

# **Animal Ethics**

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# History

- Animal issues thought to be a 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century issue. But this is not true.
- Seneca (4 BC-65CE)
- Pythagoras
  - Born: approx. 580 BC
  - “Pythagorean diet” = “vegetarian”
  - Pythagoreans also have positive views of women (could learn philosophy, etc)
- But not Aristotle who believed that there are some natural hierarchies: reason > passion, men > women, free men > slaves, people > animals

# More Recent Ideas

- And not Descartes: basic idea: animals are like watches
- Favorable to animals: Voltaire, Percy Shelley, Jeremy Bentham, Mill, Tolstoy, Gandhi
- Kant: indirect duties: hurting animals only matters because it hurts humans; being kind to animals is good because it benefits humanity
- Contemporary Philosophy: Wide range of philosophical theories/positions – most agree that animals deserve moral consideration
- Since factory farming – more consensus than ever

# Peter Singer

- (B. 1946)
- Regarded as the founder of the animal rights movement
- *Animal Liberation* (1975): widely regarded as the “Bible” of the animal rights movement
- The most well-known contemporary philosopher

# Equality = ?

- When we say that all human beings, regardless of race, creed, or sex, are equal, what is that we are asserting?
- “Equality is a moral idea, not a simple assertion of fact” (p. 3).
- “Each to count for one and none for more than one” (p. 3)

# Equal Consideration of Interests

- If a being suffers, his/her interests deserves equal consideration
- Suffering must be counted equally with the like suffering (p. 4)
- Why suffering -- not intelligence, language, having a soul, etc -- is the criterion
- Examples

# Speciesism

- “Speciesism is a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species” (bottom p 6)
- Why animal agriculture is speciesist
- Eating animal products sacrifices major interests of animals for minor interests of humans.

# Tom Regan

- He and Singer are regarded as the philosophical founders of the animal rights movement
- *The Case for Animal Rights* (hard core philosophy) & numerous other books (some like *Empty Cages* very accessible)
- Equal rights for “subjects of a life” - see p. 7
  - conscious individuals who value their lives
  - Includes all the animals that are usually eaten, hunted, used in animal testing and entertainment, etc.
- Should not be used as a means to an end.

# Regan's Goals

- Main objection: treating animals as resources (p. 1)
- Goal: “the total abolition of animal research; the total dissolution of commercial animal agriculture; and the total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping” (p. 1)
- Not larger cages, not better conditions; abolition (p. 8 & 9)

## Carol Adams (feminist approach)

- “Women and animals are similarly positioned in a patriarchal world, as objects rather than subjects”
- Both endure a “cycle of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption.”
- Agriculture uses female animals to profit off their reproductive systems.

# Matthew Scully

- Previously senior speechwriter for George W. Bush
- Main speechwriter of Sarah Palin's convention speech
- *Dominion*
- God has given us dominion, so we need to take care of his creation, not disrespect it and destroy it
- Vegan for many many years
- You can google him for more info, including interviews

# Proposition 2

- Background
- What would Singer and Regan say?
- What do you think?
- More info at: <http://www.yesonprop2.com/>