotle, "made anatomic dissections of animals for scientific study and teaching"[9] which ushered in another trend of moral inquiry: whether or not animals ought to be used for scientific experiments. Aristotle would not have even considered this query seriously. Rene Descartes denies animals the gift of sentience as he viewed them as nothing but complex machines[10]. Descartes just like St. Augustine denies animals the presence of an immortal soul which involves the capacity to use language[11]. However, it is worth stating that another popular philosopher, Immanuel Kant, although he seems to see animals as food, maintains the outlook that cruelty to animals may lead to cruelty to fellow humans. In the end, this regurgitates the view that non-human animals are means to human ends. In his own words, Kant submits that "so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man."[12]

Even when it seems commonplace to regard animals as human ends, there are a few who still treat animals with respect and dignity. St. Francis of Assisi seems to be outstanding in this mould. Thomas of Celano reports that:

> One time as [Francis] was passing through the Spoleto valley, he came upon a place near Bevagna, in which a great multitude of birds of various kinds had assembled. When the holy one of God saw them, because of the outstanding love of the Creator with which he loved all creatures, he ran swiftly to the place. He greeted them in his usual way, as if they shared in reason. As the birds did not take flight, he went to them, going to and fro among them, touching their heads and bodies with his tunic[13].

The report in the foregoing reveals that the existence of neighbourliness and positive relations between humans and non-human animals should lead to mutual respect among them. It also portrays the tendency of reasoning in the Chicken Fallacy routine as an excuse for animal brutality or cruelty.

The view we have briskly considered, ranks humans over other animals and perceives, in most instances, the relation between them, biologically speaking, as parasitic. Even when humans seek to treat non-human animals kindly, this kindness is calculated to further the interest of humans. The moral thrust of the foregoing view is thus: aside the necessity to service the interest of humans, do non-human animals have intrinsic moral significance? At the basic level, non-human animals cannot be 'reasoned with' or instructed in the same way we could, as humans. Non-human animals cannot be held responsible for their actions or sue for redress in law court as humans might. Some may want to argue that non-human animals cannot even claim rights and this makes the question of moral worth and significance an instance of flogging a dead horse. This line of reasoning, albeit very common, has some problems. Joel Feinberg counters this idea by arguing that, if it is true that nonhuman animals do not have right because they cannot reason or seek redress,

> then neither human idiots nor wee babies would have any legal rights at all. Yet it is manifest that both of these classes of intellectual incompetents have legal rights recognized and easily enforced by the courts. Children and idiots start legal proceedings, not on their own direct initiate, but rather through the action of proxies or attorneys who are employed to speak in their names. If there is no conceptual absurdity in this situation, why should there be in the case where a proxy makes a claim on behalf of an animal? People commonly enough make wills, leaving money to trustees for the care of animals. Is it not natural to speak of the animal's right to inheritance in cases of this kind?[14]

Feinberg's argument has its problem because one could still protest that the formal relation between trustees and those they represent may not hold between humans and non-human animals since legal proceedings hardly admit it. However, such clings on norms is escapist. It is clear that non-human animals are denied rights and moral status even when they fare better than human babies in terms of what they do. Our argument is that fetuses and comatose patients that are being protected are no better than non-human animals in terms of power for inductive collaboration with their neighbours and owners. In evolutionary biology, the behaviour of domestic animals in terms of their usefulness will be seen as altruistic because in the course of assisting humans, sometimes they risk their own lives. If this altruistic behavior is taken into consideration in comparison with wee babies and comatose patients, then animals too deserve better treatment. In other words, when the moral rights of fetuses and comatose patients are usually upheld even when they are not morally conscious, non-human animals should not be denied the same consideration when their faculties are functioning at their optimal level.

The quandary of whether or not non-human animals have moral significance has inspired Peter Singer. Singer accuses the human society of what he calls "speciesism"[15]. Countering the stance that non-human animals exist to serve human interests, Singer avers that "the moral basis of equality among humans is not equality in fact, but the principle of equal consideration of interests, and it is this principle that must be extended to any non-humans who have interests"[16] if we are to be consistent. Singer proceeds to defend the view that non-human animals have interests because they are entities capable of experiencing pleasure and pain. He concludes that "consciousness, or the subjective capacity for subjective experience is both a necessary and sufficient condition for having an interest."[17] In a nutshell, Singer grants that non-human animals are moral patients in a better category than wee babies and comatose patient, and their interests deserve to be given due consideration when policies that will affect them are tinkered.

