# Biocentrism FW

#### It is morally reprehensible to neglect the suffering of Animals and assume that humans are superior. This false assumption is known as speciesism. What we must realize is that moral consideration does not discriminate based on intelligence but on our capacity to suffer.

Singer 89, Peter, Princeton Philosopher, ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL, 1989, <http://faculty.webster.edu/corbetre/philosophy/animals/singer-text.html>

We will then see that we would be on shaky ground if we were to demand equality for blacks, women, and other groups of oppressed humans while denying equal consideration to nonhumans. When we say that all human beings, whatever their race, creed, or sex, are equal, what is it that we are asserting? Those who wish to defend a hierarchical, inegalitarian society have often pointed out that by whatever test we choose, it simply is not true that all humans are equal. Like it or not, we must face the fact that humans come in different shapes and sizes; they come with differing moral capacities, differing intellectual abilities, differing amounts of benevolent feeling and sensitivity to the needs of others, differing abilities to communicate effectively, and differing capacities to experience pleasure and pain. In short, if the demand for equality were based on the actual equality of all human beings, we would have to stop demanding equality. It would be an unjustifiable demand. Still, one might cling to the view that the demand for equality among human beings is based on the actual equality of the different races and sexes. Although humans differ as individuals in various ways, there are no differences between the races and sexes as such. From the mere fact that a person is black, or a woman, we cannot infer anything else about that person. This, it may be said, is what is wrong with racism and sexism. The white racist claims that whites are superior to blacks, but this is false—although there are differences between individuals, some blacks are superior to some whites in all of the capacities and abilities that could conceivably be relevant. The opponent of sexism would say the same: a person's sex is no guide to his or her abilities, and this is why it is unjustifiable to discriminate on the basis of sex. This is a possible line of objection to racial and sexual discrimination. It is not, however, the way that someone really concerned about equality would choose, because taking this line could, in some circumstances, force one to accept a most inegalitarian society. The fact that humans differ as individuals, rather than as races or sexes, is a valid reply to someone who defends a hierarchical society like, say, South Africa, in which all whites are superior in status to all blacks. The existence of individual variations that cut across the lines of race or sex, however, provides us with no defense at all against a more sophisticated opponent of equality, one who proposes that, say, the interests of those with I.Q. ratings above 100 be preferred to the interests of those with I.Q.s below 100. Would a hierarchical society of this sort really be so much better than one based on race or sex? I think not. But if we tie the moral principle of equality to the factual equality of the different races or sexes, taken as a whole, our opposition to racism and sexism does not provide us with any basis for objecting to this kind of inegalitarianism. There is a second important reason why we ought not to base our opposition to racism and sexism on any kind of factual equality, even the limited kind which asserts that variations in capacities and abilities are spread evenly between the different races and sexes: we can have no absolute guarantee that these abilities and capacities really are distributed evenly, without regard to race or sex, among human beings. So far as actual abilities are concerned, there do seem to be certain measurable differences between both races and sexes. These differences do not, of course, appear in each case, but only when averages are taken. More important still, we do not yet know how much of these differences is really due to the different genetic endowments of the various races and sexes, and how much is due to environmental differences that are the result of past and continuing discrimination. Perhaps all of the important differences will eventually prove to be environmental rather than genetic. Anyone opposed to racism and sexism will certainly hope that this will be so, for it will make the task of ending discrimination a lot easier; nevertheless it would be dangerous to rest the case against racism and sexism on the belief that all significant differences are environmental in origin. The opponent of, say, racism who takes this line will be unable to avoid conceding that if differences in ability did after all prove to have some genetic connection with race, racism would in some way be defensible. It would be folly for the opponent of racism to stake his whole case on a dogmatic commitment to one particular outcome of a difficult scientific issue which is still a long way from being settled. While attempts to prove that differences in certain selected abilities between races and sexes are primarily genetic in origin have certainly not been conclusive, the same must be said of attempts to prove that these differences are largely the result of environment. At this stage of the investigation we cannot be certain which view is correct, however much we may hope it is the latter. Fortunately, there is no need to pin the case for equality to one particular outcome of this scientific investigation. The appropriate response to those who claim to have found evidence of genetically-based differences in ability between the races or sexes is not to stick to the belief that the genetic explanation must be wrong, whatever evidence to the contrary may turn up: instead we should make it quite clear that the claim to equality does not depend on intelligence, **moral capacity,** [or] physical strength, or similar matters of fact. Equality is a moral ideal, not a simple assertion of fact. **There is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a factual difference in ability between two people justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to satisfying their needs and interests**. The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a prescription of how we should treat [them] animals. Jeremy Bentham incorporated the essential basis of moral equality into his utilitarian system of ethics in the formula: [said] "Each to count for one and none for more than one." In other words, the interests of every being affected by an action are to be taken into account and given the same weight as the like interests of any other being. A later utilitarian, Henry Sidgwick, put the point in this way: "The good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view (if I may say so) of the Universe, than the good of any other.''1 More recently, the leading figures in contemporary moral philosophy have shown a great deal of agreement in specifying as a fundamental presupposition of their moral theories some similar requirement which operates so as to give everyone's interests equal consideration—although they cannot agree on how this requirement is best formulated.2 It is an implication of this principle of equality that our concern for others ought not to depend on what they are like, or what abilities they possess—although precisely what this concern requires us to do may vary according to the characteristics of those affected by what we do. It is on this basis that the case against racism and the case against sexism must both ultimately rest; and it is in accordance with this principle that speciesism is also to be condemned.. If possessing a higher degree of intelligence does not entitle one human to use another for his own ends, how can it entitle humans to exploit nonhumans? Many philosophers have proposed the principle of equal consideration of interests, in some form or other, as a basic moral principle; but, as we shall see in more detail shortly, not many of them have recognized that this principle applies to members of other species as well as to our own. Bentham was one of the few who did realize this. In a forward-looking passage, written at a time when black slaves in the British dominions were still being treated much as we now treat nonhuman animals, Bentham wrote: The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been witholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the os sarrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the 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 a 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, Can they reasons nor Can they talk? but, Can their suffer?3 In this passage Bentham points to the capacity for suffering as the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration. The capacity for suffering—or more strictly, for suffering and/or enjoyment or happiness—is not just another characteristic like the capacity for language, or for higher mathematics. Bentham is not saying that those who try to mark "the insuperable line" that determines whether the interests of a being should be considered happen to have selected the wrong characteristic. The capacity for suffering and enjoying thingsis a prerequisite for having interests at all, a condition that must be satisfied before we can speak of interests in any meaningful way. It would be nonsense to say that it was not in the interests of a stone to be kicked along the road by a schoolboy. **A stone does not have interests because it cannot suffer**. Nothing that we can do to it could possibly make any difference to its welfare. A mouse, on the other hand, does have an interest in not being tormented, because it will suffer if it is. **If a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration**.

