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Center for Environmental Sanitation

Environmental Ethics

Paper on

ANIMALS IN ZOOS

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ANIMALS IN ZOOS

1.0 Introduction

Zoos are defined as public parks which display animals, primarily for the purpose of recreation or education. In ancient days, rulers also kept large collections of animals as a sign of their power, which they would demonstrate on occasion by destroying their entire collection. This happened as late as 1719 when Elector Augustus II of Dresden personally slaughtered his entire menagerie, which included tigers, lions, bulls, bears and boars.

The first modern zoos were founded in Vienna, Madrid, and Paris in the eighteenth century and in London in the nineteenth. The first American zoos were established in Philadelphia and Cincinnati in the 1870s. Today in the United States alone there are hundreds of zoos, and they are visited by millions of people every year. They range from roadside menageries run by hucksters, to elaborate zoological parks staffed by trained scientists.

2.0 Some experiences of animals in Captivity/zoos

Several changes have been observed with different animals while in captivity. Some of these observations bear distinct contrasts with their counterparts still in the wild. Some of these changes are discussed below.

2.1 Physical welfare in zoo enclosures

It is regularly stated that zoo animals live in a positive welfare situation. They have plenty of food, they live in a safe environment free from predators, they receive medical care when necessary and they have the opportunity to breed and produce off springs. As zoos are increasingly depended upon sustainable captive breeding, it might be presumed that they are successful with regard to this particular welfare aspect.

However, several general points out to be raised. Firstly zoos keep a large variety of animals, which have divergent requirements for their maintenance. It is remarkable that as late as 1985 a report by the zoos of Amsterdam and Rotterdam still stated that knowledge that is indispensable for the optimal conservation of numerous species in zoo collections is still lacking to a high degree. Moreover, knowledge about the large majority of exotic species is limited. According to the report, even the most elementary data, essential for the survival and reproduction of animals in zoos (such as data concerning natural feeding, social life, and physiology and reproductive biology) are often not available.

Therefore the report says that it seems unimaginable that after 150 years of zoo history the best diet for large number of animals is still not certain. This is attributed to the limited knowledge of natural diets. Where these are known, it is often not possible to get the natural ingredients. For this reason zoo diets are largely developed through experimentation. This process initially started from almost nothing and in the past (until the mid-1960-70s) was rarely carried out on scientific way. Whereas normal veterinary

medicine work with a limited number of species and many individual animals, of which relatively much is known, zoo medicine works with many hundreds of species, very few individuals and great shortage of knowledge(Anonymous, 1985). If this information is correct, it means that a large amount of important knowledge essential to guarantee the physical welfare of many animals in zoos could either have only been developed in the last fifteen years or actually non-existent.

2.2 Social bonding

Questions ought to be raised regarding the extent to which group composition in zoos provide animals with the opportunity of a wide variety of social contact customary to the animals' own preferences. An enclosure with two (or even one) chimpanzees clearly offers much less (or no) opportunity for social contact than the group of more than twenty chimpanzees at Burgers' Zoo Island at Arnhem or the colony of eleven pygmy chimpanzees (or bonobos) at Animal park Planckendael (the outdoor zoo of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp) (Anonymous, 1985).

In 'The Great Ape Project', David Cantor of the Research and Investigations Department of the American Rights Organisation (People for the ethical treatment of animals) relates the social impacts of zoo decisions on a silverback lowland gorilla, Timmy. This gorilla had lived at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo since 1966. He was kept in isolation for years, and did not mate with two females to whom he was introduced. In 1990 the slightly older female Katie was brought in and they "quickly began to display affection for each other, playing together, having sexual relations and sleeping in each other's arms".

However, Katie could no longer conceive and it was decided to send Timmy to the Bronx Zoo, New York, in order to take part in the gorilla (Species Survival Plan, the captive breeding program). Cantor cites a primate keeper of Metroparks Zoo, Steve Gove, who said that Timmy was not a very adaptable gorilla, that he had been very shy since 1966 up until Katie's arrival and that the change might make him crawl back into his shell.

