

The relationship between humans and animals



Man and animals have coexisted together and along side each other from time immemorial. This relationship between these two different types of beings can be seen from different perspectives both positively or negatively, though often characterized by suspicions. This paper is an attempt to examine the theoretical arguments that informs pets and animal care in our modern societies. In most cases, the care and protections of animals is based on both reason and moral arguments that many scholars have formulated. These arguments will be examined in detail in relation to pets keeping and pets.

Animal rights theory.

One main argument for the protection and care of animal is strongly based around the concept of animal rights. This is based on the philosophical thinking which informs much of animal rights movements in modern societies and its main proponent is a man by the name of Tom Regan. Regan argued that animals too do have that what he calls inherent values which must be respected by mankind, although they may not possess self identity and moral awareness of themselves (Regan 23). This concept argues that animals should not be treated as man's property that can be used as for the purpose of research, as objects of entertainments, for food or clothing. Rather, Animals must be considered as members of moral community and be treated as non human persons. Most animal rights advocates believe that animals at least have the right to life and the right to freedom from bodily interference.

By and large, animal movement pushes for the recognition of animals as equal beings with mankind that must be allowed to enjoy life and freedom in our societies. Most animal activism and campaigns are based on this concept. Due to the increased scholarly debates and socio-political campaigns, animal rights have now been incorporated into the mainstream legal statutes (Regan 58). It is now punishable by law to mistreat an animal. Somehow, these campaigns have been very effective to the point whereby they have influenced much of the animal legislations that have been formulated in most countries, especially in the west. However, the critics argue that animals should not have legal rights like man kind, because they cannot enter into social contract. Similarly, animals do not have understating of rights and wrongs and cannot therefore make moral decisions like humans.

Theory of Welfare and utilitarianism

Just as the name suggest this view holds that animals are part of welfare system and are therefore to be utilized by mankind. This philosophy is fundamentally different from animal rights. The rights view holds that animals have moral rights to certain privileges and freedoms, just as humans do. It does not mean that animals have exactly the same rights as humans. The main proponent behind this view is Carl Cohen and who is also the main critic against the animal rights movement.

He argues in two ways. Firstly, he agrees with some element of animal rights arguments that animals are created with sensory sentiments which make them feel pain when being tortured just like humans (Cohen & Regan 135).

But in the Second aspect, he disagrees with the view that animals should have freedom of expressions and choice because they not moral agents and do not have the capacity to bear any rights. This view implies that animals are there to be utilized man at will. Man therefore has the moral obligation to use animals as objects of food, clothes and for medical research purposes. However, this must be done responsibility without inflicting pain on animals or subject them inhumane tortures and sufferings (Cohen & Regan 140).

Keeping of animals as pets

Much of man's relationship with animals largely corresponds to these two views. One area which joins all these views together is the practice of keeping of animals as pets. Keeping of animals as pest is an old event that can be traced back to ancient history where our ancestors exercised this practice. Sperllin emphasizes that the domestication of plants and animals have largely influenced the history of both man and human species. In our traditional societies, mankind used animals for hunting, farming, security, protection, food and event clothing (Sperllin 35).

According to Sperlin " the shift from hunting to farming also produced a fundamental change in human relationships with animals "(Sperlin 45). In other words, the modern development characterized by scientific discoveries, industries revolution and technological changes also affected the relationship with animals. Moreover, the keeping of animal right from traditional societies are closely linked with welfare utilitarian theory. Sperlin (223) asserts that " even in relatively strict utilitarian attitudes to domestic animals, exceptions are sometimes made". Today, the practice of keeping

animals as pets is so wide spread in almost every society in the world. For instance, it is estimated that almost half of households in the UK roughly contains a pet (Sperllin 198). Sperlin also defines the meaning of a pet as “ animal that is domesticated or tamed and kept as favorite or treated with indulgence and fondness”, though he reiterates that pets are sometimes for practical and economic purposes (212).

Animal and Pets care

The keen interest that our modern societies have in pet care careers and training shows how important pet keeping means to our modern societies. Animal and pets care a generic term used on every thing to do with animal's health care, training and treatment. There is so much information, products and accessories that deals with pet care, rearing and training. A dog is one example of a pet that is very common in every society. A dog has been a man's companion for a long time (Sperllin 129). It is a hugely important animal that is kept for different reasons and has potential benefits on our societies. Today, there are lots of career opportunities that deal with dog care and training.

Although, dog training is a new concept in today's professional world, dog were our traditional societies trained their dogs to perform different purposes. Dog training is becoming a common practice contemporary society (Sperllin 1995). As part of training, dog are conditioned to follow different levels of command. Dog have been trained to work within the military and law enforcement agencies and also in search and rescue missions in the event of a disaster. Some communities today, use dogs to

protect their homes, properties and livestock. Dogs have also been used to assist people with disabilities especially guide dogs that provides guidance to blind people.

Timm states that there are various research studies which strongly suggest that pets have played and still continue to play a big role in the lives of human kind. In most cases, the keeping of animals as pets still continues to provide emotional support and companionship to mankind. Thus this emotional support only comes from man's positive relationship with mankind which has resulted from care, training and nurture that man continues to provide (30). Some of the benefits of keeping pets include relieve from loneliness, reduction of anxiety and great companionship for children. Other animals, especially dog walking helps to people to perform exercise which helps towards the reduction of health costs. Some pests like cats for examples help mankind to reduce the presence of rats and rodents within our domestic spheres that may be detrimental to human health (Timm 20). Due to the importance of image of pets, there are so many organizations that have emerged with the view of protections animals from human harm and cruelty, providing the welfare needs of animals in our societies and there are many industries that are constantly improving new products and accessories for animals.

Conclusion

Animals have always played an important part in the lives of humanity from time immemorial. Man has always kept the animals as pets for many years, though in modern times the issues of animal care and protection have taken

centre stage in the media. The increased attention on animal keeping and pets care has been developed by philosophical arguments and campaigns carried out by the media, scholars and animal rights activists. There are two main predominant themes that form the philosophical basis for animal keeping and care in modern societies.

The first one is known as animal rights framework developed by Tom Regan, which argued that animals have rights just like human to choose what is right for them. They should not just be taken to objects of research work, food or clothing; rather, they are moral beings with feelings and right to be respected. Most animal rights activists use these arguments to campaign for animals rights, fighting against injustices and cruelty committed to by mankind. It they are against the slaughter of animals, the use of animals to conduct research tests and also used of animal products to manufactured clothing and other accessories. The second philosophical argument is associated with welfare utilitarianism. This view argues that animals were created for man's utilize and should be used for food, developing clothes, research projects and other used. But one thing they have in common is that all animals do have feelings and sentiments just like mankind, should not be treated inhumanely.