Singer's objection to the denial of moral significance to non-human animals founders on two grouses: the one with his principle of sentience and the other with his classical utilitarian approach. His position would logically imply that we do not confer moral worth on non-human animals that lack the capacity for sentience. According to Arthur L. Caplan, Singer's stance "would seem to permit experimentation on any creature which cannot, for whatever reason, suffer or feel pain."[18] Caplan's objection, however, could also be disputed. One may contend that in the case of humans, a temporary cessation of sentience through illness, coma, neurological disorder, tranquilizers, or the administration of drugs would not diminish moral worth, perhaps because of their potentiality to regain consciousness. However, what it means is that animals such as ants that are likely non-sentient entities may not be lucky. Does this mean that ants could be denied moral worth because they are likely non-sentient and beings without interests? We think not. Ants, like other insects that are non-sentient, could be considered based on utility. When importance to environment is considered above sentience, the role of ants becomes overwhelmingly indispensable. This study suggests that the most plausible alternative to surpass the dilemma between consideration of sentience and importance to environment may be deduced from Charles Darwin's theory of evolution which inadvertently promotes biological altruism. The theory endorses non-human animals as beings with purpose tacitly, reposed in them by the process of natural selection. If this is the case, the problem or implication present in the sentience factor of Singer no longer presents itself as an insurmountable impasse.

Darwin's Evolutionary Theory and Purposiveness in Entities: It is not an error to state that Darwinism has garnered a parochial and a broad reference over the years. In the former sense, it refers to the organic evolutionary theory propounded by Charles Darwin and others who have developed strands of his ideas. In the latter sense, it connotes a compendium of sociological, theological, and even philosophical thought that was initiated and substantiated by the former. This paper shall move from the former sense to the latter sense as it exposes the main kernel of Darwinism and its implication for the relation between humans and non-human animals.

Charles Darwin's aim in the *Origin of Species* is "to accomplish three things: (a) to show that evolution has in fact occurred; (b) to describe the mechanism of evolution; and (c) to account for the major facts of morphology, embryology, biogeography, paleontology, and taxonomy on the evolutionary hypothesis."[19] Whereas Darwin informs us that we do not directly observe the process of evolution, he cites the shortness of human life as one out of many obstacles. He is, however, optimistic that certain facts and conclusions about reality force this thinking upon us. He invites his readers to try the hypothesis only to affirm that hitherto unconnected facts may in fact have a uniform elucidation. The mechanism of evolution plays the role of the hypothesis in question and consists of three components: natural selection, sexual selection, and the inheritance of characteristics attained during the lifetime of an organism. We shall gloss each of these very succinctly, just to highlight areas that are relevant to the argument of this thesis.

Natural selection is that principle upon which Darwin places the greatest weight of his evolutionary theory. In the words of Edward Wilson, "natural selection is the process whereby certain genes gain representation in the following generations superior to that of other genes located at the same chromosome position."[20] The theory proposes that (1) populations of animals and plants display variations; (2) some of the variations provide an organism some sort of advantage over the rest of the population in the constant struggle for survival; (3) variations that are favourable are transmitted to the offspring; (4) given the fact that population usually produce more offspring than the environment can support, the proportion of favourable variations that survive and produce offspring would be larger than the proportion of the unfavourable variations; and, thus, (5) a population may experience endless evolutionary change whose consequence can be the development of new varieties. Darwin admits that the cause for variation and natural selection is a matter of conjecture. However, it is admitted that changing environmental situations enormously promote variability by acting on the reproductive system and, consequently, providing material for natural selection when and where necessary[21]. Edward Wilson advances further that the individual organism is only a vehicle for the preservation and transmission of favourable variations. He argues that "in a Darwinist sense, the organism does not live for itself. Its primary function is not even to reproduce other organisms; it reproduces genes, and it serves as their temporary carrier."[22]

