



The Status Of Animal In Human Society: A Philosophical Review

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Abstract:

The place of animals in modern civilization is a hotly debated topic. But many of the pertinent issues have been discussed by various environmental activists during the past ten years. I'll make an effort to illustrate a few points in this essay about animal rights and how people view animals. Our fellow creatures, which are sentient or subjects of a life, are accorded the same moral standing by Singer and Tom Regan's arguments from marginal situations. Whether one adopts some type of animal individuality or some version of holism, the worth of animals varies greatly.

Keywords: Animal, Speciesism, Holism, Anthropocentrism, Human, Rights, Morality etc.

Introduction

Several environmental activists started their "Animal have rights too" campaign in the 1970s. Animal activists, intellectuals, and self-described animal lovers nowadays focus heavily on the environmental issue relating to animals and position themselves as advocates for animal rights. Yet it's still unclear what an animal's place is in human civilization. How limited our sympathies are as selfish, arrogant animals, John Mair remarked in 1867. How insensitive the rest of creation is to animal rights. Robert Hunter, one of the first Green Peace members, characterised the environmental challenges as a demand for the rights of nature in 1979. He said that we must seriously begin to inquire into the rights of rabbits and turnips, the rights of soil and swamp, the rights of the atmosphere, and ultimately the rights of the planet.

Different Arguments on Animal Status

There are two types of justifications for protecting animals. Many animals, according to some philosophers, have interests that support rights. There are others who contend that human rights are the foundation upon which animal rights should be justified because humans are also animals and all other non-human creatures are not, in any way, subordinate to humans. In his well-known book "The Argument for Animal Rights" (1983), Tom Regan makes the case that animals do in fact have "moral rights," which are rights that are universal and inherent, as opposed to "legal rights," which are provided by a specific community in a specific location. Tom Regan makes an effort to demonstrate the intrinsic value of animals. According to him, we should discuss animals from a moral

perspective as well as from the perspective of environmental activists. Tom Regan presents an illustration of a circumstance in which rights conflict: five survivors are in a lifeboat. Just four people can ride on the boat due to its size restrictions. They would all about be the same weight and occupy the same amount of space. Of the five, four are grown people. Dog comes in sixth. Everyone must drown if one isn't tossed overboard. Should it be them? Regan provides a solution that is accurate. Sadly, we must put the dog down. No reasonable individual, according to Regan, would contest the fact that the death of any one of the four people would constitute a bigger prima facie loss and hence a higher prima facie injury than would be the case in the case of the dog. Briefly stated, the harm caused by the dog's death is not comparable to the harm caused by the death of any human. Throwing any of the people overboard would cause them more harm than would be done to the dog, as they would face certain death.

Animal rights encompass both legal and moral rights. Rights that are covered by the law are known as legal rights. Moral rights are inherent in society and hence are not always safeguarded by laws or regulations. Leopold and Callicott are most constant in their belief that the biotic community has worth when it comes to animal rights. Callicott asserts that there are distinctions between domesticated and wild animals. Wild creatures that live and pass away in biotic communities in the wild should be treated with the holism of the land ethics. Considering that domesticated animals are safer than wild animals.

The moral and rational standing of animals in society is due to a number of factors. According to Midgley, species in animals is unquestionably an important grouping, but race in humans is not at all. It is untrue that you must first determine what race a person belongs to in order to know how to treat them. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand the species while dealing with an animal.

Humans are a species within the animal world, which is divided into the divisions of vertebrates and invertebrates, each of which has several classes and species within each class. The class of vertebrates, which also includes amphibians, fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals, contains humans as one of its species. As all debates of "animal rights" are predicated on the idea that non-human animals share qualities with humans, they are not only morally anthropocentric but also unscientifically incorrect.

A moral distinction based on major variations between species is not necessarily incorrect just because the moral distinction based on race is wrong. In other words, it doesn't make sense to claim that discrimination between groups is the same as a differentiation between species. Two further facts counteract the accusation of "speciesism." According to Midgley, people have a "natural predisposition" to live in communities with other people and that this is different from racial prejudice, which is a product of culture. She asserts that a "species-bond" might lead to excruciating misery, but she also thinks that these preferences are a crucial part of human pleasure and that it is unlikely that people could exist without them. These are just a few of the creatures that human societies have tamed. Midgley claims that interactions between domesticated animals and people have frequently been harsh and continue to be unpleasant in many respects, but this is surely not the whole story.

