

Searching for the Animal of Animal Ethics

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Assumptions of human-non human relation and the analogy argument

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Abstract

The assumption that some non-human animals are conscious is sometimes supported by what is referred to as an argument of analogy. Certain observed similarities between human beings and some non-human animals are then taken to be signs of non-human animal consciousness. This reasoning has been criticized as violating the rule of Occam's razor. To presume that certain observable similarities between human beings and non-human animals means any similarity of non-observable qualities, it is contended, is to presume too much.

In my presentation, I will elaborate on assumptions about the human-non human relation in this kind of argumentation. Solely by calling an argument raised because of similarities between two groups of species for an argument of analogy makes presumptions about the relation between those species. A view of human beings as special and naturally separated from others, but yet peculiarly similar, are assumed and reproduced. This is also why a counter-argument based on Occam's razor comes to mind. Why would one allow presumptions of non-observable similarities between human beings and non-human beings, while it is assumed that they are *prima facie* different? In developing my views, I draw mainly on texts by Tom Regan.