

2. Animal ethics

It was started to provide animal welfare and stop cruel practices on animals, for example factory farming, animal testing, using animals for experimentation or for entertainment. In the most of Western philosophy animals were considered as beings without moral standing, namely those that do not have to be included into our moral choices. The very typical example of this approach is the Cartesian one, according to Rene Descartes (1596-1650), animals are just simple machines that cannot experience pain. The philosopher was known for making vivisections on living animals and claiming that none of the animals could feel the pain during this. In consequence of this approach until modern times there were conducted many unnecessary and cruel experiments with animal usage, also animal's condition at factory farms or in entrainment were terrible. All these practices caused a huge amount of suffering of animals. The approach to animals was changed with Peter Singer's influential book on *Animal Liberation* (1975). Singer raised the issue that animals can suffer and amount of suffering that they experience is not worth what we gain from these cruel practices. His argumentation was utilitarian, which is one of the approaches of normative ethics.

Deontological and utilitarian argumentation in animal ethics

Normative ethics aims at providing moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behavior on others. The most popular approaches to normative theory are: **deontology** and **consequentialism**.

The word **deontology** derives from the Greek words for **duty (deon)** and **science (or study) of (logos)**. In contemporary moral philosophy, deontology is one of those kinds of **normative theories** regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted. In other words, deontology falls within the domain of moral theories that guide and assess our choices of what we ought to do (deontic theories), in contrast to those that guide and assess what kind of person we are and should be (aretaic [virtue] theories). The most well-known deontological approaches to animal ethics is this of Tom Regan. Tom Regan claims that animals (mammals and birds) have an intrinsic value thus we are obliged to respect them and include them in our moral choices. The thesis of the intrinsic value of animals is the justification of including animals in our moral choices.

The other approach to normative theory is consequentialism. As its name suggests, it is the

view that normative properties (decision whether action is good or bad) **depend only on consequences**. This general approach can be applied at different levels to different normative properties of different kinds of things, but the most prominent example is consequentialism about the moral rightness of acts, which holds that whether an act is morally right depends only on the consequences of that act or of something related to that act, such as the motive behind the act or a general rule requiring acts of the same kind.

The paradigm case of consequentialism is **utilitarianism**, whose classic proponents were Jeremy Bentham (1789), John Stuart Mill (1861), and Henry Sidgwick (1907). Classic utilitarians claim that an act is morally right if and only if **that act maximizes the good, that is, if and only if the total amount of good for all minus the total amount of bad for all is greater than this net amount for any incompatible act available to the agent on that occasion**. (Cf. Moore 1912, chs. 1–2). The Singer's argument is a utilitarian one. He argues that the amount of animal suffering is higher than the amount of pleasure derived from animal usage. Thus, we should stop animal exploitation.

Should animals have rights?

One of the aspects of discussion about animals is question whether they should have rights. This issue was raised for the first time by Ulpian (170-223), the Roman jurist, who claimed that animals should have rights. However, this were natural rights independent from human concept of it and governments¹. This view is very different from traditional approach to animal right. And the issue of animal rights came with the question about human right. The idea of equal human right used to be a controversial one for conservative thinkers. To provide some argumentation for an equal right to education, in 1790, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97) published a book on *Vindication of the Rights of Men*² and in 1792 she presented arguments for including women (*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*). Even though today the idea of human right is one of the crucial concepts, at those times it was very controversial for conservative thinkers, for whom equal right were unthinkable, not mentioning such a controversial concept like women's right. Thus, one the answers to Wollstonecraft's claims was a sarcastic pamphlet entitled *Vindication of the Rights of*

¹ Nash Roderick Frazier, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 1989, p. 17.

² Anker Peder, *A vindication of the rights of brutes*, *Philosophy and Geography*, 7:2 (2004), p. 259.

Brutes published anonymously. “This little booklet (...) suggested that animals were entitled to rights because of their intrinsic capabilities to reason, speak, and have emotions. Animals were entitled to rights because of these inherent characteristics and not because of human obligations or sympathies towards them.”³ Even though it was created to ridicule the idea of animal right, it includes some of biocentric arguments for it.

The contemporary revival of discussion of animals as sentient beings, who can experience pain, and thus it is our moral obligation not to cause it to them, is contributed to Peter Singer. However, the first thinker, who raised this issue in modern philosophy is Jeremy Bentham, who gave arguments for including animals in our moral choices (*An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1789). And the very first book in contemporary philosophy, that raised issue of animals was *Animals, Men and Morals* by Roslind and Stanleya Godlovitch, and John Harris (1974). However, it was the *Animal Liberation* by Singer that made this issue very widely discussed among philosophers and a source of inspiration for animal activism.

Arguments for animal welfare/rights

Not all philosophers claim that animals should have rights, some argue for improving conditions of animals. In animal literature we can find 5 types of arguments for both of above mentioned:

1. **Arguments for improving the way we perceive animals**, the usually present us with the results of empirical observations showing that we and animals have quite a lot in common, especially monkey and dolphins. Few of examples that some animals have humanlike behaviors are presented below:
 - Chimpanzees use tools; manipulate; have body consciousness (using mirrors for examination of their body parts); have social consciousness (hierarchy, long-term relationships, coalitions); and ability to create primitive culture (nests building); also express altruistic behaviors.

³ Ibid.

