

Exploitation of mammals

As a possible factor of social pathology

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Abstract: Modern society undoubtedly depends heavily on the utilization of natural resources. In particular, animals are widely utilized in industries such as food, commerce, and research. These animals include mammals, which are considered very similar to human beings. Although researchers have examined the utilization of animals from an animal rights perspective, few have examined how such acts actually affect us as human beings. Deconstructionism posits that multiple and contradictory meanings, which traditional thinking often ignores, are found when the specific meaning of a text is removed. This paper attempts to deconstruct and examine the human acts of eating and otherwise utilizing mammals to see the implication of human treatment of other living beings as simple material resources.

Keywords: animal treatment, animal abuse, human violence, human well-being, psychological effect,

1. Introduction

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a welcome statement to the adoption of the outcomes of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) held in Japan in 2010 [108]. This new protocol sets ground rules for “improving access to, and the equitable sharing of, the world's genetic resources” by providing an innovative approach to conserve and protect the world's rapidly diminishing “living resources” [1]. This conference was hosted by the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), a part of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The world's genetic resources here include a wide range of flora and fauna.

Ki-Moon's statement clearly represents the stance of modern society regarding nature. Humans need nature for

material resources. There is no doubt that modern society depends heavily on the utilization of natural resources. Animals are especially utilized in the industries of food, commerce, research (e.g., biomedical, behavioral, wildlife, and cosmetic safety), education, entertainment (e.g., zoos and circuses), religious practice, and companionship [2]. Included among these animals are mammals, which are considered to be very close to human beings in kinship. Although there are researchers who examine these utilizations from an animal rights perspective, very few researchers have examined how such acts actually affect us as human beings. Deconstructionism posits that the context of a person's society influences his or her interpretation of a phenomenon and that multiple and contradictory meanings are found when the specific meaning of a text is removed.

However, traditional thinking often ignores this reality [3], [4], [110]. The uses of mammals can be broadly divided into two groups: eating mammals as food and other utilizations. Thus, this paper will attempt to deconstruct and examine these two types of acts to see what it means for human beings to treat other living beings as simple material resources.

2. Deconstructing the act of eating mammals as food

Today, beef and pork are central to our meals, especially in Western and Westernized countries, where hamburgers, steaks, pork chops, etc. have become increasingly popular. There are multiple reasons that so many people desire these foods, including taste, caloric properties, nutrition, and tradition. There is also an unspoken custom that, without meat, a meal is missing its main dish. However, various studies have shown that there is not much difference between human flesh and animal meat in terms of content, except for our feelings that the former is of our own kind [5], [6]. This means that, in a sense, we are practically eating our own flesh almost every day. It is well known that when cattle eat cattle bone chips, they suffer physical abnormalities, such as mad cow disease [7]. However, we humans, as omnivores, do not appear to develop the clear health abnormalities that herbivores do by eating virtual human flesh. Indeed, genes found among the remains of ancient Azteca people proved their habit of eating human flesh as a regular food [8]. There is a possibility that cannibalism occurred more often than we would expect in ancient times [9]-[13]. We ceased this custom partly because of our intentional efforts to distance today's civilized society from the uncivilized barbarism of our ancient societies [14], [15].

Our DNA is roughly 95% identical to that of chimpanzees [16]-[18], [111]. Moreover, nearly 95% of what chimpanzees eat is plants [19], [20]. This logically leads us to assume that human beings are more oriented towards plant foods [21]-[23]. It has increasingly become accepted that Plio/Pleistocene hominids first came to eat meat

through scavenging [24]. The change in practice was likely part of an adjustment to unstable or geographically disadvantaged environmental conditions, in which plant foods were not easily available [25]. This means that, originally, meat was not meant for human consumption, although some researchers claim that meat played a significant role in the further development of the human brain—and, thus, further human evolution [26]. Meat represents only 5% of a chimpanzee diet, and this meat mainly comes from smaller monkeys. However, even when chimpanzees do eat meat, they do so mainly as a means of attracting the opposite sex [27]; in fact, they tend to chew the meat and spit it out rather than actually taking it in and digesting it [28]. Interestingly, a similar phenomenon can be observed among people who eat meat often. Sociological studies have found that some of those who regularly eat meat dishes do so partly as a means to attract females [29]. Such meat eaters like to demonstrate that they have power and status by eating meat intentionally [30]. Thus, in sum, it seems that meat did not originally, at least, serve as an indispensable source of energy and nutrition in the survival of human beings [31] [107].

