

Animals and Ethics

Utilitarianism (act v. rule utilitarianism) and **consequentialism** (outcome-based thought)

Deontology, duty, and rights-based thought

[Kant, the **categorical imperative**, and the **principle of personality**]

Contractarian ethics (generally 'unfriendly' to animals, because of a lack of a capacity to reciprocate)

Virtue ethics (moral psychology and Aristotelian *philia*)

Feminist ethics (the **ethic of care**)

Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*

- **Moral agents** versus **moral patients**
- **Inherent** versus **instrumental** value
- Preference autonomy and the **subject-of-a-life**
- The **miniride principle** and the **worse-off principle**

Peter Singer, excerpt from *Practical Ethics*

- Understanding what Singer means by the '**equal consideration of interests**'
- Quoting Bentham: "the question is not, can they *reason*? Nor can they *talk*? But, *can they suffer*?"
- the problem of interspecies pain/pleasure valuation and the issue of **discounting**

From "Animal Liberation at 30"

- on **speciesism** ("a prejudice that survives because it is convenient for the dominant group")
 - two distinct questions (note that they're not the same!): 1) can speciesism itself be defended? 2) If not, "are there other characteristics about human beings" that justify such extreme moral differentiation?
 - How about this argument: "If the argument works for both the narrower circle of family and friends and the wider sphere of the species, it should also work for the middle case: race."
- on the **argument from marginal cases**
 - this is where Singer gets in 'trouble', both in the interview and elsewhere, with his defense of infanticide, etc.
 - What is a **person**? An acephalous child? A chimp? Neither? Both?

Martha Nussbaum, "The Moral Status of Animals"

- Building on Aristotle's **virtue ethics** and **Rawls'** idea of "**justice as fairness**" to develop her **capabilities approach**
- **Pompey** and the High Court of **Kerala**—why does she open with these two examples?
- "The fact that humans act in ways that deny other animals a **dignified** existence appears to be an issue of justice"
- The capabilities approach "begins with the question, "What are people actually able to do and to be?"
- "I argue that it is a waste and a tragedy when a living creature has an innate capability for some functions that are evaluated as important and good, but never gets the opportunity to perform those functions."
- "The focus should be the **individual** creature...the survival of a **species** may have weight as a scientific or aesthetic issue, but it is not an ethical issue, and certainly not an issue of justice."
- "It seems wrong to conclude...that species membership is... irrelevant. A child with mental disabilities is actually very different from a chimpanzee...[this] child's life is difficult in a way that the life of a chimpanzee is not"
- "the species norm (duly evaluated) tells us what the appropriate benchmark is for judging whether a given creature has decent opportunities for flourishing....[but I admit] there is a danger [here]"

Greta Gaard and the **ethic of care**

- **Ecofeminism**: a blend of ecology, feminism, and socialism that is critical of the self/**other** divide and is primarily concerned with **androcentrism** rather (or in addition to) than **anthropocentrism**
- As a branch of socialist thought, ecofeminism is concerned with the elimination of all forms of oppression, including sexism, racism, classism, speciesism, and 'naturism'
- Privileging the role of emotion and other 'feminine' traits against 'masculine' reason, etc.
- Some key players: Vandana Shiva, Carol Adams, Carol Gilligan, Marti Kheel, Nel Noddings