



All Animals are Equal by Peter Singer

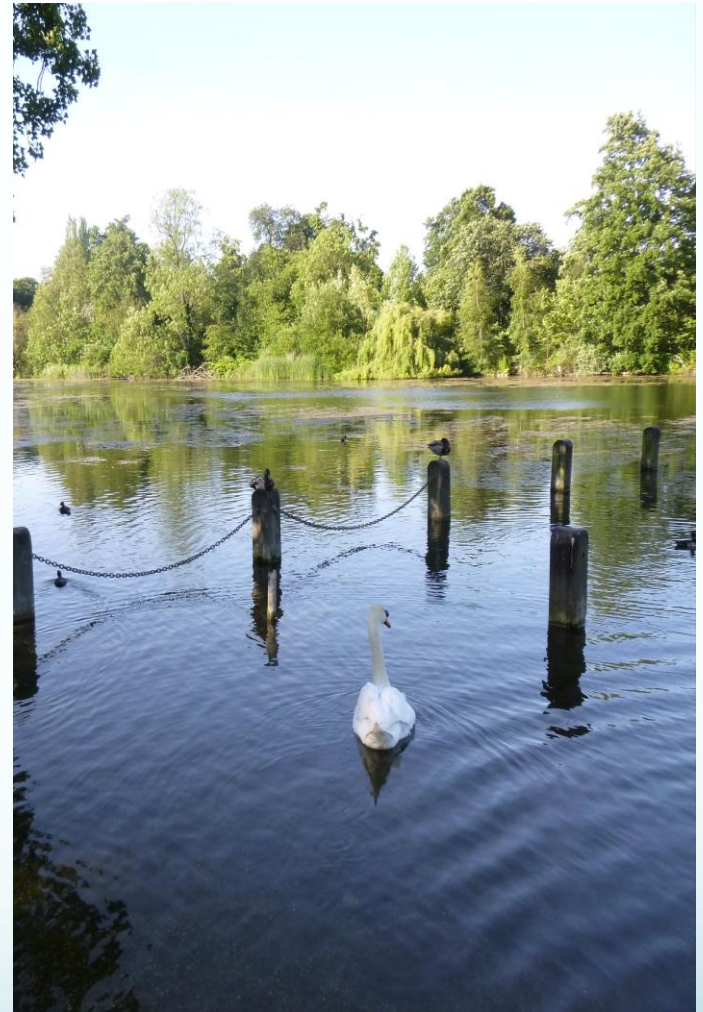
Jonathan Kesten

Peter Singer and animal rights

Ethical and **philosophical** perspective

Utilitarian : the doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority.

- One entity, from the point of view of the universe, is no more good/valuable than another.



Equality: *Looking to the oppressed past...*

Racism/Sexism

1. *NORM: Slavery regarded as “natural” superiority/inferiority*
2. Pejorative terms for minorities
3. Differences between women/men, black/white