2.3 Parental behaviour

Social care by parents of their offspring may be problematic because of the interruption to the learning process in nature when they are caught. The dolphin report by Van den Sande and De Bois states that many calves seem to die in captivity because of trauma, often inflicted by the mother or by other dolphins. The comment by Bryden (Professor in Veterinary Anatomy of Sydney) relates to this. In nature, dolphin mothers are assisted by other dolphins, called 'aunts'. According to Bryden there is often a difference in their behaviour of these aunts in nature and in captivity. In nature, they support the calf by protecting it against other animals, by bringing it to the surface so that it can breathe for the first time, when it is ill or even when it is dead. In captivity the potential aunts often show little interest in ill or still-born calves; sometimes they even kill them. More than once it has been observed that the mother or other dolphins takes the still-born calf to the bottom of the pool and keeps it there. Bryden believes that the dolphins can perceive whether or not the calves are dead or alive and possibly judge the survival chances of the calves (Bryden, 1990).

2.4 Refusal of food

According to Meyer-Holzapfel, refusal of food often happens after capture or change of enclosure. She illustrates this for sea elephants and snakes, which can respectively refuse food for 40 to 100 days and for 1 to 2 years (Meyer-Holzapfel, 1968).

2.5 Compensation reactions

Birds may catch "non-existing, imaginary" insects or a cat "kills" bananas. The latter behaviour was shown by one of the civet cats at Gerald Durrell's Jersey Zoo. Before eating the banana, the animal first shook it, as if to make it lose consciousness, and then fell on it repeatedly until it was smeared over the ground. Durell supposed that this was done as some kind of substitute for natural predator behaviour (Durell, 1976).

2.6 Abnormal feeding behaviour

Copraphagy refers to active oral contacts with faeces, such as eating them or smearing them on walls with the lips. This behaviour has been seen in nature in gorillas and chimpanzees, but occurs more frequently in captivity. Once this behaviour pattern has been developed, it is very difficult to eliminate (Fritz *et al.,* 1992).

2.7 Increased passivity and apathy

Wemelsfelder (University of Leiden) refers to literally sources, according to which captive animals display more sleeping-, lying-and sitting –behaviour patterns than their counterparts in (semi-) nature.

Meyer-Holzapfel quotes an example of a female orang-utan who became apathetic when her cagemate died. She looked ill and was lying in her sleeping box for most of the day. Occasionally she sat dejected under the heating lamp. It was when a male was added to her enclosure (after more than one year of isolation) that her behaviour patters changed. She hardly slept during the daytime, she actively initiated contact and she became a lively animal again (Fritz *et al*., 1992)

2.8 Frustration

Some behaviour patterns seem to be consequence of frustration of specific forms of natural behaviour. The stereotypical tongue movements in giraffes are thought to be in part the consequence of lacking the opportunity to carry out natural, complex tongue movements. Sato and Takagaki found that the feeding on leaves, which require such complex movements, reduced the duration of this stereotypical behaviour by half (in contrast with hay feeding) Sato and Takagaki, (1991)

2.9 Stress

Refusal of food after either capture or change of enclosure may be the result of acute stress. The responsible negative effect on animal welfare caused by human visitors is a factor requiring special consideration. At San Diego Zoo, the douc langurs "have frequently been plagued by vomiting, probably caused by psychological stress". In an attempt to reduce stress, the breeding groups of this primate species have been placed behind the scene, "away from staring people and the commotion of other animals" (Peterson, 1989:288)

3.0 Some views on animal and liberty

Before considering the reasons that are usually given for the survival of zoos it should be noted that there is a generally and moral presumption against keeping wild animals in captivity. What this involves, after all, is taking animals out of their native habitats, transporting them great distances, and keeping them in alien environments in which their liberty is severely restricted. It is surely true that in being taken from the wild and confined in zoos, animals are deprived of a great many goods. For the most part they are prevented from gathering their own food, developing their own social orders, and generally behaving in ways that are natural to them. These activities all require significantly more liberty than most animals are permitted in zoos. If there is any justification in keeping animals in zoos, it must be because there are some important benefits that can be obtained only by doing so.

