

(Bio)etika životinja – uvodnik

Josip Guć

Prije okruglih 50 godina Peter Singer je, barem koliko je meni poznato, prvi put spomenuo pojam ‘oslobođenje životinja’ [*animal liberation*], da bi dvije godine nakon toga osvanula istoimena knjiga, čija je revolucionarna uloga u ovoj stvari neupitna. Singerovo *Oslobođenje životinja* iz 1975. knjiga je koja nije zaslužna zato što je razvila nekakvu etiku životinja (mada sadrži na veoma pristupačan način pojašnjene principe Singerova utilitarističkog pristupa i principa jednakosti), nego prije svega zato što je širokoj čitalačkoj javnosti zornim učinila ono što se odvija u klaonicama, farmama za uzgoj životinja, laboratorijima itd. Istinu koja je (ili bi trebala biti) neupitna. Riječ je o istini koja se (ni u kom pogledu slučajno) skriva od naših očiju iza zidova spomenutih ustanova izvan gusto naseljenih područja, mada istini koja je posve providna posveti li joj se ikakva pažnja. Zar bi, primjerice, moglo biti tako naivnog mnijenja da mu sine kako u okvirima kapitalističke privrede životinje bivaju humano tretirane, da pasu beskrajnim pašnjacima i da sretne daju mlijeko usprkos odvojenosti od svojih mladunaca – kako se to pojavljuje u marketingu, integralnom kotačiću istog sistema? Baš zato što je nešto ovako teško zamislivo, jasno nam je da se o moralnoj relevantnosti životinja naprosto ne misli, tj. da se o tome izbjegava misliti. To nam baca prvi tračak sumnje na neproblematičnost našeg odnosa spram životinja. Čini se da je tu riječ o djelovanju u kojem u većoj ili manjoj mjeri participiramo gušeći vlastitu savjest. Bijeg od takvog gledanja istini u oči prvi je znak da se moralni odnos spram životinja treba propitati, a onda i etički reflektirati. Upravo zbog zasluga na polju uznemiravanja savjesti mnogih čitatelja po pitanju našeg tretiranja životinja, kao i zbog formuliranja jedne od klasičnih teorija etike životinja, Peter Singer zaslužuje barem da mu posvetimo ovaj mali tematski blok.

Dakako, ne znam s koliko bi se onoga što autori ovih radova pišu Singer složio, no svakako se čini da se ne bi složio s naslovom samoga tematskog bloka. Bioetika je pak na engleskom govornom području najčešće poimana kao *bio(medicinska-)etika*. No njezino je drugačije poimanje također rašireno (tako i zastupano u ovom časopisu), naime, njezino shvaćanje kao *bio(s-)etike*, dakle, etike koja ne obuhvaća samo nove biomedicinske izazove, nego i sve one koje se tiču života, u svim njegovim oblicima i pojavama. Legitimitet za ovaj pristup dohvaća se ponajprije iz djela dvojice

autora koji su neovisno jedan o drugome prvi govorili o bioetici – Fritz Jahr (1926.) i Van Rensselaer Potter (1970.). U tom pogledu rasprava o etici životinja opravdano zauzima mjesto u ovakvom, širem shvaćanju bioetike, u kojem joj se pridružuju i druge perspektive da joj pomognu osvijetliti njezin središnji problem – kako djelovati spram životinja.

Pet radova ovog tematskog bloka upravo pokazuje kako se ovaj problem treba sagledavati i uz pomoć onih kategorija koje nisu usko etičke. Prije svega, etika se ne bi smjela misliti izvan cjeline filozofije, pa je estetički aspekt, uz promišljanje drugosti i antropomorfizma, posebice naglašen u radu »Animal Ethics and Aesthetics Revisited: Distant Proximity« slovenskih autora Tomaža Grušovnika i Vesne Liponik. Ontološka bliskost i udaljenost čovjeka i životinje sagledana je i u radu »Overview of Animal Dehumanization in the Context of Changing Capitalism« hrvatskih autora Marina Beroša i Maje Mandić, koji su u tom okviru poseban naglasak stavili na utjecaj kapitalističkih proizvodnih odnosa na tretman životinja. Još jedan slovenski autor, Vojko Strahovnik, u radu »Animals and Us, Us and Animals«, putem analize komentara na knjigu *The Lives of Animals* J. M. Coetzeeija, propituje granice filozofije u odgovoru na »životinjsko pitanje«, a analizu književnih djela pruža i novozelandska autorica Henrietta Mondry u članku »Cross-Species Hybrids and Bioethics in Early Soviet Fiction«, koja promišlja i religiozni motiv čovjekova igranja Boga. Čovjekova percepcija životinja kroz medij jezika obrađena je u radu »Specizmi u hrvatskom jeziku« hrvatske autorice Lidije Bakote.