Charles Darwin accounts for the rationale behind sexual selection as the catalyst in mating rituals, sexual behaviours, and characteristics. The intent of sexual selection is to influence the probability of having offspring. Writing on the sexual behaviours of ring doves, D.S. Lehrman reveals that the sight and sound of the male alone stimulates the pituitary gland to secret gonadotropins[23]. These substances induce an increase in estrogen, which triggers best-building behavior and progesterone which initiates incubation behaviour[24]. What we call 'sight' and 'sound' is a deeper communication and language among doves. It is, therefore, not an error to ascertain that non-human animals have their linguistic and communication techniques aboriginal and unique to them. With regards to the evolution of humans, M.W. Fox informs us that sexual selection was the auxiliary motor that drove human evolution all the way to the *Homo* grade[25]. Edward Wilson expands this line of thought in his words thus:

> Polygyny is a general trait in hunter-gatherer bands and may also have been the rule in the early hominid societies. If so, a premium would have been placed on sexual selection involving both epigamic display toward the females and intra-sexual competition among the males. The selection would be enhanced by the constant mating provocation that arises from the female's nearly continuous sexual receptivity. Because of the existence of a high level of cooperation within the band, a legacy of the original *Australopithecus* adaptation, sexual selection would tend to be linked with hunting prowess, leadership, skill at tool making and other visible attributes that contribute to the success of the family and the male band[26].

If there is any truth in the above excerpt, the weight is on humans to therefore re-evaluate their relation with non-human animals. This becomes pertinent given their role as the vehicle preserving the genes that led to *Homo sapiens.* This is true if we remember that, in Darwinist parlance, the organism does not live for itself, but as a temporary carrier of genes. If this is the case, then it calls for caution on our part when engaging in actions that will breed unfavourable genes in non-human progenitors. At this point, a critic may object that, since evolution has no aim or purpose, there is no reason to deduce that non-human animals are purposive beings with aims that must not be cavalierly frustrated. The response one may proffer here is that even if the critic is not incorrect in saying that evolution has no intention or purpose, this does not downplay the possibility of giving meaning and purpose to it. After all, a bulk of human life involves interpreting and giving existence meaning through deliberations and actions. For instance, humans may marvel at the complex things of the phenomena and propound the existence of God (teleological and cosmological arguments for the existence of God are popular instances). In other words, humans do attribute aims and purpose to nature, including non-human creatures, if persistent regularity is observed. Darwin observed through fossil evidence and record of animals' features that lower-grade entities have evolved into higher-grade, complex entities. If Darwin's conjecture is taken, then it would not be an error to say this is precisely the aim of evolution. If this is accepted, non-human animals have been used by evolution to bring about the emergence of humanity. This makes them human ancestors. It is the failure to see them as such that presents the difficulty in admitting that non-human animals are purposive entities with moral worth.

However, even if the term 'purposive' seem inapplicable in the same sense it is applied to humans, the difference in the meaning may be a matter of degree and not kind. A dog that saves his master's child from drowning in a pool may be said to be faithful just like the cock that crows behind his owner's window regularly to wake him up for work. Whereas the dog did his act once, the cock does his always. The cock may be responding to an inner mechanism but the dog is not. After all, not all dogs will do that. So, their faithfulness differs only in degree but not in kind.

Furthermore, upon a consideration of the mechanism of inheritance, a deeper appreciation of the position of animals suffices. Inheritance of acquired characters is the third pillar of Darwin's evolutionary theory. Whereas the modern theory of the origin of genetic variation

in populations was not available to Darwin, he suggests that some variations are due to the action of the environment on the germ plasm but the effects of use and disuse cannot be ruled out in variations. One may notice the role of Lamack's theory of use and disuse in Darwin's evolutionism, save for the environmental conditions that the latter added to his element. Darwin's theory invites humans to perceive themselves as purposive creatures brought about through the effect of natural selection on non-human animals. In Darwin's words:

> When we no longer look at an organic being as a savage looks at a ship, as something wholly beyond his comprehension; when we regard every production of nature as one which has had a long history; when we contemplate every complex structure and instinct as the summing up of many contrivances…when we thus view each organic being, how far more interesting – I speak from experience – does the study of natural history become![27]

As opposed to the foregoing, pre-Darwinian taxonomy proposed humankind to be at the summit of all there is. The view that all creatures are individually brought into existence through the unalterable work of God had been accepted before Darwin. This among other observations denied non-human animals rationality and moral status. This assessment holds that non-human creatures exist solely to promote the human good, and as such deserve no consideration.