Either we have duties to animals or we do not. If humans have duties to animals, surely they include respecting those interests which are most important to them, so long as this does not conflict with other, more stringent duties that we may have.

4.0 Some reasons for keeping animals in zoos

Four important benefits or reasons have been put forward supporting the existence of zoos as follows: amusement, education, opportunities for scientific research and in preserving species.

4.1 Amusement

Amusement was certainly an important reason for the establishment of the early zoos, and it remains an important function of contemporary zoos as well. Most people visit zoos in order to be entertained, and any zoo that wishes to remain financially sound must cater for this desire. But although providing amusement for people is viewed by the general public as a very important function of zoos, it is hard to see how providing such amusement could possibly justify wild animals in captivity.

4.2 Education

This reason has been cited as long as zoos have existed. For example, in 1998 the New York Zoological Society resolved to take “measures to inform the public of the great decrease in animal life, to stimulate sentiment in favour of better protection, and to cooperate with other scientific bodies in efforts calculated to secure the perpetual preservation of our higher vertebrates”. Despite the nice words that are often uttered about the educational efforts of zoos, however, there is little evidence that zoos are very successful in educating people about animals. One reason why some zoos have not done a better job in educating people is that many of them make no real effort at education.

Ludwig’s study indicated that most animals are viewed only briefly as people move quickly past cages and that a typical zoo-goer stops only to watch baby animals or those who are begging, feeding, or making sounds. Of course, it is undeniable that some education occurs in some zoos. But this very fact raises other issues. What is that people learn from visiting zoos? Is it acts about the physiology and behaviour of various animals? Attitudes towards the survival of endangered species? Compassion for the fate of all animals? To what degree does education require keeping wild animals in captivity?

Couldn't most of the educational benefits of zoos be obtained by presenting films, slides, lectures, and so forth?

4.3 Scientific research

Scientific reasons had been pointed as a benefit long ago. Sir Humphrey Davy, one of the founders of the Zoological Society of London, wrote in 1825: "It would become Britain to offer another, and very different series of exhibitions to the population of her metropolis; namely, animals brought from every part of the globe to be applied either to some useful purpose, or as objects of scientific research-not of vulgar admiration!" Zoos support scientific research in at least three ways: they fund field research by scientists not affiliated with zoos; they employ other scientists as members of zoo staff, and they make other wise inaccessible animals available for study.

The first point we should note is that very few zoos support any real scientific research. Fewer still have staff scientists with full-time research appointments. Among those that do, it is common for their scientists to study animals in the wild rather than in zoo collections. Much of this research, as well as other field research that is supported by zoos, could just as well be funded in different way-say, by a government agency.

Behavioural research conducted on zoo animals is very controversial. Some have argued that nothing can be learnt by studying animals that are kept in the unnatural conditions that obtain in many zoos. Others have argued that captive animals are more interesting research subjects than are wild animals: since captive animals are free from predation, they exhibit a wider range of physical and behavioural traits than animals in the wild, thus permitting researchers to view the full range of their genetic possibilities. Both of these positions are surely extreme.

Studies in anatomy and pathology are the most common forms of zoo research. Such research has three main purposes: to improve zoo conditions so that captive animals will live longer, be happier, and breed more frequently; to contribute to human health by providing animal models for human ailments; and to increase our knowledge of wild animals for its own sake.

The first of these aims is surely laudable, if we concede that there should be zoos in the first place. But the fact that zoo research contributes to improving conditions in the zoo is not a reason for having them. If there were no zoos, there would be no need to improve them.

