

## *Universal Kinship*<sup>\*</sup>

J. HOWARD MOORE

[T]he complete denial by human animals of ethical relations to the rest of the animal world is a phenomenon not differing either in character or cause from the denial of ethical relations by a tribe, people, or race of human beings to the rest of the human world. The provincialism of Jews toward non-Jews, of Greeks toward non-Greeks, of Romans toward non-Romans, of Moslems toward non-Moslems, and of Caucasians toward non-Caucasians, is not one thing, and the provincialism of human beings toward non-human beings another. They are all manifestations of the same thing. The fact that these various actions are performed by different individuals and upon different individuals, and are performed at different times and places, does not invalidate the essential sameness of their natures. Crimes are not classified (except by savages or their immediate derivatives) according to the similarity of those who do them or those who suffer from them, but by grouping them according to the similarity of their intrinsic qualities. All acts of provincialism consist essentially in the disinclination or inability to be universal, and they belong in reality, all of them, to the same species of conduct. There is, in fact, but one great crime in the universe, and most of the instances of terrestrial wrongdoing are instances of this crime. It is the crime of exploitation—the considering by some beings of themselves as *ends*, and of others as their *means*—the refusal to recognize the equal, or the approximately equal, rights of all to life and its legitimate rewards—the crime of acting toward others as one would that others would *not* act toward him. For millions of years, almost ever since life began, this crime has been committed, in every nook and quarter of the inhabited globe.

Every being is an end. In other words, every being is to be taken into account in determining the ends of conduct. This is the only consistent outcome of the ethical process which is in course of evolution on the earth. This world was not made and presented to any particular clique for its exclusive use or enjoyment. The earth belongs, if it belongs to anybody, to the beings who inhabit it—to all of them. And when one being or set of beings sets itself up as the sole end for which the universe exists, and looks upon and acts toward others as mere means to this end, it is usurpation, nothing else and never can be anything else, it matters not by whom or upon whom the usurpation is practiced. A tyrant who puts his own welfare and aggrandizement in the place of the welfare of a people, and compels the whole people to act as a means to his own personal ends, is not more certainly a usurper than is a species or variety which puts its welfare in the place of the welfare of all the inhabitants of a world. The refusal to put one self in the place of others and to act toward them as one would that they would act toward him does not depend for its wrongfulness upon who makes the refusal or upon whether the refusal falls upon this or that individual or set. Deeds are right and wrong in themselves; and whether they are right or wrong, good or evil, proper or improper, whether they should be done or should not be done, *depends upon their effects upon the welfare of the inhabitants of the universe*. The basic mistake that has ever been made in this egoistic world in the judging and classifying of acts has been the mistake of judging and classifying them with reference to their effects upon some particular fraction of the inhabitants of the universe. In pure egoism conduct is judged as good or bad solely with reference to the results, immediate or remote, which that conduct produces, or is calculated to produce, on the self. To the savage, that is right or wrong which affects favorably or unfavorably himself or his tribe. And this sectional spirit of the savage has, as has been shown, characterized the moral conceptions of the peoples of all times. The practice human beings have today—the practice of those (relatively) broad and emancipated minds who are large enough to rise above the petty prejudices and "patriotisms" of the races and corporations of men and are able to view "the world as their country" (the world of human beings, of course)—the practice such minds have of estimating conduct solely with reference to its effects upon the human species of animals is a practice

---

<sup>\*</sup> London, 1906.

which, while infinitely broader and more nearly ultimate than that of the savage, belongs logically in the same category with it. The partially emancipated human being who extends his moral sentiments to all the members of his own species, but denies to all other species the justice and humanity he accords to his own, is making on a larger scale the same ethical mess of it as the savage. The only consistent attitude, since Darwin established the unity of life (and the attitude we shall assume, if we ever become really civilized), is the attitude of universal gentleness and humanity.