It is pertinent to hint that Darwin's *Origin of Species* questioned some popular and dominant ways of thinking. Darwin's thought poked at creationism and natural theology, on the ground that "the living world, including man, is due to a single origin of life."[28] The implication here is the futility in invoking an intelligent deity who has subsumed all other living entities to the whim and caprice of the *Homo sapiens.* By extension, anthropocentrism is probed. This is the belief that man is at the apex of the Great Chain of Being and legitimizes man's perception of everything in the world from his 'specialized gaze'. Darwin challenges us to view humans as animals, albeit complex ones that have acquired the trait of higher intelligence through evolution. Darwin's idea of common descent proposes that all organisms, including humans, descended from common ancestors[29].

Darwin's *Origin of Species,* aside the impact on the afore-stated dominant ways of thinking, also tasked people to review their perspectives with regard to classical mechanics, essentialism, cosmic theology, and determinism.

Darwin's Evolutionism as an Ethical and Normative Groundwork for a Holistic Animal-Human Relation: The deductions from the foray into Darwin's evolutionary theory, with its implications for human relations with non-human animals and their moral worth, are as follows:

(1) Humans are not essentially different from non-human animals. If there is any 'real difference', it is a matter of degree, not of kind;

(2) Non-human animals are the vehicles employed by evolution, through natural selection, sexual selection, and inheritance of acquired traits for the appearance of an improved organism, which at the moment seems to be the *Homo sapiens*;

(3) All organisms (including *Homo sapiens*) are carriers of genetic materials with altruistic consequence. This indicates that evolution is purposive. If not, the regular process of the emergence of higher-grade species from lower grades may be difficult to explain; and

(4) Deducing from (1) – (3), it would be morally imprudent for humans to cavalierly frustrate the aims of their progenitors. This confers a degree of moral worth on non-human animals. Among humans there is this cherished and cordial relationship towards those who had done us one favour or the other and their kin albeit without any direct benefit. In this regard, human society is challenged to rethink: if we consider blood relation in certain ethical situations, why do we neglect genetic relation?

The preceding section lends credence to (1). For if one agrees with the mechanism of evolution, (1) has no misgivings. A critic may grouse about (2) that, despite its emergence, *Homo sapiens* have not been able to evolve into a higher being with higher intelligence and consciousness. This study ripostes that although no one has witnessed evolution yet, facts and anecdotes of variation of species impose it on our intelligence. However, the shortness of human life, among other challenging factors, has been a major impasse in this empirical demand of the critics. Just because we do not directly observe natural selection is not enough to wish away the reality. In order to avoid the pitfall of *argumentum ad ignoratiam*, it would be prudent to admit (2) alongside the caveat that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."[30] The claim in (3) follows necessarily from (1) and (2). The movement from beings that are genetic carriers to purposive beings is entrenched in (3).In the words of Samir Okasha:

> Altruistic behaviour is common throughout the animal kingdom, particularly in species with complex social structures. For example, vampire bats regularly regurgitate blood and donate it to other members of their group who have failed to feed that night, ensuring they do not starve. In numerous bird species, a breeding pair receives help in raising its young from other 'helper' birds, who protect the nest from predators and help to feed the fledglings. Vervet monkeys give alarm calls to warn fellow monkeys of the presence of predators, even though in doing so they attract attention to themselves, increasing their personal chance of being attacked. In social insect colonies (ants, wasps, bees and termites), sterile workers devote their whole lives to caring for the queen, constructing and protecting the nest, foraging for food, and tending the larvae. Such behaviour is maximally altruistic: sterile workers obviously do not leave any offspring of their own—so have personal fitness of zero—but their actions greatly assist the reproductive efforts of the queen[31].

The above instances are clear cases of biological altruism among animals for the preservation of species. It seems puzzling how natural selection would admit the element of altruism into

its schema. In the words of Jonah Lehrer: "Charles Darwin regarded the problem of altruism—the act of helping someone else, even if it comes at a steep personal cost—as a potentially fatal challenge to his theory of natural selection."[32] Even in the face of the seeming contradiction in the personal and selfish struggle for survival and the altruistic tendency latent in both animals and even humans, it is not incorrect to say that non-human animals have purpose and sometimes go out of the line, become generous to fulfill this drive. Consequently, one can readily defend (4).