- Dolphins also are able to undertake many intentional actions: cooperation during hunting; ability to use tools; ability to learn new things (understanding human language); ability to recognize itself in mirror; complex social relations.
- The special kind of these arguments are those that show that animals can learn or understand language used by humans. Because ability to use such a complex language is one of these skills that distinguish human being from other beings. One of the most known examples is the gorilla Koko that learned and used sign language, she was able to learn words, including abstract ones (for example “good”). However, her language skills never exceeded those of young human child, and IQ reached 70-90 (depending on scale).
- It could be clearly seen that capabilities of some animals (mostly great apes and dolphins) excel the capabilities of other animals⁴. Thus David DeGrazia came up with an idea of so-called “borderline persons”, that are between persons and non-persons due to highly developed skills and capabilities.

2. Environmental arguments – it is quite well documented that livestock production has a huge impact to climate change. Moreover it consumes precious resources, like water of takes land for growing food for husbandry animals. Thus, there are many argument to quit or reduce significantly meat and all animal products in our diet for improving environment. Some of the facts are presented below:

- The production of just 1 kg of beef, as a global average, consumes nearly 15,500 litres of water,¹³ the equivalent of 90 full bathtubs. This is nearly 12 times the quantity needed to produce 1 kg of wheat.
- 1 kcal of food energy from beef requires 40 kcal of fossil fuel energy input to produce
- It raise the amount of greenhouse gases, especially methane.
- Land usage: The production of 1 kg of beef requires 15 times as much land as the production of 1 kg of cereals and 70 times as much land as the production of 1 kg of vegetables

⁴ There are many examples of other animals that expressed various forms of humanlike behaviors, including ability of understanding human language to an impressive extent, using tools, ability of abstract thinking, ability to build complex social structures, and so on.

- Livestock production additionally pollutes freshwater by sediments (through soil erosion), pesticides, antibiotics, heavy metals and pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) (all of which can cause food borne disease in people).
 - 75% of antibiotics dosed to animals is not digested and can be found in manure.
- 3. Arguments on suffering.** This argument as presented above in Singer's philosophy claims that we do not derive such benefits from animal suffering, that would justify hurting sentient beings. Traditionally these arguments are applied to mammals and birds, because they have a nervous system that is responsible for experiencing physical pain. However, research analysis provide everyday new results. One of the discussed issues within this area is question whether getting animals protein from insects is ethical. We do not have convincing empirical arguments that would prove that insects suffer. Thus, maybe proteins from insects would be morally justifiable.
- 4. Arguments applying to marginal cases** – this arguments shows that not every human being could be defined by a most common definitions of personhood. The example of this are few, like: people in coma, or new born babies. They cannot use human language, they have no ability of abstract thinking (it is dubious if we can apply this argument to people in come – we still need some research to find out it). So some animals have higher mental capabilities than new born babies or possibly people in coma. Thus, there rise a question whether these animals should be given a status of personhood that provides right?
- 5. Arguments for animal rights due to contradiction (moral or legal)**
- **Legal contradiccion (Steven M. Wise, Białocerkiewicz)** – come from different approach in legal document. For example The Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare announced in 1978 at UNESCO, claims that all animals have equal rights to exist within the context of biological equilibrium. However, this international document is often not included into national legal documents.
 - **Moral contradiction (Garry Francione)** – came from different approach that one might have towards his/her pet and towards husbandry animals. Francione criticizes it claiming that the fact that we love some animals and eat the others is a sign of moral contradiction or even schizophrenia.

The three philosophical traditions in reflection on animals

The following three philosophical traditions are most common in animal discussions:

1. **The analytical school.** The representatives of the analytical school discuss animal issues by reference to the familiar ethical theories and methods of modern Western philosophy, as utilitarianism, deontology (rights theory), social-contract ethics, and virtue ethics. The majority of philosophical approaches to animal ethics are of the analytical school, for example: Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Mark Rowlands, Dale Jamieson, Bernard Rollin, Stephen Clark, Paola Cavalieri, Evelyn Pluhar, James Rachels, Steve Sapontzis, and David DeGrazia.
2. **The postmodern school** reference to Continental and post-structural philosophy. In many ways this school is the opposite of the analytical school in that its proponents view neutrality, universality, and consistency with suspicion. The postmodern school is highly diverse, among its representatives are: Cary Wolfe, David Wood, Matthew Calarco, Giorgio Agamben, Ralph R. Acampora, some ecofeminists, for example: Val Plumwood, Carol Adams, Marti Kheel, Josephine Donovan, Greta Gaard, Vandana Shiva)

Despite the meta-ethical differences, the analytical and postmodern schools share many basic premises and conclusions:

- Both resist anthropocentric assumptions and thus seek to explore the value of nonhuman animals from a viewpoint that is not biased toward human beings.
- Both reject dualism, for example the human-animal dichotomy.
- They put an emphasis on the animal itself. Animals are not passive objects and a tabula rasa on which humans can write different conceptions but active beings with their own independent abilities and interests. A common conclusion is that the capacity to experience (consciousness in the phenomenal sense) is the basis for individual or inherent value both in humans and in other animals. The value of other animals implies that many current practices, from animal production to hunting and animal experimentation, are morally problematic.

3. **The pragmatic school.** The pragmatic school concentrates on specific practical issues such as particular aspects of animal experimentation or agriculture. The theoretical input of this school is small, and its relevance in philosophy is minor in comparison to the other two schools. The representatives of the pragmatic school are: Donna Haraway, Lynda Birke, Joan Dunayer, Eileen Crist, and Barbara Noske. Themes relevant to animal ethics also have been explored outside academia, with one example being the work of the novelist J. M. Coetzee.