Many animal-rights philosophers have emphasized the importance of recognizing the inherent or intrinsic value of animals in encouraging a deeper respect for non-human life. The intrinsic value of animals is contrasted with the perceived extrinsic instrumental value from the point of view of human utility. Intrinsic value is regarded by animal rightists as taking precedence over an animal's extrinsic value, because animals are ends in themselves rather than the means to satisfy purely human ends.

However, we should not overlook the fact that animals and other existences are not purely ends in themselves, there can be nothing wrong with humans doing likewise. Predator species are always few in number. That the presence of 6 billion animals the size of Homo sapiens on this small planet is a logical aberration with devastating ecological consequences when those animals behave as predators.

In recognizing the intrinsic value of animals and other living things in their contribution to the harmony, beauty, and diversity of the biotic community, the animal rightist moves conceptually toward a more holistic, ecological view. This has been lacking too long in the movement, as has respect for the intrinsic value of animals as individuals by the environmental and conservation movements.

Some philosophers, reflecting a fairly prevalent social consensus, believe that domesticated animals that were "created" by man for specific human use have less intrinsic value than wild animals. This is also fallacious, I believe, because it is indicative of an anthropocentric attitude toward nonhuman life that embraces the "naturalistic fallacy" alluded to earlier.

It may be reasoned that a being that is both more intelligent and self-aware than the whale? Furthermore, in focusing another considerable aspect, especially of non-sentient (or, more cor- logical aberraion with devastating ecolog- ic consequences when those animals behave as predators.

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another has greater intrinsic value. This, again, could be based upon anthropo- centric and have racist and speciesist consequences. A hierarchy of intrinsic value, in terms of creatures' "richness of experience," can be based upon the complexity of their nervous systems. From this perspective (as proposed by Charles Birch and John B. Cobb in The Liberation of Life, Cambridge University Press, 1983), chimpanzees and whales have much greater intrinsic value than worms and mosquitoes. But is not the life of the worm of equal importance to the whale? Furthermore, in focusing upon intrinsic value to the exclusion of extrinsic value (or vice versa), the natural paradox between the two is not appreciated. This is that organisms, such as earthworms and soil bacteria, that, from an anthropocentric perspective, have less intrinsic value than, say, a more sentient and sapient wolf or human being, actually have a greater extrinsic or instrumental value in terms of their contribution to the integrity of the biotic community. Nothing will grow in sterilized soil devoid of worms and microorganisms.

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