Meat is known to make those who consume it more aggressive by boosting their energy levels [32]-[34]. Research suggests that the manipulation of endogenous and exogenous hormones could lead to increased production of red meat among meat-producing animals, which indicates another possible interrelation between the male hormone and red meat [35]. In the very beginning of human history, meat was likely only available in cases when animals were accidentally killed by lightning, or when carcasses were left by predators. In a sense, it was a “lucky food,” which had a high concentration of nutrition and energy. Thus, continued consumption of such a special energy booster means constantly gaining extra energy, which is unnecessary for living normal daily lives. This could lead to higher levels of daily human aggression. The serial killer Albert Fish, who killed and ate a 10-year-old girl, reportedly ate raw steak. Eating raw meat and cannibalism were highly likely to be connected in his mind [36]. In 2014,

the U.S., the U.K., and Germany had the highest crime rates in the world. It cannot be denied that the relatively higher meat consumptions of these three countries (compared to other countries) partly contributed to this result.

If human beings were originally meant to be a predator, our meat-eating behavior should be supported by all indicators. However, research studies have pointed out various connections between the excessive consumption of red meat, which mainly comes from pigs and cows, and colorectal cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, etc. [37]-[44], [109]. All these health reports seem to indicate that our current habit of eating the flesh of mammals is at least not perfectly in line with the natural design of the human body.

3. Deconstructing the act of utilizing mammals

We utilize mammals in a variety of fields. In experiments, perfectly healthy mammals are intentionally injured, infected, or drugged to examine how they react, both physically and mentally [45]-[46]. In the fur industry, we either hunt wild mammals or raise animals to provide the fur. Wild mammals are either shot or trapped. Mammals are raised as quickly as possible until they are ready for the fur cropping. The lower the expense, the more profit fur companies receive. This inevitably leads to the deterioration of their living environment. A similarly poor living environment is witnessed in case of live-stock, as well [47]. In some cases, animals are even deprived of their furs while they are still alive.

It is undeniable that, among all animals, mammals are the closest kin to human beings, and do have sentience and feelings. The outpouring of global support to save dolphins is a one good illustration that people do recognize our similarities as a fact. To treat animals simply as "things," completely ignoring these emotional aspects, is an act of "betrayal"—both of the animals' trust and of the stewardship bestowed upon human beings [48]-[52].

According to Mason (1998), this betrayal began due to population pressure in the

Middle East, which created the need to control the reproductive lives of animals in a way similar to plant domestication to secure more food. This divide created between humans and nature has been justified, reinforced, and socially established by misinterpreting Christianity and misapplying the anthropocentrism represented by Descartes [53], who advocated that nonhuman animals can be viewed as no more than machines with intricately assembled parts. These selfish and distorted views, as well as the subsequent exploitations of nature, are considered to have led us to today's environmental destructions. Moreover, they have served as the very root of all sorts of evil acts by human beings, since, by condoning unjust acts on beings other than human beings, we have been preserving the same negative factors in the human kingdom, which thus far have encroached on human beings on countless occasions [54]-[57]. As long as this unjust element remains in the human world, human beings are never completely safe; instead, we are doomed in the end environmentally and psychologically.

Mammals are exploited either for what they have (e.g., meat and fur) or for what they can do (e.g., experiments) for human benefits. Regardless of the usage, when mammals are treated as things, their feelings become irrelevant, unwanted, and bothering pieces of collateral, which must be intentionally ignored or denied to perceive the living beings as simple material goods [58]. In this sense, the exploitation of mammals is said to be one of the most typical cases of *compartmentalization/dehumanization* (CP/DH), which is a mental device that makes all inhumane acts possible. Compartmentalization separates *us* from *them* and limits our care only to *us*. Dehumanization intentionally manipulates the image of *others* so that they are worse than what they really are and it is easier for us to harm them [59]. CP/DH is a mental device that is habitually used whenever truths need to be distorted.

Treating mammals as things clearly involves an aspect that goes against our nature. This is why we leave animal slaughters to limited people in isolated and hidden sites. The difficulty of enforcing morality in the meat industries stems from the same factor [60]-[62]. The enforcement of moral behavior simply contradicts companies' business of killing sentient beings. This fundamental moral contradiction makes workers psychologically unwilling and reluctant to follow other company rules. Thus, understanding their immoral business operations, come companies are very careful about creating a positive public image. McDonald's is known to use its clown character and toys for kids, together with its company logo with a big yellow M on a red background, to represent a happy experience. However, seeing from a cow's perspective, although this yellow M may stand for human happiness, the red might as well be seen as representing the blood cows shed, which is occasionally shown by journalists to fill the floors of slaughter houses. There are views that see such a stance of pursuing happiness at the expense of others as being culturally biased [63]. If we follow such views, we would probably be pursuing options that taste exactly like steaks and hamburgers without using actual meat, using today's science and technology.