The second aim, to contribute to human health by providing animal models for human ailments, appears to justify zoos to some extent, but in practice this consideration is not as important as one might think. There are very severe constraints on the experiments that may be conducted in zoo animals. In a 1982 article, Montali and Bush drew the following conclusions:

Despite the great potential of a zoo as a resource for models, there are many limitations and, of necessity, some restrictions for use. There is little opportunity for conduct overly manipulative or invasive research procedures-probably less than would be allowed in clinical research trials

involving human beings. Many of the species are difficult to work with or are difficult to breed, so that the numbers of animals available for study are limited. In fact , it is safe to say that over the past years , humans have served more as 'animal models' for zoo species than is true of the reverse.

4.4 Species preservation

A fourth reason for having zoos is that they preserve species that would otherwise become extinct. As the destruction of habitat accelerates and as breeding programs become increasingly successful, this rationale for zoos gains in popularity. There is some reason for questioning the commitment of zoos to preservation: it can be argued that they continue to remove more animals from the wild more than they return. Still zoo breeding programs have had some notable successes: without them animals like the Pére Deer, the Mongolian wild Horse, and the European Bison would all now be extinct. Recently however, some problems have begun to be noticed.

A study by Katherine Ralls, Kristin Brugger, and Jonathan Ballou (1979) convincingly argues that the lack of genetic diversity among captive animals is a serious problem for zoo breeding programs. In some species the infant mortality rate among inbred animals is six or seven times that among non-bred animals. In other species the infant mortality among inbred animals is 100%. What is most disturbing is that zoo curators have been largely unaware of the problems caused by inbreeding because adequate breeding and health records are not kept. It is hard to believe that zoos are serious about their role in preserving endangered species when all too often they do not even take this minimal step.

In addition to these problems, the lack of genetic diversity among captive animals also means that surviving members of endangered species have traits very different from their counterparts in the wild. This should make us wonder what is really being preserved in zoos. There is another problem with zoo breeding programs, they create many unwanted animals. In some species (lions, tigers, and zebras, for example) a few males can service an entire herd. Extra males are unnecessary to the program and are a financial burden. Some of these animals are sold and end up in hands of individuals and institutions which lack proper facilities. Others are shot and killed by Great White Hunters in private hunting camps. In order to avoid this problem, some zoos have been considering proposals to "recycle" excess animals: a euphemism for killing them and feeding their bodies to other zoo animals. Many people are surprised when they hear of zoos killing animals. They should not be. Zoos have limited capacities. They want to maintain diverse collections. This can be done only by careful management of their "stock".

5.0 Zoos of today

Early zoos were explicitly meant to demonstrate and celebrate the domination of nature by man Bradford and Bloom (1992). These days however, wildlife conservation parks have risen to replace them. In their current reinvention zoos are being pitched as the last best hope foe endangered wildlife. For advocates of zoos, they say the past is evil but fortunately always behind us. The present is good, and the future promises to be even better-assuming the money still holds out.

Critics of zoos rightly see this attitude as self-servicing and disingenuous. Most zoos are still in the business of entertainment rather than species preservation. Despite protestations to the contrary, most zoos are still more or less random collections of animals kept under largely bad conditions.
Although the best zoos have been concerned to position themselves as environmental heroes, they have done little to promote this ethic in zoo industry as a whole. Even the best zoos have problems with preventable mortality and morbidity due to accidents or abuse and are too often in league, wittingly or unwittingly, with people whose idea of a good animal is one that turns a quick profit. Even now, with the bad old days presumably behind us, there is not much ground for complacency.
Still, it is clear that zoos are changing they are becoming more naturalistic in environment, focusing more on species preservation and scientific research and less on entertainment. Zoos in the future, at least the better ones, will increasingly become more like parks.