According to Carl Cohen, "The argument for animal rights that is grounded on their 'inherent value' is utterly fallacious, an egregious example of the fallacy of equivocation---that informal fallacy in which two or more meanings of the same word or phrase are confused in the several propositions of an argument."¹

Peter Singer argues that there are several arguments in favour of the position that murdering a person is morally more wrong than killing a non-human entity. Regarding the right to life, Tooley argues that it is true whether we subscribe to preference utilitarianism or the respect for autonomy principle. According to traditional utilitarianism, there may be covert reasons why it is worse to murder someone. One of the great Utilitarian, who is the founding father of modern utilitarianism Jeremy Bentham wrote: "The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been with holden from them but the hand of the tyranny. The French have already discovered that the clack ness of the skin is no reason why a human beings should be abandoned without redness to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognised that the numbers of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the OS sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being, to be same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as more conversable animal than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, they reason? nor can they talk? but can they suffer?"²

In this book, Bentham claims that the crucial characteristic that entitles a creature to equal esteem is the capacity for suffering. The capacity for pain, or more accurately, for pain, pleasure, or happiness, is not just another skill like the capacity for higher-level language or mathematical computation. Bentham does not contend that those who seek to draw the arbitrary line that determines whether a being's interests should be taken into consideration unintentionally select the incorrect attribute. In order to have interests at all, one must be able to endure pain and pleasure; this condition must be satisfied before we can effectively discuss interests. It is ludicrous to assert that a student kicking a stone along the road is not acting in the stone's best interest. Because a stone cannot experience suffering, it lacks interests. Its welfare cannot possibly be affected by anything we do to it. A mouse, on the other hand, has a reason to care that they are not tortured since they would suffer if they are.

According to Bentham, there is never a moral justification for ignoring a being's misery when it manifests itself. Regardless of the being's nature, the equality principle requires that, to the extent that approximate comparisons may be drawn, their pain must be compared to analogous suffering of any other creature. If a being is incapable of going through sorrow, joy, or happiness, then nothing has to be taken into account. For this reason, the sentence limit is the only justifiable upper limit of care for the interests of

¹ Traer Robert, Doing Environmental Ethics, P. 105

² Singer, Peter. Practical Ethics, p.56,57.

others. To draw a line over this obstacle based on qualities like intelligence or reason would be arbitrary. Why not select the same traits for other things like skin colour?

A member of one species may suffer more under particular circumstances than a member of another species. The concept of equal consideration of interests should still be used in this situation, although doing so will inevitably result in giving precedence to alleviating the larger suffering. This may be made apparent by a comparable instance. A horse may startle if someone slaps it hard on the rump with an open hand, but it probably doesn't feel much pain. It can withstand a little slap thanks to the thickness of its skin. Yet if a newborn receives the same kind of smack, the infant would scream and probably experience pain since their skin is more delicate. So, if both slaps are given with similar force, it is worse to smack a baby than a horse.

Further distinctions between humans and animals lead to additional difficulties. Notwithstanding the obvious distinctions between humans and other animals, the fundamental question is whether these two species genuinely differ from one another. Animals of all kinds, including humans, have some level of rationality. Like chimpanzees, dolphins, etc. They have some capacity for reason. We cannot distinguish between a human life and an animal life when we are thinking about the worth of life. We must state with such certainty that every life is equally precious and that it is a life, whether it be an animal or human life. It would not be a speciesist position to assert that a self-aware person's existence is more valuable than a being that is incapable of abstract cognition, future planning, sophisticated acts of communication, etc. The ethical subject of the worth of life is not renowned for being particularly challenging, and it is only after we have spoken about the worth of life in general that we can get to a logical conclusion concerning the relative worth of human and animal life.

Experiments on Animals

Peter Singer contends that the use of animals in research is the context in which speciesism is most readily discernible. According to him, experiments frequently attempt to justify using animals as subjects by suggesting that the results teach us anything about people. If this is the case, the experimenters must also agree that nonhuman animals and humans share a number of important characteristics. We must assume that the rat suffers stress in this sort of situation if forcing it to choose between starving to death and running over an electric grid in quest of food will tell us anything about how people react to stress.