When Peter Singer confers moral worth on non-human animals on the basis of sentience, we believe he overlooks non-sentient creatures with utility value, given that they are carriers of genes. This study diverges by hinging on the purposiveness of the evolutionary process rather than sentience. It maintains that sentience could inadvertently deny non-human animals moral worth if it could be proven that such creatures could be used for pain-free scientific research. This scorching issue shall be assessed shortly. For the moment, this research agrees with Arthur Caplan who recommends that "purposiveness rather than sentience is a property that suffices for conferring moral worth"[33] for non-human animals.

As Darwin submits that human beings evolved from non-human animals, this truth places a certain moral responsibility on human beings towards their evolutionary ancestors. The least we can do is to treat these entities with more dignity and consideration than what currently obtains. We must improve our social relations with them since they are like neighbours to us. Animals are not meant to serve human ends simpliciter. There are instances where animals have developed the ability to drive automobiles, serve countries during wars, practice yoga, and even assist members of dissimilar species[34]. These attest to what may be the result of a good and positive human-animal relation as opposed to the received view that places the one over the other. To corroborate this claim, research in sociobiology has shown that animals are also social beings and as such are purposive in their behaviours. Social behaviours of animals are indicative that they also have interests and goals which should make us replicate the loyalty and good services they render to us as humans. The dogs that fend us from human criminals, the cats that keep our environment clean of rodents, and the chicken that serves as a clock should not be killed like 'common criminals'. If cruelty to good fellow human neighbours is discouraged, the same treatment should be extended to domestic animals. This empathy may not be extended to wild animals since part of our concern in this paper is to rid the world of cruelty and violence. Most wild animals are naturally cruel and violent and killing them may be a way of defense but if any of them has been domesticated and successfully develops friendly genes then our position may admit such. Hence, this research lauds implemented efforts of some authorities towards training of wild animals with the purpose to generate neighbourly and friendly relations with them. This is crucial especially for those species that are on the brink of extinction. At this point, it is pertinent to emphasize the emotional bond that domestic non-human animals have built with humans.

Killing those who have become attached to us betrays their trust even if it is tacitly reposed. An analogy from Chinua Achebe could prove helpful. Chinua Achebe, in his book *Things Fall Apart*, relays a relevant story to this discourse where Ikemefuna who was brought to

Okonkwo's house as a sacrificial lamb was kept in the house of the hero of the novel, Okonkwo, for a period of time[35]. Due to the long stay and familiarity with the house, the boy saw Okonkwo as his father. As it was time to sacrifice Ikemefuna, other men could not kill the boy because they have grown to love him and his youthfulness. Okonkwo whom the boy calls father drew out his sword and killed Ikemefuna. The explanation offered is that Okonkwo has the fear of failure, but the complex of portraying himself as a brave man. This single act turned his immediate family against him as his fellow chiefs were also disappointed. The chiefs retort: "but the boy calls you father!" In the same vein, our attempt to show superiority on earth should not lead us to treat our non-human neighbours as non-entities. Such treatment portrays betrayal on the part of humans. The dog that wags his tail when we are home and the chicken who clucks when we approach deserve to be treated like neighbours, if not friends, since these acts are signs of love or acceptability displayed towards humans.

This paper agrees with Caplan that "it is wrong to interfere with or deprive animals of the opportunity to fulfill their basic drive."[36] However, a deep look at our cruelty to animals will show that what we obstruct mainly is the purpose of the force behind evolutionary goals rather than the purpose of creatures. We all may not fulfill our individual purposes since death is inevitable but one should not be killed before the maturity of the genes to maintain evolutionary balance in the world. Consequently, we have a duty as humans to lessen cruelty to, and even death of, non-human animals where possible. In other words, cruelty to animals is a means of altering evolutionary process that persistently and consistently strives to produce improved species. This is what (4) also admits.