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Animal abuse

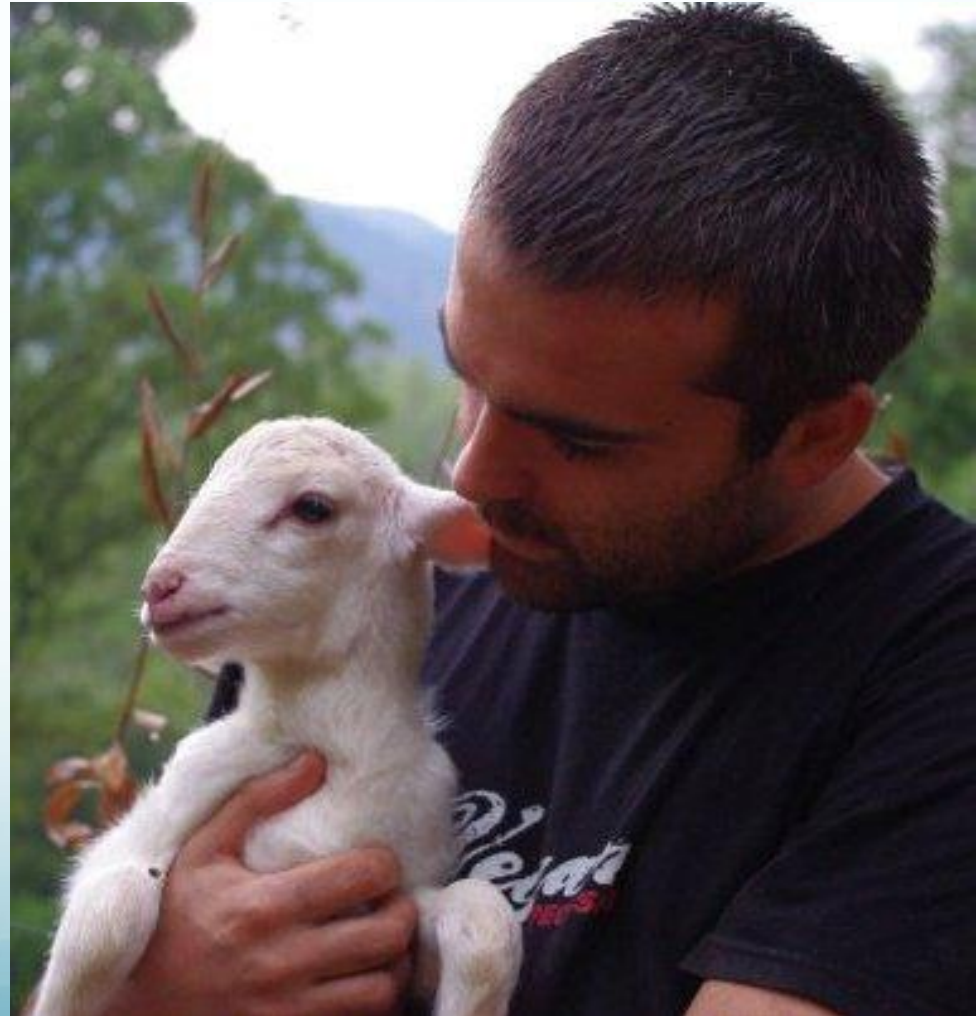
1. NORM: Eating and experimenting animals
2. Calling them “animals” isolates humans as civilized and superior
3. We shouldn't TREAT groups equally (i.e. giving a pig the right to vote), but we should consider their rights in the same way



How should we judge equality?

Among Humans

- *Moral Idea*
- *Distinct from judgments of “intelligence, moral capacity, physical strength, or similar matters of fact.”*
- *A philosophy on how we should treat all other humans*
- *Interests*
- *Capacity for suffering*
- *NOT*
 - *Intelligence*
 - *Moral capability*
 - *Strength*
 - *Any attribute*



Why is it wrong to have a **bias** for our species?

Humans...

1. Can live the “good life”
2. Capacity to suffer
3. Inherent ‘dignity’ of humans
4. Ability to rationalize (voting)

Counterargument

1. *“every sentient being is capable of leading a life that is happier or less miserable than some alternative life”. Behavior of some animals show emotional expression.*
2. Adult apes, cats, mammals are aware and sensitive to pain
3. Humanist thinkers prioritize humans based on Judeo-Christian values
4. We should equally **CONSIDER** them

**IF WE HOLD NON-HUMAN
ANIMALS IN ANOTHER
REALM OF RESPECT, WE
ARE SPECIESISTS.**



“Most humans are speciesists”

- *Eating them as most common form of contact*
 - *Objectified and only valued economically, within the market system*
 - *Singer would call this a trivial interest (we can eat soy instead...)*
 - *Even calling them “animals” arbitrarily distinguishes humans from other animals in an US vs. THEM mentality*
- *Modern philosophers have not challenged the prevailing ideology and thus not extended rights’ language to non-humans*
- *Why do we continue to accept/perpetuate this “injustice” according to Singer?*



Questions for discussion

- *What separates humans from non-humans?*
 - *Consciousness?*
 - *What about mentally disabled humans?*
 - *Dignity?*
- *Would be "unfair" to use an imbecile or orphan infant for medical research instead of a dog ?*
- Can a weighing of considered interests help solve this dilemma of injustice?
- Singer often mentions mammals (pigs, apes, cats, etc.) in his arguments. Would Singer want us to extend rights to other non-sentient beings such as bacteria, plants or rocks?
- Should we try to minimize all suffering in our dealings with animals?