Julia Moura

Professor Jesse Miller

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Is a time of agreement coming?

In life, there are numerous internal struggles we all encounter. These usually revolve around our moral views and beliefs. These struggles are sometimes vocalized in certain circumstances and the discussion can only be pushed to a certain point. This can be connected to an article written by David Foster Wallace, “Consider the Lobster”. This article touches upon many difficult topics that cover a wide range on controversial viewpoints which allow the reader to really ponder their views on certain matters. Wallace’s main argument, “there are limits to what even interested persons can ask of each other,” involves the idea that there are certain breaking points on issues that some may never agree with the other on. Many have varying viewpoints that they will stick by no matter what. Wallace is sure to include many different aspects of this emotional struggle with important issues, such as economics, animal cruelty and social standings between humans and animals. Wallace’s viewpoints can be compared to many others’, such as Ross Andersen who wrote an article, “What the Crows Know”, discussing his viewpoint on the many issues revolving around animals, their importance to us a humans, their interactions with us and there overall conscience levels. Another opinion on such matters is Hal Herzog’s, he wrote an article called “Animals Like Us” which discusses the social standings of animals in comparison to those of humans as well as their values with animal cruelty and whether what we do should be acceptable or not. The three authors together all bring forth such critical and controversial viewpoints that are widely discussed but usually never agreed upon. Throughout life, there are certain breaking points where discussions may never end in an agreement and the controversial topic of animals, their worth and their consciousness are arguments that may never come to agreement.

Wallace brings in all of his viewpoints through the simple yet complex conversation of the lobster, “the spider of the sea” (Wallace 1). Wallace makes you take into consideration how we treat the lobsters and for what purpose. In some cases, it is due to the economy. Lobsters bring in a lot of money, in many different ways. In Wallace’s article he talks about the Maine Lobster Festival, which is an annual festival that occurs yearly and brings in a large number of tourists and regulars who are willing to spend large amounts of money all due to something revolving around the lobster. All aspects of the festival have some sort of impact on the economy, “Tourism and lobster are the midcoast region’s two main industries, and they’re both warm-weather enterprises, and the Maine Lobster Festival represents less an intersection of the industries than a deliberate collision, joyful and lucrative and loud” (Wallace 1). With these industries being the driving forces of the midcoast, it is important that they thrive, to keep the economy in this area booming. Other creatures and animals can also bring in this sort of income, in the same areas as well as in others. The food, shipping and tourist industries are big parts of our economy from both a large scale and a small scale.

The downfall of lobster and other animals being such a large factor in the economy is the horrifying outcome many of these animals must face: death. It brings in such an emotional aspect and tests many individuals’ boundaries. The main issue is the moral aspects of what an animal really is. Many ponder their own beliefs in what they consider animals to be. For instance, why is it that for most, the slaughter and consumption of a dog or cat sounds inhumane, but for an animal such as a lobster or a cow it is a sufficient source of food? Why do many accept that some animals can be used for sustenance while others cannot? What exactly makes an animal an animal? These are some questions that Herzog recognizes deeply in his article, after being accused of feeding cats to his son’s snake, “Given Sam’s need for meat, was it ethical to keep a boa constrictor for a pet? Is having a pet that gets its daily ration of meat from a can of cat food morally preferable to living with a snake? And are there circumstances in which feeding kittens to boa constrictors might actually be morally acceptable?” (Herzog 4). If one thinks deeply on this concept of what is acceptable it really influences how many perceive the animals, they are dealing with and what is acceptable to society. We might be horrified at the fact that feeding cats to snakes for their survival is inhumane but what if the question was posed towards us? If you were forced to eat a dog for your survival, would you? It is easy to think that many would rather eat the dog and survive while I would feel otherwise. I would rather starve than eat the dog. I am sure that many would try to provide me with logical reasoning on why I should indulge in such horrific behavior, but I wouldn’t budge. Thus, meaning there are many circumstances where we will truly never agree. Some may find it acceptable for snakes to eat cats, and for humans to eat dogs and others will not, but no matter how hard one tries opinions may never change.

Animals are viewed differently by all individuals, some feel a strong emotional connection to them and want to give them everything while others view them as a source of food or useful tool in many industries. What many don’t think about is what the animals think, what is their level of consciousness? This is something that Andersen tackles in his article, he defies the simple answer of humans being superior and makes the reader question where animals stand in relation to humans. “Monkeys that spotted a stalking cat let out a specific call. Deer weren’t the only ones that recognized and used these calls; the lion tracker who had been with me in the park did too” (Andersen 5). This passage from Andersen signifies the connection of humans working in cohesiveness with animals. It shows almost a societal equivalent between the two. They all work together to survive and are able to connect with each other without even speaking the same language. On a deeper level it has something to say about the consciousness of animals. It shows that animals can adapt social cues and heed warnings towards others of their own kind. It also gives a superiority to the deer in how they are able to recognize the monkeys’ calls as a warning for predators when in fact most humans believe they could not think and be so comprehensible.

To further stress the comprehensibility of animals as well as their cohesiveness to humans, it can easily be evaluated through specific relationships between humans and animals. Some of which Herzog elaborates in his piece, “Our relationships with animals can also be emotionally complicated. Twenty years ago, Carolyn fell head over heels for a 1,100-pound manatee…That’s when her husband accused her of having her priorities screwed up, of loving a half-ton blob of blubber and muscle more than she loved him.” (Herzog 2). This stresses how relationships with animals can be connections that some may never understand. Carolyn loved her manatee friend so much she stopped vacationing to make her animal happy. Her husband lacked the ability to understand her feelings which resulted in driving the two apart because it was something they could never agree on. While I find myself understanding Carolyn and her connection to the animal who has a strong bond to her. I feel I have felt a connection like this with my own animal, a yellow lab, Jasmine. We have an inseparable bond and follow each other around everywhere. It is interesting to see how I can feel so strongly about another being and know deep down that others will never feel the same. I could describe my thoughts just like Carolyn did to her husband, but some will never understand or agree with us on how amazing and important the animals are.

Animals have a variety of value to humans, they are a key importance in our economy, they bring joy and unique emotions towards us through relationships not everyone can understand, and they also bring forth so many questions about consciousness and its true meaning. These discussions bring many individuals including myself to a certain breaking point. One we may never discover an answer for, or one we may never agree on. Not only does this revolve around animals and their meanings or societal importance yet also with many other pressing issues. These other issues could revolve around politics, economy, beliefs and overall simple disputes yet there are always these breaking points where you will never convince one to change their mind. In certain instances, we are set in our ways and will not let anything affect the way we believe. It would be interesting to see if there was ever a day that we all agreed on everything, that day to me is impossible.

Works Cited

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