4. Human behavior repeats one basic pattern

Hunting, experimenting, and raising livestock are akin to assault, murder, kidnapping, abuse, torture, maiming, confinement, dismemberment of carcasses, and cannibalization (if conducted with human beings), all of which are first-degree felonies. In other words, human society is running essentially on blatant felony crimes and cannibalism. It is no wonder that policies to crack down on violent crimes and efforts to stop wars have never been truly successful, since we are nonchalantly condoning these vicious acts in the case of mammals. Our society is practically advocating two perfectly contradicting directions at the same time. Abnormality is defined as being different from what is normal or average: unusual especially in a way that causes problems [64]. The current dysfunctional, problem-causing global current, in this sense, is considered

to be nothing but abnormal.

Many cases have been reported in which war veterans and police officers commit violent acts, such as physical altercations, domestic violence, corporal punishment, etc., outside their duty. Although they are trained to switch their behaviors when on duty and off duty, this switch does not always work perfectly [65]-[68]. It is natural for people to act always the same at all times [69]-[71]. As a result, police officers' on-duty behavior patterns very easily cross into their family and civilian lives. Other good examples of people following a basic behavior pattern can also be seen in a variety of other arenas. For example, Kim Jong Un has been repeating the cleansing of those people whom he suspects of betraying him after killing his uncle, who was once his closest advisor. This repetitive tendency, which we see at individual levels, can also be seen at group levels. Just as teachers see each class as having a different character, families, schools, companies, cities, and countries all have different personas, as if they were individuals. People's behaviors as whole groups are also very much based on a certain pattern [16], [72]. It has been confirmed that Nazi Germany, before committing the genocide of the Jewish people, first administered the eradication of alien plants [73], [74]. This same pattern can be seen simultaneously at the micro and macro levels of a group [75], [76]. For example, when an authoritarian administration is in power at a company or government level, individuals or social institutions under the administration also become authoritarian [77], [78]. This not only attracts the same type of authoritarian people, but is also easier for those who were not originally authoritarian to switch to an authoritarian manner (rather than to acting in a democratic manner against the surrounding social current). The spread of McCarthy's Red Scare and J. Edgar Hoover's various anti-communist activities were two instances under the Truman administration that addressed communism, ultimately leading to the final use of the two nuclear bombs on Japan—a move that is still fresh in our history.

All of these cases show that human beings, whether individually or in groups, tend to behave basically with the same simple pattern, which is repeated everywhere, at both micro and macro levels [79]-[81]. If this is true, what our society is regularly doing to mammals cannot be considered to relate only to mammals. Instead, this indicates that there is ample possibility that if similar abusive behaviors are repeated daily, we, as human beings, could easily cross the line in terms of the basic behavior patterns of our society. As seen with police officers or war veterans, our routine attitudes cannot be easily stopped for our convenience. It is more natural for us to stick with a normal, simple behavior pattern. Indeed, such transfers of fixed behavior patterns already happen in numerous areas. It is known that the automation system developed for efficient animal slaughter was used first for automobile production by Ford, and then for the killing of Jewish people [82]-[84]. It has also been confirmed that a family that engages in animal abuse also has a higher possibility of involving child abuse or domestic violence [85]-[86]. The order of transfer does not matter—whether it goes from the father to other family members or from the father to the pet. In either direction, such violent behavior patterns “stay in the family.” In the same way, what is condoned in one corner of society always has the potential of transferring to other corners, regardless of the subject.

5. Systematical Promotion of Less Empathy by Society

In our society, there are those who are called *psychopaths*. Approximately 1 to 4% of our population is estimated to be psychopath; these do not feel empathy, guilt, or conscience [87], [88]. Around 50% of those afflicted with this disorder are considered to be designed by genes, and the other 50% become who they are through environmental influences. That is, in addition to the prototype that is primarily designed through transmission (i.e., *primary psychopath*), there are also other types, who acquire the same traits mainly through the course of their environmental adjustments (e.g., *secondary psychopath*). This secondary type intentionally kills feelings of empathy and conscience

to survive in adverse environments [89]. Behind the most incredibly cruel and gruesome human acts lurk these psychopaths, who lack empathy, which is the very foundation upon which the safety of our society depends. If these people are created by our society, and society itself is practically founded on killing and exploiting living beings with feelings, logically, our society is in effect reproducing the dangers in our lives by systematically promoting less empathy in its members.