# WHAT IMMA SAY IN SUMMARY

## ! - killing marine life

#### OW Scope - just one nuclear plant in the United States kills 1 billion fish and other aquatic organisms every year (Theilman).

#### Anthro FW --- Extend Singer [30sec]

#### Humans are not morally superior to animals bc moral inclusion should not be arbitrarily selected based on things like intelligence but on our capacity to feel pain. Because suffering is an inherent part of what it means to be alive. That is why morality is directed at meeting our intrinsic values to stride for pleasure and avoid pain. Meaning if something has the capacity to feel pain, they are just as important as another entity that can feel pain. This means animal suffering must be also moral priority as the same principles of equality that cause us to reject racism and sexism, motivates us to reject speciesism as well. The life of a fish is the same as a life of a human.

#### Even if you are skeptical

#### Timeframe/Scope - Fish lay hundreds of eggs at a time which means every birthing fish you kill destroys the potential for hundreds more down the line that would have huge amounts of happiness – humans at most have 8 or 9 kids.

# Frontlines

#### A2 But humans can do \_\_\_\_\_ and fish can’t.

1] That doesn’t mean that they are morally superior. It doesn’t matter how many reasons they give as to why humans are better if they are all derived and based on our fundamental values. That is to uphold morality is to decrease pain. The reason they isolate is cherry picked and is derived from suffering.

2] The singer evidence crushes this argument. There are humans that are more \_\_\_\_\_ than other humans that doesn’t mean the first person is morally superior to the other.

#### A2 Humans can feel more pain than animals

1] that doesn’t matter. Pain is still pain, which is still intrinsically a bad thing

2] If I radioactively poison a human it’ll have the same effect as if I radioactively poison a fish. They’ll both die

3] Singer crushes this argument. that doesn’t matter even on a human level. If I punch an old lady and I punch a body builder with the same force, obviously the old lady will feel more pain, but that doesn’t mean the body builder’s life matters more.

#### A2 can’t compare slavery the holocaust or genocide = stepping on an ant [1:08]

1] YES we agree we should look after who have suffered more but we tell you the fish die. That is the worst form of suffering.

2] If we were to do that then we would simply play oppression Olympics

This is bad bc

A] we would never discuss the issues of those who still suffer. If one race were to suffer the most then no other races or sexes oppression would matter and be under recognized our standard is best because we see suffering as a problem that affects everything.

B] that doesn’t solve anything but further dividing races instead of uniting them under equitable treatment.

3] you’re saying it as if fish can’t suffer to similar extent as humans. Taking fishing as an example -- sticking a massive hook through your cheek to be lift up into the air where you suffocate and flail for your life is something Fish have to deal with that on the daily. Also radiation poisoning.

4] Best 07 - in order to solve human suffering we have to solve animal suffering first. Because the first beings we have dominated over were animals when we domesticated them. This then bred the logic of dominating of humans too and seeing certain races as animal like and morally inferior.

## AT Anthro Answers

### AT No pain

They have the same nervous system as humans they feel pain.

Singer 79, Peter, Princeton Philosopher, Equality for Animals?, https://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/1979----.htm

The basis of my belief that animals can feel pain is similar to the basis of my belief that my daughter can feel pain. Animals in pain behave in much the same way as humans do, and their behaviour is sufficient justification for the belief that they feel pain. It is true that, with the exception of those apes who have been taught to communicate by sign language, they cannot actually say that they are feeling pain\_ but then when my daughter was a little younger she could not talk either. She found other ways to make her inner states apparent, however, so demonstrating that we can be sure that a being is feeling pain even if the being cannot use language. To back up our inference from animal behaviour, we can point to the fact that the nervous systems of all vertebrates, and especially of birds and mammals, are fundamentally similar. Those parts of the human nervous system that are concerned with feeling pain are relatively old, in evolutionary terms. Unlike the cerebral cortex, which developed only after our ancestors diverged from other mammals, the basic nervous system evolved in more distant ancestors common to ourselves and the other 'higher' animals. This anatomical parallel makes it likely that the capacity of animals to feel is similar to our own. It is significant that none of the grounds we have for believing that animals feel pain hold for plants. We cannot observe behaviour suggesting pain--sensational claims to the contrary have not been substantiated-- and plants do not have a centrally organized nervous system like ours.

### AT What about Plants

Plants don’t feel pain

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