6.0 Arguments in keeping animals in captivity

Keeping animals in captivity usually involves restricting their liberty in ways that deny them from many good things including gathering their food, developing their own social orders, and generally behaving in ways that are natural to them. In the case of many animals captivity also involves removing them from their native habitats and conditions. If animals have moral standing at all, then it is plausible to suppose that depriving them of liberty is presumably wrong, since an interest in liberty is central to most morally significant creatures. Such presumption has recently been challenged (Leahy, 1991). If Leahy is correct in thinking that there is no such presumption, then there is no general reason for being opposed to zoos. The acceptability of keeping animals in captivity would turn entirely on a case-by-case examination of the conditions under which various animals are kept. Before considering Leahy's argument against the presumption, let us first consider the view to which he is committed.

The idea that there is a presumption against keeping animals in captivity implies that it is not a matter of moral indifference whether animals are kept captive. But it carries no implication about how strong the presumption is. People who agree that there is a presumption against keeping animals in captivity can disagree about the strength of the presumption or about whether it is permissible to keep an animal in captivity in a particular case. What Leahy is committed to is the view that everything else is equal, it is a matter of moral indifference as to whether animals are kept in captivity; we might as well flip a coin. He believes that this view is implausible.

Although it is difficult to perform this thought experiment, imagine that we could guarantee the same or better quality of life for an animal in a zoo than the animal would enjoy in the wild. Suppose further that there are no additional benefits to humans or animals that would be gained by keeping the animal in captivity. The only difference between these two cases that might be relevant is that in one case the animal is confined to a zoo and in the other case the animal is free to pursue his or her own life It is believed that most people would say that it would be morally preferable for the animal to be free rather than captive. In others opinion this shows that most of the people believe that there

is a moral presumption against keeping animals in captivity. Such a presumption is indicated in various ways. For example, sometimes it is said that keeping in captivity is a privilege that involves assuming special obligations for the animal's welfare. This expresses the sense believed that in confining an animal we are in some way wronging him or her, and thus owe him or her some compensation.

With this result in mind, let us consider Leahy's arguments. He appears to offer two. The first (following Hediger 1964) involves the claim that animals are not truly free in the wild. They are constrained by ecological and social pressures and are "struck down by natural predators and diseases which, quite reasonably, can be said to limit their freedom" (Leahy 1991:242). Since animals are not truly free in the wild, keeping them in captivity does not deprive them of liberty. The second argument is a conceptual one. According to Leahy, animals do not have language and are not self-conscious; therefore they cannot make choices or raise objections. Since they cannot make choices or raise objections, they cannot be said to live their own lives. Since they cannot live their own lives, they can never really be free. Since animals can never really be free, confining them in zoos dose not deprive them of their freedom.
The first argument is intended to show that as a matter of fact animals are not free in their natural habitats while the second argument is intended to show that animals can never be free under any circumstances. There is no presumption against keeping them in captivity because in neither case does captivity deprive them of something that they have in the wild.
We should see first that these arguments do not really question the view that there is a presumption against depriving animals of liberty. What these arguments are supposed to show is that animals do not or cannot have liberty, thus they are not deprived of it by captivity. If it could be shown that animals do have liberty in the wild but not in captivity, then Leahy might agree that there is a presumption against keeping animals in captivity on grounds that it deprives them of liberty.

The topic of self-consciousness is a difficult one. Philosophers and psychologists often use this concept in different ways. One approach, characteristic of Descartes and much of the philosophical tradition, associates self-consciousness with the ability to use language or complex systems. But even if it were agreed that the use of complex systems is required for self-consciousness, it would appear that various primates could satisfy this criterion and thus would be excluded from the scope of Leahy's conclusion Herman and Morrel-Samuels (1990); Savage-Rumbaugh and Brakke (1990).

Leahy's first argument attempts to show not that animals cannot be free under any conditions but that as a matter of fact they are not free in the wild. The idea is that if they are not free in the wild, then they lose nothing when they are confined in zoos. The evidence for the claim that animals are not free in the wild is that they are constrained by ecological and social pressures and are struck down by natural predators and diseases.