Several people, like Singer, believe that all animal experiments are necessary for treating patients and may be justified on the basis that doing so lessens suffering overall. In general, this idea is completely false. In a procedure known as the Draize test, the majority of pharmaceutical firms evaluate new shampoos and cosmetics that they want to sell by draping concentrated solutions of them over rabbits' eyes. Artificial colourings and preservatives are among the food additives that are subjected to what is known as the LD 50 test, which aims to determine the "lethal dosage" or amount of intake that would result in the death of 50% of a sample of animals. Nearly all of the animals become quite ill throughout this procedure, and some of them eventually pass away while others survive.

Even if there were no option to using animals to test the safety of the items, we already have enough shampoos and food colourings, so these tests are not essential to avoid human pain. There is no need to create brand-new, perhaps harmful ones.

At Princeton University, three researchers starved and dehydrated 256 baby rats until they perished. They came to the conclusion that young rats are significantly more active than typical adult rats given food and water. Throughout the course of a well-known experimentation programme that lasted more than fifty years. H.F. Harlow raised monkeys in complete isolation and mother deprivation at the primate Research Centre in Madison, Wisconsin. He discovered that by doing this, he could get the monkeys to the point where, when among other monkeys, they would sit hunched in a corner out of constant anxiety and melancholy. Harlow also gave birth to mothers of monkeys who were so neurotic that they massaged their young back and forth and pounded their faces into the ground. Although though Harlow is no longer alive, some of his former students continue to adapt his research at other US colleges. In these circumstances, as well as many more like them, there are either no benefits or equivocal benefits for humans, but there are certain and significant costs to other species. Hence, the trials demonstrate a failure to equitably consider the interests of all beings, regardless of species.

If the experimenters are hesitant to utilise orphaned people who have serious and irreparable brain injury, Peter Singer claims that their desire to use nonhuman animals is simply motivated by speciesism. This is due to the fact that many seriously brain injured individuals who are barely living in hospital wards and other institutions are not as clever, aware of their environment, sensitive to pain, etc. as apes, monkeys, dogs, cats, mice, and even rats. There doesn't appear to be any ethically relevant characteristic that these people have that a non-human animal doesn't. When experimenters use non-human animals for goals that they would not believe warranted employing humans at an equivalent or lower degree of sentience, consciousness, sensitivity, and other characteristics, they exhibit prejudice towards their own species. The amount of animal studies would be drastically decreased if this bias were to be removed.

Significance of Animal Welfare

Animals are employed for a wide range of purposes. Many domesticated animals and animals kept in captivity are said to be morally obligated to care for people since humans are essential to their existence. Animals have been utilised by humans for many reasons, including food, fibre, medicine, study, companionship, service animals, and pets, among others. The majority of people will counter that caring for animals by humans is only right. The number of people who care about animal welfare keeps rising. The amount of legislation relating to animal husbandry that have been introduced recently reflects the growing concern in animal welfare. 12 U.S. states have approved laws or policies relating to farm animal housing in 2019. California (Proposition 2 of 2008) and Michigan are two examples (Public Act 117 of 2009). The number of animal welfare groups, certification programmes, and laws pertaining to animal welfare has increased along with the amount of legislation in this area. Consumer interest in and concern for animal welfare has

contributed to the growth of laws and certification schemes. Depending on the kind of animal under consideration, varying levels of concern exist for its welfare. For instance, a recent survey indicated that Americans are more concerned about feeding cattle than they are with turkeys and chickens. In addition, the level of care for animal welfare is influenced by a number of variables, including gender and the ownership of pets.

Conclusion

Animal welfare is still a hot problem in human society today, both in terms of animal agriculture, so it's critical to grasp what it means so that people may vote responsibly and shop sensibly for groceries and other goods. People's decisions have an impact on farmers who raise animals for food, customers who buy animal products, and animals themselves. By just appreciating nature, adoring it for its own sake, and treating it with care, the majority of us begin to develop an environmental ethic. Anthropocentrism, the belief that only humans have moral standing, is rejected by Singer, Regan, Callicott, and Leopold, who all contend that at least nonhuman living beings have moral standing.

The term "Nonanthropocentrism" refers to all of these perspectives. Even though humans possess unique qualities that other creatures lack, such as reason or moral agency, this viewpoint contends that moral standing should transcend individuals and people.

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