

Editorial



Between the Species has its origin in fiction, the name of a journal mentioned by one of the characters in George Abbe's unpublished novel, Negavit.

Martin Buber wrote about the way in which humanity arises in the space between persons, in that realm that is the realm of dialogue, of moving to meet that which is moving to meet us. In politics the philosophy of co-existence, as set forth, for example, by Gemma Corradi in her Philosophy and Co-existence (1966), is surely one of the most beautiful expressions of the promise of life.

The distinction between human life and other life is a false one. The theory of evolution establishes connections of relationship with the natural world, requiring us to recognize our common nature with other species.

Between the species, and among them, is the space in which a humanity not limited by the species bounds of Homo sapiens arises. So, Between the Species is a journal in which, so far as possible, is carried on the dialogue requisite for the arising of such a humanity, neither wrongly anthropomorphizing animals and the natural world nor wrongly animalizing our own species. Between the Species is a journal of ethical thought.

Peter Singer has founded his ethical philosophy upon the principle of "equal con-

sideration of interests," saying in Animal Liberation (1975) that "the fundamental moral principle of equality of consideration of interests . . . ought to govern our relations with all beings." So, Between the Species is also a journal in which, in thought and proposal, that equal consideration to other animals' interests can be given, in so far as Homo sapiens can know or imagine what those interests are. Certain interests of other species can be easily known. The interests residing in habitat through living (perhaps based on an argument akin to Locke's concerning the interest in property arising through use or work), in life itself, in freedom from pain and suffering at the hands of our species, and so on, are obvious interests equal to ours. Practical thought will give atten-

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tion to the means (which may indicate radically less meddling in nature) of realizing a state of affairs congruent with such obvious conclusions concerning the status of the interests of other species. Progressively, we can better know or imagine other, more subtle, dimensions of the interests of other species, to which Singer's ethical principle can then be applied.

At the same time, prudent cautions concerning the merely simplistic attribution of rights and interests to animals are in order. Joseph Meeker's essay in these pages in part constitutes one such prudent caution.

Between the Species revives in modified form a journal of the same name published briefly in 1971-72. That journal had a modest national circulation and carried mostly writing by George Abbe. One article, we recently learned, went on to bigger things. Professor Maurice Visscher's "The Ethics of the Scientific Use of Animals" (which opposed our viewpoint), first published in the second number of that earlier journal, was subsequently published as "The Ethics of the Use of Lower Animals in Scientific Study" in Ethical Constraints and Imperatives in Medical Research (1975) and again recently in Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Bio-Ethical Issues (1984). I bear a certain guilt for having stimulated the writing of that article, which received no answer when the journal had to be abandoned early in 1972. What was said in introducing Between the Species in 1971 is reprinted on the inside back cover of this issue.

In the more than a dozen years that have passed since the first brief existence of Between the Species, an important movement has grown up around the issues we refer to when we talk about animal liberation and animal rights.

Concern for animals has not yet found widespread expression in the attitudes of political parties. Participants in the animal welfare community may find it interesting to take a look at the content of such docu-

ments as those of the Global Tomorrow Coalition or at the Platform of the Peace and Environmental Convention Coalition. The latter recently had a significant impact upon the Democratic Party of California, but it lacked coalition participation by animal rights groups. An example of what an animal rights plank might initially look like in a progressive political party's platform may be found in the platform of the German Greens. We have reprinted in these pages relevant portions of this platform.

The status recognized in animals and the quality of their treatment are of supreme importance for the condition of culture. The way back to civilization, which Schweitzer said lies through Reverence for Life, is also a way forward created through caring.

The way back to civilization is an activity which is broadly philosophical, artistic, and scientific. In so far as this activity is carried on in Between the Species, this journal might be subtitled "Explorations in the Philosophy and Science of Reverence for Life."

I hope that readers will participate as we time and again seek to express and contribute to better relations between those of us who read and write and the many species and nature. Between the Species is intended as a forum for a free-wheeling dialogue on the issues of animal rights and liberation. Social analysis is appropriate when in the writer's view there is substantial bearing upon such issues. We seek an international readership and participation. The editors invite philosophers, poets, scientists, and scholars and writers of all types to contribute articles, poems, stories, interviews, letters, and reviews for publication.

One last note. The reader's attention is called to James Hillman's essay, "The Animal Kingdom in the Human Dream," Eranos Yearbook (1982). It is of critical importance for those concerned to establish a better relation between humanity and nature. The spring issue of Between the Species will contain an exchange of letters with Professor Hillman.

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