The destructive consequence would be the interference in the 'preservation processes' of the genetic materials that are necessary for the sustenance of life and evolution. This implores that if non-human animals are fit for human ends, the best way to show that is to preserve them. Animals are not just dumb and non-rational entities lacking in self-awareness. To this effect, there are torrents of research in ethology, sociobiology, and comparative psychology that indicate at least that some non-human animals are capable of some forms of intentionality, language, and self-awareness[37]. What this means is that our attitude towards them goes a long way to shape their world and their progeny. Converse attitude from them is not impossible. In spite of these, a critic may counter (4) on two grounds: Firstly, it may be stated that animals did not intentionally act as carriers of the genes that led to the emergence of humanity. So it is pointless according reverence to entities that did us a favour when they are not even aware of it. Secondly, that animals that are currently existing have done close to nothing to our genetic make-up. Hence, there is no justification for taking their existence seriously as we would, for instance, idiots and wee babies.

The first objection is countered by offering that, if natural selection allowed non-human animals to do this task intentionally, perhaps humanity would not exist as some of these animals would not want to be the fore-runners of higher-grade entities that would maltreat them, decimate their habitat, and even denigrate the environment. The second objection is even less trivial. Even if we admit that present animals have not contributed to our genetic

make-up, we must not wish away how cruelty towards them may impose on their genes the emergence of advanced organisms that may develop adaptive wild behaviours as the principles of survival and selection of the fittest made us to understand. The chicken ignorance will then turn into the chicken rationality as non-human animals that were hitherto friendly, now evolve adaptive but cruel and violent behaviours. Through natural selection and preservation of the species, a once friendly but cruelly-treated dog could whelp puppies that would acquire adaptive features that turns them into wild and tenacious breeds. These are some of the consequences of failing to give a proper interpretation to evolution and the moral worth of non-human animals even if they are moral patients.

Since purposiveness is a criterion for moral worth, what consideration should be put in place if the purposes of humans clash with those of non-human animals, for example in the context of scientific experiments? In other words, there is a gulf between the recognition that non-human animals possess worth on the one hand and the question of whether or not they could be subjected to laboratory use on the other hand. However, if humans must fulfill the drive and impulses for medicine, it seems some animals must suffer in the course of the discovery of new drugs. Our preference for the utility of non-human animals and humans suggests that they ought to be preserved for maturity of genes necessary for future evolution. It seems helping with drugs is a way of doing this. In this vein, preference is given to those scientific research projects that increase the overall well-being of the human species and non-human animals, in the drive to retrieve some from the abyss of extinction, with the help of drugs borne out of research on them. What we shall have is a win-win situation. This attests to Darwin's thinking that all organisms must survive in the face of scarce and limited resources. As a result, there is an assurance that some non-human animals would have their moral worth and rights transgressed in order to fulfill the goal of evolution. It is the unchecked but indiscriminate killing for food and pleasure that are discouraged. The use of a few animals in the development of drugs and medicines saves more animals from diseases and avoidable demise. This is where Singer's principle of equal consideration of interest is revived, albeit in newer perspective[38].

Conclusion: The relations that ought to exist between humans and non-human animals as occupants of the same environment have received attention from different scholars. When some have argued that animals have certain fundamental rights and as such should not be killed for whatever ends by humans, others maintain that cruelty to non-human animals can make humans to develop malignant attitudes to one another. Hence, the haphazard and blasé killing of animals for food and research purposes should be discouraged. This study departs from the status quo to propose that cruelty to non-human animals, especially the ones who are domesticated, is a mark of betrayal given the attitude of loyalty to humans. Further, this could make domestic non-human animals that were hitherto non-wild to develop adaptive wild behaviours against humans in order to preserve their species. This invariably blurs the zoologists' demarcation between the wild and non-wild. We should note that what we are writing by our malevolent behaviours in the genes of these domestic animals is the inscription: "Dogs, Beware of Men," which is the reverse of what we normally place at the entrance of our residence: "Beware of Dogs."

Author Contribution: Both authors contributed equally to the paper.

Conflict of Interest: Declared none.

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to Rainer Ebert, Ph.D., our dear friend on Facebook, who informed us about this journal and encouraged us to write this piece. This acknowledgement is incomplete without a mention of Okoro Chiedozie, Ph.D., who helped with some materials on this topic.