Posebice nam potonja perspektiva, ali u izvjesnoj mjeri i sve ostale koje su ovdje zastupljene, pokazuje koliko je u pogledu razvoja bioetičkog racionaliteta važan razvoj bioetičkog senzibiliteta – otupljenje potonjega zatvara prostor da se izvjestan problem uopće javi kao problem, a kamoli kao etički problem (kako će ga se dalje razrješavati, ostaje na zastupnicima različitih etičkih teorija). Stoga nisam slučajno na početku podjednako istaknuo važnost Singera kao etičara i kao onoga tko problem čini vidljivim. Isto se tako nadam se da će ovaj tematski blok pobuditi kako bioetički racionalitet tako i bioetički senzibilitet kod čitatelja.

Animal (Bio)ethics – Editorial

Josip Guć

50 years ago, at least as far as I am aware, Peter Singer first mentioned the term ‘animal liberation’, and two years later a book of the same title appeared whose revolutionary role in the matter is unquestionable. Singer’s *Animal Liberation*, published in 1975, is a book that is not credited with developing any kind of animal ethics (although it does contain the principles of Singer’s utilitarian approach and the principle of equality, clarified in a very accessible way), but above all with making visible to the general reading public what goes on in slaughterhouses, animal farms, laboratories, etc. A truth that is (or should be) undeniable. However, it is hidden from our eyes (not by chance) behind the walls of the institutions mentioned, outside of densely populated areas, although it is entirely transparent if we pay attention. For example, could there be such a naive opinion as to imagine that, within the framework of the capitalist economy, animals are treated humanely, that they graze in endless pastures, and that the happy ones give milk separated from their young – as it appears in marketing, an integral part of the same system? Precisely because this is difficult to imagine, it is clear to us that the moral relevance of animals is simply not thought about, i.e. it is avoided. This should at least make us a little suspicious and suggest that our behavior towards animals is not so unproblematic. It seems that we are more or less complicit in this kind of behavior in which we suffocate our own conscience. This gives us the first hint of doubt that we are more or less complicit in this by suffocating our own conscience. Running away from facing the truth is the first sign that the moral relationship with animals needs to be questioned and then ethically reflected upon. Precisely for his merits in disturbing the conscience of many readers regarding our treatment of animals, as well as for formulating one of the classic theories of animal ethics, Peter Singer deserves at least to have this small thematic block dedicated to him.

Of course, I am unaware of Singer’s level of agreement with the authors of these works, but it appears unlikely that he would support the title of this thematic section. In the English-speaking world, bioethics is commonly referred to as *bio(medical-)ethics*. But a different understanding of it is also common (as represented in this journal): the understanding as *bio(s-)ethics*, i.e., ethics that embraces not only the new biomedical challenges but also all those that affect life in all its forms and

manifestations. Legitimacy for this understanding primarily comes from the works of two authors who were the first to write about bioethics – Fritz Jahr (1926) and Van Rensselaer Potter (1970). Hence, the debate on animal ethics is rightly placed into this broader understanding of bioethics, wherein other perspectives come together to shed light on the main issue – how to treat animals.

The five papers in this thematic block demonstrate how to approach the issue using ethical, but also non-strictly ethical categories. Firstly, it is important to consider ethics within the larger context of philosophy. Thus the aesthetical perspective is the consideration of otherness and anthropomorphism, especially emphasized in the paper “Animal Ethics and Aesthetics Revisited: Distant Proximity” written by Slovenian authors Tomaž Grušovnik and Vesna Liponik. The ontological relations between humans and animals are also examined in the paper “Overview of Animal Dehumanisation in the Context of Changing Capitalism” written by Croatian authors Marin Beroš and Maja Mandić, where they focus on how capitalist production affects the treatment of animals. Another Slovenian author, Vojko Strahovnik, in the paper “Animals and Us, Us and Animals,” through the analysis of comments on the book *The Lives of Animals* by J. M. Coetzee, questions the limits of philosophy in answering the “animal question.” The New Zealand author Henrietta Mondry also provides an analysis of literary works in the article “Cross-Species Hybrids and Bioethics in Early Soviet Fiction,” where she also considers the religious motif of human beings playing God. Human being’s perception of animals through the medium of language is discussed in the work “Species in the Croatian Language” by Croatian author Lidija Bakota.

Especially the latter view, and to some extent all the others, demonstrate the significance of developing bioethical sensibility for the advancement of bioethical rationality – the dulling of the bioethical sensibility closes the space for a certain problem to appear as a problem at all, let alone as an ethical problem (how it will be solved further remains up to the representatives of different ethical theories). Therefore, it was intentional that I stressed Singer’s significance both as an ethical thinker and problem identifier from the outset. I also hope that this thematic block awakens both bioethical rationality and bioethical sensibility in the reader.