If pointing to ecological and social pressures were sufficient for showing that an animal is not free, it would prove too much, for all organisms, including humans, are constrained by ecological and social pressures. The most that this claim could establish is that social

and ecological pressures restrict animals to such an extent that they are freer in captivity than they are in the wild.

6.1 Zoos as preservers of endangered species

There are a number of arguments against zoos as meaningful sites for preserving endangered species. First, such preservation is needed; it is rightly pointed out, because we are loosing species at an enormous rate. But although estimates differ and not at all the facts are known, it is obvious that not more than a tiny fraction of these species can be preserved in zoos. Secondly, only a small number of the species preserved could ever be reintroduced into their natural habitats. Indeed most attempts at reintroduction have failed (Beck 1995). Finally over many generations the genetic structure and behaviour of captive breeding and reintroduction can play in the preservation of endangered species is at best marginal. Thus the benefit of preservation is not significant enough to overcome the presumption against depriving an animal of its liberty.

Defenders of zoos say that the burden is on the other side, for captive breeding keeps option open. True enough. We ought to keep options open, not only for ourselves but for the future people as well. Unless the presumption that animals should not be kept in captivity can be overcome by the moral case for keeping options open, this observation does not carry much weight. It certainly does not establish a burden of proof.

There is another dimension to this dispute. The critics of zoos point out that breeding and reintroduction programs can be extremely invasive, involving not just denials of liberty but sometimes pain and suffering for individuals. Defenders of zoos sometimes say that this suffering is for the good of the species.

7.0 Personal analysis of various arguments

It was indicated earlier that most zoos were initially created for the purpose of amusement. The mere looking or watching at animals in zoos may be regarded as "passive" amusement. In such a situation some people might be of the opinion that this activity poses no harm to these animals just by looking or watching at them as people walk by. However, this writer is of the opinion that some animals even get scared at the site of persons either in singles or in large groups as the case may be. This could be realised when these animals tend to run away from visitors or hide behind objects. For an animal to change its position or hide just at the site of visitors is already an indication that it is not in favour of seeing people. Thus this practice of animal keeping in zoos is therefore not in favour of the animal in captivity but in favour of man or people advocating for zoos.

There seem to be another "crude" form of amusement rendered on animals by human beings. In this situation, animals are allowed to fight amongst themselves (same species) or with members of different species both to the delight of human spectators.

Bullfights are again another cruel form of animal amusement. It is termed 'crude' because it appears that the main objective of these fights with animals is to induce harm, injury and pain to these animals to the satisfaction of human beings. However, this bullfight has not been dealt with in this paper but mentioned here because it is agreed that animals are also used as a means of entertainment.

If people derive entertainment from such activities concerning animals then, it will be better if human beings could be in the position to accept members of their own species to do the same thing as well. If it is a good practice why use animals for it and not human beings? Of what importance are these fights towards the welfare of the animals involved in the game? The word 'cruel' will be very justified to describe such activities by man on animals.

7.1 Education

Accepting that zoos play a role in education is just a means of hiding man's guilt toward these creatures. This was never the basis or reasons put forward when zoos were created. Education is just an added reason to at least give a justification as to why animals have to be placed in zoos. I am of the opinion that any education derived from animals could be better carried out in their natural environment or in the wild rather than in zoos. No amount of research or knowledge derived from animals in captivity can compensate for the detention or deprivation of animals from their inherent rights if and only if it is agreed that animals are due some rights in the first place.

7.2 Research

Sir Humphrey Davy mentioned that animals were brought from all over the globe to London to be applied in some 'useful ' purpose, or as objects of scientific research-not as vulgar admiration. To him research was a more comfortable and good reason for animals other than for admiration purpose. Seemingly, he should equally be in support with the situation whereby prisoners have been used as research tools when testing the efficacy of a drug without their prior consent. I am in no way trying to put animals and human beings on the same level.

If the research on zoo animals is to achieve better conditions for animals in zoos, then there is really no sense out of this. The reason is that: We have created zoos to fit our taste and therefore cannot be justified in trying to improve the zoo situation by performing research on zoo animals. If there is any justification in improving the welfare of animals, this should be done in their natural habitat and not in captivity. Even a human being without a descent home is 'better' under a tree than in confinement.

