WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD: A CONTRIBUTION FROM GENERAL SOCIOLOGY TO HUMAN ETHICS

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I. The Biological Evidence

In our laboratory we are making two experimental approaches to the phenomena of biological sociology, and each yields its very different aspect of truth. On the one hand, we have been studying for over a decade the dominance-subordination relations that are characteristic of many social groups. We know from personal observations, as well as from the literature, of nip-orders in fish, peck-orders in flocks of several species of birds and fighting orders in mice. Usually there is one dominant animal which can bite, nip or peck others without being attacked in return. Below it the others are ranked in various degrees of subservience. Similar dominance orders occur among such mammals as rats, cats, cows and men. Social organizations have also been reported with certainty