References

[1]Some refer to the illustration as "Russell's Chicken". See Deutsch, D. *The Fabric of Reality, the Science of Parallel Universes and its Implications.* New York: Viking Adult. 1997.
[2]Russell, B. *Problems of Philosophy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1959 p. 63.
[3]Singer, P. "Not for Humans Alone: The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues" in *ETHICS: Thought and Practice.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1985 p. 479
[4]Caplan, A.L. "Beastly Conduct: Ethical Issues in Animal Experimentation" *The Ethical Dimensions of the Biological Science.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995 p. 184
[5]Darwin, C.L. *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.* New York: Modern Library Edition 1949
[6]Augustine, St. *The Catholic and Manichean Ways of Life,* (trans.) D.A. Gallagher and I.J. Gallagher. Boston: Catholic University Press 1966 p. 102
[7]Rowan, A.N. *Of Mice, Models and Men: A Critical Evaluation of Animal Research.* Albany: State University of New York Press 1984 pp. 1-323
[8]Aristotle,*Politics,* 1256b.
[9]Bulger, R.E. "Use of Animals in Experimental Research: A Scientist's Perspective" *The Ethical Dimensions of the Biological Science.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995 p. 187
[10]Levine, C. "Should Animal Experimentations be Stopped?"in *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Bio-Ethical Issues.* Guilford: Dushkin Publishing Group 1984 pp. 222-3
[11]Benjamin, M."Ethics and Animal Consciousness" in *Social Ethics, Morality and Social Policy.* New York: McGraw Hill 1987 pp. 476
[12]Kant, I. *Lectures on Ethics,* New York: Harper & Row 1963 p. 239
[13]Thomas of Celano, *The Treatise on the Miracle of Saint Francis* (1250-1252) R.J. Armstrong, OFM Cap, J.A.W. Hellmoann, OFM Cov, W.J. Short, (eds.) *The Francis Theology of Thomas of Celano.* Hyde Park: New City Press pp 329-30
[14]Feinberg, J. "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations" in *ETHICS: Thought and Practice.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1985 p. 469
[15]Singer, P. *Animal Liberation: A New Ethic for Our Treatment of Animals.* New York: Avon Books 1975
[16]*Op. Cit,* Singer 1985 p. 479
[17]*Ibid* p. 479-80

[18]*Op. Cit*, Caplan 1995 p. 183
[19]"Darwinism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/. Retrieved on 11/12/2016.
[20]Wilson, O.E. *Sociobiology: The Abridged Edition.* London: Belknap Press 1998 p. 3
[21]*Op. Cit*, Darwin 1949
[22]*Op. Cit*, Wilson 1998 p. 3
[23]Lehrman, D.S. "The Reproductive Behaviour of Ring Doves" in *Scientific American* 1964 211(5): 48-54
[24]*Op. Cit*, Wilson 1998 p. 107
[25]Fox, M.W. "Socio-Ecological Implications of Individual Differences in Wolf Litters: A Development and Evolutionary Perspective" in *Behaviour*1972 46(3,4) 298-313.
[26]*Op. Cit*, Wilson 1998
[27]*Op. Cit*, Darwin 1949
[28]Mayr, E. "Darwin's Impact on Modern Thought" in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society.*1995 139 (4) 317-325
[29]*Ibid* p. 319
[30]Weiss, E.*The Long Trajectory: Reincarnation and Life After Death.* Unpublished Version. 2009 p. 23
[31]Okasha, S. "Biological Altruism" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2013 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/altruism-biological/. Retrieved on 21/11/2016.
[32]Lehrer, J. "The Paradox of Altruism" 2012 https://www.wired.com/2012/02/the-paradox-of-altruism/. Retrieved on 21/11/2016.
[33]*Op. Cit*, Caplan 1995 p. 184
[34]Beres, D. "Animal Stories: When Beasts Act Like Humans" http://www.rd.com/true-stories/inspiring/animal-stories-when-beasts-act-like-humans/. Retrieved on 24/11/2016.
[35]Achebe, C. *Things Fall Apart,* London: William Heinemann Press 1958
[36]*Op. Cit*, Caplan 1995 p. 183
[37]see Bowd, A.D. "Ethical Reservations about Psychological Research with Animals" *Psyschol. Rec.* 1980 30 (Spring): 201-10; Fox, M.S. "Experimental Psychology, Animal Rights, Welfare and Ethics". *Psychopharm. Bull.* 1981; 17(2): 80-4; Griffin, D.R. *The Question of Animal Awareness*. New York: Rockefeller University Press. 1976; Wilson, O.E. *Sociobiology: The Abridged Edition.* London: Belknap Press 1998
[38]*Op. Cit*, Singer 1985 p. 479