

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/corbetter/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, inequalitarian 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 inequalitarian 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 inequalitarianism. 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 withdrawn 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 reason nor Can they talk? but, Can they 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 things is 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.**

Lay weighing Overview

Griffiths of The Daily Mail in 2014 contextualizes that fish feel pain, just like humans. Fish have the same intelligence as other animals and consequently, people should care for their welfare. They have memories and exhibit behaviors such as using tools. There is mounting evidence they can feel pain in a manner similar to humans. The best practice would be to lend fish the same level of protection as any other vertebrate.

We O/W on:

1. 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 best have 8 or 9 kids.
2. Off of Framing: Probability/Scope - Literally 3.5 trillion fish and if one plant kills 1 billion fish each year, in 7 years that's as much life lost as the entire human population. And 100% probability as opposed to the lower probability impact of x (Most likely climate change)

Griffiths evidence:

[Griffiths of The Daily Mail Co in 2014](#)

"Fishing may not seem like such a relaxing sport anymore, as **scientists claim to have found that fish feel pain**, just like humans. One researcher believes **fish have the same intelligence as other animals and consequently, people should care more for their welfare**. Flying in the face of what is considered popular opinion, he added **fish have good memories and exhibit behaviour seen in primates, such as building complicated structures like specially-shaped sandcastles, as well as using tools**. Associate Professor Culum Brown of Macquarie University in Australia, said fish have very good memories, live in complex social communities where they keep track of individuals and can learn from one another. They develop cultural traditions and can even recognise themselves and others. They also show signs of Machiavellian intelligence, such as cooperation and reconciliation, according to the study, which focuses on bony fish and is published in Springer's journal Animal Cognition. Professor Brown said the primary senses of the fish are 'just as good' and in some cases better than that of humans. **The level of mental complexity that fish display is on a par with most other vertebrates, while there is mounting evidence that they can feel pain in a manner similar to humans. While the brains of fish differ from other vertebrates, fish have many comparable structures that perform similar functions**. Professor Brown believes that if some comparable animals are sentient, fish must be considered to be so, too, and therefore their welfare needs should be reconsidered. 'Although scientists cannot provide a definitive answer on the level of consciousness for any non-human vertebrate, **the extensive evidence of fish behavioural and cognitive sophistication and pain perception suggests that best practice would be to lend fish the same level of protection as any other vertebrate,**' he said."