

Animal Rights

and

Animal Welfare

Animals and Us

May we do whatever we want with animals?

If there are restrictions:

- (1) What are these restrictions?
- (2) What justifies these restrictions?
(Why is it wrong to do X to that animal?)

Human Dealings with Animals

- (1) Using animals to assist in our labors
- (2) Keeping animals as pets and in zoos/aquariums
- (3) Using animals for sporting events and amusements
- (4) Using animals in laboratory and medical work
- (5) Keeping/killing animals for non-food consumer goods
- (6) Keeping/killing animals for food

Domesticated Animals

The Brambell Report (England 1965): farm animals should have **five freedoms**: the ability to

- turn around,
- lie down,
- stand up,
- stretch, and
- groom,

without restriction of movement.

Moral Standing and Significance

Moral Standing: To have moral standing means to have one's interests taken seriously.

Moral Significance: When interests between beings come into conflict, their level of moral significance helps decide the outcome.

Kinds of interests

Vital: what we need to survive

Serious: what we need to flourish

Peripheral: (all the rest)

More Terms Useful to Know

Speciesism: Conferring moral worth to an individual simply because of its species membership.

Sentience: The ability to experience pleasure and pain.

Moral patient: Having moral standing; a being toward which moral agents have some moral responsibility; a being capable of being benefitted or harmed.

Moral agent: Anyone capable of acting morally or immorally; normally, one who is rational and free, aware of one's duties and the rights of others

Singer's Two Questions

- (1) Can **speciesism** be defended?
- (2) If speciesism cannot be defended, are there **other characteristics** about human beings that justify them in placing far greater moral significance on what happens to them than on what happens to nonhuman animals?

[Peter Singer, "Animal Liberation at 30." *The New York Review of Books* (15 May 2003)]

Indirect Duties to Animals?

On this position, **non-human animals lack moral standing**; we have no duties towards them. Any protections they enjoy are a result of **duties we owe to ourselves** (harming our moral sensibility) or **to other human beings** (damaging their property).

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274): animals lack souls.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): animals lack reason and autonomy.

Restricting our Behavior

The Argument from Utility

- (1) It is wrong to cause suffering “without some good reason.” [maximization principle]
- (2) Suffering is of equal disvalue, wherever it occurs. [impartiality principle]
- (3) Non-human animals are capable of suffering [they are sentient].
- (4) The suffering of non-human animals caused by doing X is not justified by its benefits.
- (5) Therefore, doing X is wrong.

Restricting our Behavior

The Argument from Rights

- (1) Human beings have rights (“inherent value”).
- (2) There is no morally-relevant (= “rights conferring”) characteristic that all human beings have that many other animals lack.
- (3) Therefore, many other animals also have rights.

What are possible rights-conferring properties?

What gives humans their inherent value?

Are Humans Morally Special?

Capacity to ...

... reciprocate

... reason

... be self-aware

... have a sense of justice

... communicate with language

... be autonomous (act freely)

Tom Regan

Goals include:

- (1) Total abolition of test animals
- (2) Total dissolution of CAFOs.
- (3) Total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping.

Basic Moral Principle: Humans have moral (inherent) value because each of us is the “experiencing subject of a life”. This property is shared equally and confers equal value — and many other animals (all vertebrates? mammals over one year old?) share this property.

This property precludes our viewing each other as mere resources for our use.

Mary Anne Warren

Strong Animal Rights: (Regan's position)

Rights are extended to all mammals older than one year (and various other animals) because of their **inherent value as "subjects-of-a-life"** which they have equally (=moral egalitarianism).

Weak Animal Rights: (Warren's position)

Rights are extended to **all sentient animals** (wider scope than Regan), but not equally; they **differ in moral significance**. Highest level of moral significance requires **moral agency** (=moral egalitarianism). All other members of the community: "no harm without *good reason*".

Two Moral Principles (Regan)

Respect Principle: Individuals with “inherent value” may not be used as mere resources.

Harm Principle: Individuals with “inherent value” may not be harmed. (Regan’s principle, not Mill’s)

(or)

Harm should not be inflicted without “good reason”. (Warren’s principle)

Goodpaster on Moral Considerability

Kenneth Goodpaster, “On Being Morally Considerable,” *Journal of Philosophy* (1978).

Criteria for Moral Considerability

- Rationality?
- Sentience?
- Being alive?

Goodpaster on Moral Considerability

Distinctions

- (a) Moral rights vs. Moral considerability
- (b) Moral considerability vs. Moral significance

Goodpaster on Moral Considerability

Arguments against other criteria for moral considerability

- (a) Rationality (Kant)
- (b) Potentiality
- (c) Capacity to suffer (= sentience)
- (d) Has interests (Feinberg)

Goodpaster on Moral Considerability

Objections that Goodpaster addresses

- (a) “Respect for all life” is mere Schweitzerian Romanticism
- (b) “Biocentric egalitarianism is absurd!”
- (c) “Life not defined”
- (d) “Too wide” (it includes biosystems).
- (e) “Plants having interests is implausible.”
- (f) “Not practical.”

On the Sixth Day

[27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” [29] And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

[*Genesis*, 1:27-31]

How to Eat a Live Goose

“Take a goose, or a Duck, or some such lively creature and pull off all her feathers; only the head and neck must be spared. Then make a fire round about her, not too close to her, that the smoke do not choke her, and that the fire may not burn her too soon; not too far off, that she may not escape free. Within the circle of the fire let there be set small cups and pots of water, wherein salt and honey are mingled; and let there be set also chargers full of sodden Apples, cut into small pieces in the dish. The Goose must be all larded, and basted over with butter: put the fire about her, but do not make too much haste, when you see her begin to roast; for by walking about and flying here and there, being cooped in by the fire that stops her way out, the unwearied Goose is kept in; she will fall to drink the water to quench her thirst, and cool her heart, and all her body, and the Apple sauce will make her dung and cleanse and empty her. And when she roasteth, and consumes inwardly, always wet her head and heart with a wet sponge; and when you see her giddy with running, and begin to stumble, her heart wants moisture, and she is roasted enough. Take her up and set her before your guests and she will cry as you cut off any part from her and will be almost eaten up before she be dead: it is mighty pleasant to behold!”

[From an 18th century book of recipes]