In all eras, some political figures and movements, such as Putin, Kim Jong Un, ISIS, and so forth, will always try to disturb world peace. However, this is not necessarily irrelevant to a lack of empathy, which we are discussing here, since most of these figures are also assumed to have been raised in a manner that disregards human emotions [90], [91]. For example, Putin was raised in emotional neglect in a family that was deeply involved in war and lacked emotional communications [92]. Kim Jong Un was spoiled, but in an authoritarian environment. Considering that hardcore members of gang groups are likely to be psychopathic [93], it is highly likely that hardcore members of other violent groups, such as ISIS, are also psychopathic, partially as a result of their own personal and psychological problems. Assuming that those who threaten world peace are also created in family and social environments that do not foster empathy, it is considered all the more important for us to pay attention to increasing the amount of empathy in our society.

6. Global Necessity to Change Direction

In 2010, the UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) international panel of sustainable resource management reported the necessity of a global shift towards a vegan diet to save the world from hunger, fuel poverty, and the worst impacts of climate change [94]. This action indicates that Western tastes for diets rich in meat and dairy products are not necessarily indispensable, illustrating the need to shift our current unsustainable worldwide dietary habits away from animal products, so that we can reduce impacts on agriculture at a substantial levels. Human beings,

by misusing their special memorizing ability, created their own world and completely detached it from the world of animals, which are the very symbol of Nature in that they can move like human beings [25]. The destructive and cruel acts toward Nature, which can never be allowed to human beings, have been haunting the human world, and are now finally taking its toll. This change of direction proposed by the environmental sector is highly welcomed from a social safety perspective that we are discussing. We are currently being pressed into the direction that has long been suggested by animal rights groups—but we are being pressed by the need to ensure our own human sustainability and safety. In today's age, when the world's population is expected to reach 9.1 billion by the year 2050 [95], we simply cannot continue the inconsistent behaviors of the present. Scientific evidence across disciplines is now pointing to the same direction.

7. Need for the Objective Scale to Measure the Level of Empathy

To measure a person's degree of psychopathy, there is a scale called the Psychopathy Check List-Revised (PCL-R) created by Hare [96]. This scale consists of 20 items, which cover interpersonal, affective, lifestyle, and antisocial facets, including a lack of empathy, egocentricity, pathological lying, a history of victimizing others, promiscuity, etc. Each of the 20 items in the PCL-R is scored on a three-point scale (i.e., 0, 1, 2). In the United States, if the sum total of all scores is higher than 30 (out of a maximum score of 40), a subject is labeled as a psychopath [106]. This scale has significantly contributed to accurately measuring this human trait, which cannot be easily seen from the outside, worldwide. From the standpoint of social safety, it seems critical to devise a similar scale that can reliably measure the level of human empathy, regardless of the individual or the social institution. For example, if we could accurately and officially judge the empathy level of the tyrannical administration of a country, the results would serve as a powerful index in the world's efforts to lead such a country in a more humane direction. It could also be a great

contribution to an improved level of literacy among humanity as a whole.

Empathy is defined as the ability to understand what another person is experiencing, using the capacity to place oneself in another's shoes [96]. The word *empathy* is derived from the Ancient Greek word *empathia*, which consists of *en*, which means *at*, and *patheia*, which means *suffering* [97]. Empathy originally meant paying attention to others' pain. There are two types of empathy. One is affective empathy, which is the capacity to respond with an appropriate emotion to another's mental state, based on emotional contagion. The other is cognitive empathy, which involves understanding another's perspective or mental state [98]. To make our society a truly safe place for everybody, we must promote affective empathy as best as we can—a goal that should altogether prevent us from acts of causing pain to others. *Civilization* is defined as showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement, both of which involve reasonable, ethical, and humane behaviors [99]. *Humanity*, on the other hand, is defined as being humane and benevolent [64]. In both definitions (i.e., humanity and civilization), the quality of being *humane* seems to be the key. This quality is characterized by tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for both people and animals—and, especially, for the suffering or distressed [64]. This means that both civilization and humanity are qualities that are not species-specific, which we have been discussing is critical to ensuring the safety of our society. The utilization of mammals, which are so close to human beings, as human resources/materials is always accompanied by great risks and dangers for human beings themselves. It is always easier for negative human aspects to first be applied to those who cannot vocally complain or object [100]-[102]. This reality significantly affects the mental nature of our social constitution. Thus, when we devise a scale to measure empathy, acts towards mammals should be included as one of the most essential parts. Considering the high potentiality of such acts to transfer to humans, it is appropriate to count their scores, multiplied by

a factor of .8. The following is one possible proposal of an empathy scale:

Table 1: Scale of Uncivilized Level (SUL)

Facet 1 Damage/Pain level on the subject(s) (Score 3-10)

Neglect (Light 3–Severe 6)

Psychological abuse (3–7)

Sexual abuse (6–7)

Physical abuse (5–9)

Killing (9–10)

Facet 2 Harm/Conviction level of the agent (0.5-1.0)

Accidental/No knowledge/Guilt/Concern (0.5)

Ignorant / In vogue/Pressure by others (0.6)

Revenge (0.7)

Irresponsible/Justification/Defensive/Rigid /Dogmatic/Business (0.8)

Compartmentalization & Dehumanization/ Selfishness (0.9)

Intentional/Malicious/Pleasure (1.0)

Facet 3 Length of the Act

Short (1)

Intermediate (1.5)

Long (2)

Facet 4 Number of Victims

One (1)

Several (1.5)

Large (2)

Facet 5 Number of agent(s)

Follower (0.7)

Leader (1)

Note. Total Score = Facet 1×Facet 2×Facet 3×Facet 4×Facet 5. When the subject is mammal*, the final score originally obtained shall be multiplied by .8. Total scores of 15 and above (out of 40) indicate warning signs for significant levels of potential danger to society.

e.g. 1) Hitler F 1 (10)×F 2 (0.9)×F 3 (2)×F 4 (2)×F 5 (1) =36

e.g. 2) Josef Mengele F 1 (10)×F 2 (1)×F 3 (2)×F 4 (2)×F 5 (0.7) =28

Understandably, killing ranks as the highest in score, severe injury. The main objective of this scale is to followed by maiming while alive and intentionally causing objectively assess the lack of empathy; that is, the scale

attempts to show exactly how much a person or institute ignores the pain and suffering of others. The higher the score, the more cruel or irresponsible—and, thus, the less civilized a person or institute is. On the other hand, lower the total score, the higher a person's empathy or civilization level. This scale enable anyone who uses it to easily and objectively measure the empathy level of not only any individual, group, or social institution, but also commercial products, rules, acts, customs, policies and so forth. For example, the scale must be able to measure the cruelty and irresponsibility level of a business that manufactures certain cosmetic products, or of a police department whose conduct has been seen as questionable by the people living in the area. In this sense, the scale can also be called the *Social-Danger Indicator*. We must be able to apply the scale in a universal manner, so that the results can be easily compared, regardless of where we are (as with the Psychopathy Check List-Revised). This scale should also exist in parallel to our legal system, which examines each case elaborately, so that members of society can easily have a common understanding or awareness of an issue, without necessarily exploring its details. This will direct our society toward a safe and more sustainable collaborative direction.

8. Conclusion

In an age during which the advent of the Apocalypse is so often rumored [103], [104], we can no longer condone self-centered or biased acts that negatively impact all of society. However, the world still runs on capitalism, which affirms every human greed that produces profit. Self-interest and empathy are two phenomena that run completely against each other. Therefore, we must secure a system or apparatus that counteracts this world trend in which self-interests are prioritized. A lack of consideration for the pains and suffering of other living beings is a great source of danger to everybody when lands are occupied by the same human beings globally. This is especially true in the current age of technology, during which practically any human ambitions are possible to realize. Today, we need to make intentional efforts to ensure empathy in each and every member of our society, while simultaneously

controlling human behaviors within a safe and sustainable range. Otherwise, in time, our world will become a place where we can trust no one, and our children can never come home safely from the playground. No money, no competition, no religion, and no virtue is more important than the guarantee of peace and safety. We must take decisive action now, before it is too late, to avoid creating and/or condoning such dangerous elements in our society. We must also be ready, if necessary, to exclude, eliminate and eradicate any potentially dangerous minds from our community to ensure that other peaceful society members do not lose their chance to enjoy their lives. Gandhi [105] once said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." His perspective, as well as the findings presented in this paper, illustrate that the way in which animals are treated in society is indeed "the" litmus paper which reflects our own safety and survival.

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