7.3 Species preservation

The questions to be asked here are-What have caused the preservation of some species? Are animals themselves responsible for some species to be reduced or go into extinction? Is predation responsible for some species going to extinction? Conservation of some species is as a result of human activities on the environment. Man has been very unsustainable with its ecosystem and this has lead to overexploitation of certain species of animals thus leading to shortage. This is already the first harm man has imposed on the animals. Because of this, man again has gone further to confine some of these animals because of fear that they may go extinct. What I find easier and worth doing is for man to manage the animal population in the wild in such a way that will not lead them to extinction. There will be less cost in exercising proper animal population management in the wild than trying to maintain its population in zoos. If over exploitation has resulted to the opening of zoos for the sake of preserving species, then it wise to close the zoos and

manage animal population sustainably in the wild. Over exploitation is the cause and zoos are the effect thus constituting a cause and effect situation.
If the forces of nature were responsible for the extinction of certain animal species, then there could be a justification for the preservation of these species in zoos.
Preserving animals in zoos and reintroducing them into the wild may probably not solve the problem of extinction. This is because the human activities leading to their depletion or extinction will still persist. Therefore a complete or total band on the exploitation of animals and endangered species is better to be efficiently enforced than confining them in zoos and reintroducing them into the wild just for them to be tempered with again by human activities. This is seen as a double tragedy on the part of the animals concerned (i.e. confinement and then disturbance by human activities).

7.4 The situation of zoos today

The impression given by zoos of today is that, there are better than those of the past. What I will like to state here is that, because of the pressure and/or criticisms about the existence of zoos, or keeping animals in captivity, zoo owners have merely added other goals or objectives for maintaining them. By doing so, they have merely shifted the emphasis from entertainment to other things as education, research and species preservation and these were not part of the initial objectives for opening zoos.
It is difficult to cancel out the idea of financial profits and entertainment from the zoo industry. These two things are the main objectives or reasons for the zoo industry. It is definite that the human being gains more in this zoo venture and this gain is not comparable with whatever is thought of as being beneficial to the animals that are in captivity. Thus in the actual sense of it all, there is nothing as a good or bad zoo. A zoo remains a zoo with no qualification of it being bad or good.

7.5 Adaptability of animals

Most of the animals in zoos are not indigenous of the area they find themselves. For example tropical animals like elephants, tigers and lions are forced to live in temperate climatic conditions where the zoos are situated. There is no evidence anywhere to show that these animals have developed features with time that have made them adapted to this new climate. Yet it is thought that these animals have been brought to where they are for their own good. It is like taking a person from tropical Africa to Europe and not providing him with a winter coat or any heating facility just because it is believed that his stay in Europe will be of benefit to him.

7.6 Liberty of animals

An animal's natural home or place is in the wild. The question is-What makes some human beings feel that for animals, the zoo is a better place for them since it is claimed that being in the zoo or in captivity is for their good?
According to Leahy's first argument in which he claims that animals are not truly free in the wild because they are constrained by ecological and social pressures, struck down by natural predators and diseases are seen as limiting their freedom. In this argument, he holds the opinion that escaping the presence of predators is an element indicating freedom for the animal. He has not equally considered the situation on the part of the animal in the zoo that has been deprived of its own natural prey as well.

Apart from the animal's prey it has been deprived of, the animal in the zoo will not be exposed or given the food that was available in its natural ecosystem or in the wild. Furthermore, there is no scientific prove or evidence that with the animal in captivity, its possibility of contracting disease is decreased. Conversely, living in a confined environment makes the animal more exposed to diseases. It should be noted that the animal must have been deprived of its natural food (forage or vegetation) which in some occasions act as medicines for curing certain illnesses that might have been contracted in the wild.

