

SPECIES EGALITARIANISM

DAVID SCHMIDTZ



SOME IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Species Egalitarianism: the view that all species have moral standing.

Moral Standing: to command respect; to be something more than a mere thing.

Anthropocentrism: gives either exclusive or primary consideration to human interests above the good of other species

Biocentrism: gives consideration to one species' interests on the same level as other species' interests

Vulnerability: a matter of having more to lose.



TAYLOR'S ARGUMENT- BIOCENTRISM

Four Components

Humans are members of the Earth community of life in the same sense and on the same terms in which other living things are members of that community

Human species, as well as other species, are integral elements in a system of interdependence

Each organism is a unique individual pursuing its own good in its own way

Humans are not superior to other living beings.




IMPORTANT WORD CHOICE

TAYLOR FOCUSES ON
“LIVING THINGS”



TAYLOR'S CONCLUSION

Rejecting anthropocentrism inherently accepts its counterpart: the doctrine of species impartiality. Species impartiality is the belief that all species have the same inherent worth.



CRITIQUES OF TAYLOR

Just because we may accept that humans' interests are not superior to other being's interests, does not mean that all species' interests must be weighted equally.

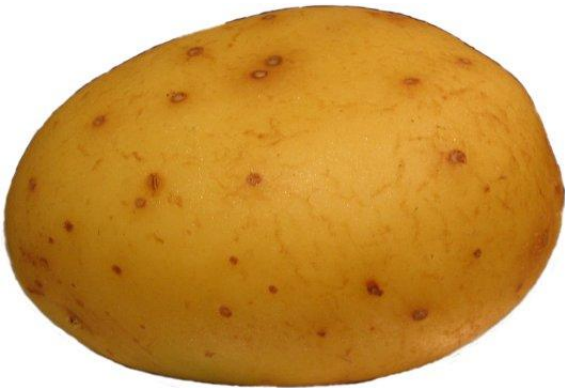
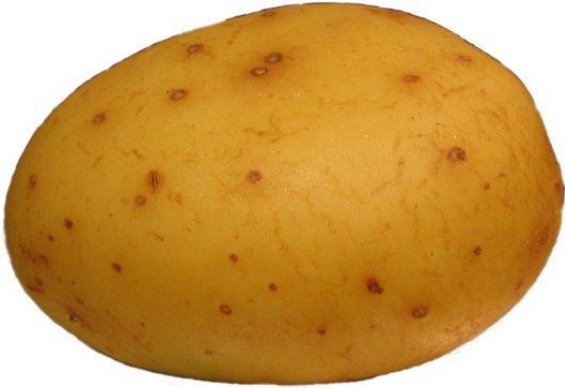
Reject the notion that humans are not inherently superior to other species.

Taylor argues that species' interests should be weighed equally, but at the same time argues that in certain circumstances, human interests trump non-human interests.

- Taylor's response: Bear vs. Enemy Soldier



TAYLOR: THE BIG PICTURE



Avoid mortal combat whenever we can, with both humans and nonhumans alike. Allows a limited license to kill for survival.

We should view the killing of a potato as the same as a killing of a cow.



SPECIESISM ACCORDING TO SCHMIDTZ

Direct response to Biocentrism

Just as arbitrary as anthropocentrism. Requires us to only value those capacities which all living species share.

There are grounds for moral standing that we do not share with other living species.



THE ARGUMENT

We should make our determinations of interests at the *type level*.

Moral significance in *biological differences*

Why should we care about other species?

self-respect, self-realization, similar capacities

“moral regard is appropriate wherever we are able to manage it”

Ex: lions and gazelles

Responsibility of moral agent: choosy about *what we respect* and *how we respect it*.



ULTIMATE CONCLUSION

NOT ALL THINGS ARE DESERVING
OF MORAL CONSIDERATION



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In order to have respect for nature, must one be a species egalitarianist? What is your opinion? What would Singer, Schmdtz, and Attfield believe?

Taylor's argument focuses on living beings. What do you think he means by this? Does this only include animal species? What about plant species? Bacteria? Rocks?

Does speciesism mean that we owe no moral consideration to other species? What about our obligations to an inferior member of one species?

How should a human value a gazelle, according to Schmdtz? How should a lion?

Are having respect for nature and being a species egalitarian compatible positions? Why or why not? What would Schmdtz say?