His second argument that animals cannot be free because they do not have language and are not self-conscious, therefore they cannot make choices or raise objections, they cannot be said to live their lives. If this premise holds true, then it will also imply that a new born baby who has no language, no self-consciousness and cannot make a choice or raise objections can be equally placed in captivity for the purpose of entertainment, education, scientific research etc as animals. The same will be true for mentally retarded adults who may posse the above characteristics.

If the presumption of putting animals in captivity is a privilege that involves assuming special obligation for the animals' welfare, then this alone is an indication of wrong done to them therefore justifying such compensation? Thus people will not be forced to giving special treatment to zoo animals or ensuring their welfare if they are not in the first place put in captivity. Furthermore, it is not proven any where that the welfare accorded to animals in captivity is near what they ought to have if left in the wild. This special welfare in zoos might not really compensate these animals for the lost they experience compared to their lives in the wild.

7.8 Species versus creatures' preservation

There seem to be too much focus on preserving species rather than preserving creatures in general. This therefore gives the impression that the criteria for selecting which species or animal to be preserved in zoos is solely depending on the species which are of some economic or social benefit to human beings. This is another presumption for thinking that preserving animals in zoos is not really intended to be of the animals' interest of continuous survival but human interest. When one considers a cross section of animals in zoos, one seems to realise that, most animals in zoos are those that man has a close interaction with them in the wild.

A closer look at the different animal populations in zoos will illustrate that most animals are not indigenous in the cities or countries where they have been placed in captivity. This brings to light the idea that zoos are mostly created to keep and demonstrate to the public those animals that cannot be seen in the countries where these zoos are located. If keeping animals in zoos was in the interest of the animals themselves, then tropical animals should be kept in the tropical zoos and temperate animals in temperate countries.

If really the intensions of preserving species or creatures in zoos are to prolong or guarantee their continuous existence, then a better way to do it would be to preserve the

entire ecosystem where these animals stay. There is no realistic justification for destroying someone's home or killing them, in order to take the remainder ones into custody, confinement or captivity with the reason that you want to preserve their existence or welfare. This is similar to creating a war situation in a country whereby human beings are to be killed and their homes destroyed. Knowing that these people do not have any other means of surviving in their indigenous homes/countries, and then the solution is to create asylum conditions for them in different countries with very different living conditions comparable to the restrictions rendered to animals.

The questions therefore are-Do we allow asylum laws to continue because we are aware that we will continue to interfere with human population and existence in their natural homes/countries because we will afford to provide them with alternative homes or countries? Or do we stop asylum because we know that we as human beings will not allow man made tragedies to be inflicted on people where they have been naturally placed to live?
A similar scenario can be placed forward in relation to animals and zoos. We maintain zoos because we continue to interfere with animal populations and existence where they naturally live. The only way to stop zoos is to stop interfering with these animals where nature has placed them.

8.0 Conclusion

In my opinion, I recognise that zoos are for us human beings rather than for the animals we pretend to protect. Our ideas on preservation or ensuring their continuous existence both in numbers and the different species are basically geared towards man's interest rather than an act of pure generosity towards these animals that we tend to destroy and at the same time pretend to preserve.

Human beings have just take the advantage of their position in the food chain and food web in the global ecosystem resulting from their intelligence to impose man-centred pressure on these innocent living creatures called animals.

The Biblical concept of man placed in control of the rest of the creatures does not make it a right for us to claim absolute control over the less intelligent members of the same ecosystem. It is like saying parents of a new-born baby have absolute power to determine what ever thing they will want to do with the baby even though being a human being but has almost similar characteristics of the lower animals.

The fact that human beings have the ability and capacity to control the lower animals does not necessarily make them to have absolute dominance over them whereby they can decide their fate in just any way they feel. Rather, we should regard animals as just another species or group of living organisms with whom we all share the same ecosystem and thus treat them humanely despite our status or position in the food chain.
In so far as zoos distant us from the truth about ourselves and what we are doing to nature, they are a part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

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