UTILITARIANISM AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

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This thesis is dedicated to the billions of sentient, non-human animals who have fallen victim to the ruthless tendencies of human consumption. May those chickens, cows, pigs, mice, monkeys, cats, dogs, sheep, rats, and all other species who suffered horrible atrocities during their all-too-short lifespans never be forgotten. Instead, let their lives be reminiscent of the horrifying practices of animal agriculture and vivisection and act as a spark to ignite a movement to provide liberation to current and future sentient species.

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers two potential methods, both based in utilitarianism, that can be used to grant animals a higher moral status. The first of these methods is an "animal-centric utility" based argument which seeks to decrease harm in non-human animals and increase non-human utility. The second of these methods is an "anthropocentric utility" based argument which seeks to decrease harm in human beings and increase human utility. Though both methods are generally effective at promoting animals receiving a higher moral status, the anthropocentric utility method is ultimately more persuasive for convincing society as a whole. Because of how normalized animal consumption has been throughout history, religious narratives, and human philosophy, the argument to give animals a higher moral status must continue to place homo sapiens at the forefront of the argument; people are more likely to be persuaded to benefit themselves as opposed to benefiting someone - or something – else. This paper analyzes these two methods and provides various avenues for implementing stronger animal rights.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1973, the United States Air Force used two hundred beagle puppies to test their reaction to poisonous gases. Shortly after, the United States Army announced it would be doing similar testing, but with four hundred beagle puppies. When the American public learned about these testing projects, along with the support of Congressman Les Aspin, a nationwide movement to prohibit the testing sparked. After receiving vast quantities of letters from outraged citizens, the Department of Defense announced that the testing would be postponed and alternative approaches would be investigated. While the public outrage against the military testing was warranted, the situation raised a valid question: why do people not react with such outrage towards the other tens of thousands of experiments that take place each year at universities, research institutions, firms, businesses, and other industries? The answer is ignorance; people do not know just how many and how frequently animals are used in our modern society.

Nearly eighty billion farm animals are killed each and every year to supply the demand for beef, poultry, and veal worldwide (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). Animals are starved, trapped, beaten, and suffer atrocities which shortens their natural lifespan drastically (De Vries and Marcondes). These animals, who are physically capable of experiencing pain and fear, have little to no legal protection from the tendencies of the agriculture industry. These animals are treated as objects with little concern for their health or wellbeing.

Along with the harm that animals face on a regular basis, there is also direct human suffering that stems from society's usage of animals. Animal agriculture accounts for 18% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, with livestock accounting for 65% of all nitrous oxide - a

greenhouse gas - emissions (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). The consequences of using animal products result in global warming, climate change, and air pollution. While these consequences may be difficult to quantify, they nonetheless deserve to be taken into consideration. Human harm also stems from consuming animal products as part of our diet. Studies have shown that consuming large quantities of red meat has detrimental effects on the human cardiovascular system (Al-Shaar). Additionally, animal testing may also lead to negative health consequences to human beings, for some drugs have proven to be tolerable for other animals but incredibly dangerous to humans (Bracken).

The Research Question

Whether one finds the suffering that animals themselves face or by the indirect harm on human beings more compelling, it is evident that there are prominent issues that stem from animals having a limited moral status. To solve these issues and limit overall suffering, animals must be granted a higher moral status. A foreseeable follow-up question to this claim is: why? The basis for the assertion is answered by the founder of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham.

The question is not "Can they reason?" nor "Can they talk?" but "Can they *suffer?*" (Bentham).

Many people draw the line of equal moral consideration at rationality or the ability to express language, but Bentham's response draws the line of equal moral consideration at the ability to experience pain. Because nearly all vertebras, including mice, fish, birds, and reptiles have the abilities to experience both pain and pleasure, those beings should have their interests taken into consideration.

Bentham's distinction between the ability to suffer and the abilities to reason or speak, incorporate the basic moral underpinnings of utilitarianism into the debate for animal rights. Utilitarianism, in its most basic definition, is a moral philosophy which seeks to limit the amount of suffering and increase the amount of pleasure or happiness. Pleasure or happiness is coined as "utility." Utilitarian arguments generally seek to generate the most amount of utility in a given situation. (de Lazari-Radek and Singer). The main research question of this piece is: how can utilitarian-based arguments be used as a logical method of granting non-human animals a higher moral status?

Arguments to be Explored & Research Methods

Within the realm of utilitarianism, there are two separate methods that could be taken in order to give a higher moral status to non-human animals. On one hand, one may take an "animal-centric utility" approach, which uses arguments to limit the amount of suffering and generate more utility for those non-human animals. This type of argument is predominately used amongst animal rights activist groups, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the Animal Legal Defense Fund, and the 269 Life Movement. A leading figure of this animal-centric utility argument is Australian utilitarianist and modern-day philosopher, Peter Singer. Singer puts forward this animal-centric argument in much of his academic research – in particular, the influential *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (1975). An example of the animal-centric utility argument can be seen through the following example. Consider the Draize Test, a test used in cosmetics in which chemicals are dropped into the eyes of restrained rabbits. For the animal-centric utilitarian, the Draize Test should be prohibited for the sole reason that the procedure causes the rabbit to suffer. In this view, the benefits of having

access to human cosmetic products does not generate more pleasure than the suffering that the rabbit endures. Prohibiting the Draize Test would thus yield a greater amount of utility than the current practice.

However, in a world driven by homo sapiens, the animal-centric utility argument may fall short. Yet, there is a second method that could also be argued to extend higher moral status to non-human animals, but it is instead centered around human beings. This subsidiary argument is what I consider an "anthropocentric utility" approach. This sort of argument would be seen as follows; the Draize Test should be prohibited, because rabbits have an entirely different genetic makeup than human beings for animal testing to be indicative of side effects. What may be safe for the rabbit, may not be safe for human beings, who contain a different anatomical structure and genetic makeup than rabbits. Therefore, human beings suffer from ineffective animal testing which does not necessarily translate results to human beings. This type of argument seeks to generate more utility for human beings, but still does so in a manner that provides higher moral status to animals.

For the sake of clarity and familiarity for readers, I will be using the terms "animal" and "non-human species" interchangeably. In a utopic world, the arbitrary distinction between mankind and animals would not be so evident, especially through the usage of certain terminology. Just using the term "animal" already separates other species from "humans," without even starting discussion of intellectual capacity, rationality, or sentience. Alas, for the sake of familiarity with laymen's terminology and the general rhetoric put forward by anti-speciesist groups, the term "animal" will be used throughout this piece. After all, Singer titled his work *Animal* Liberation. PETA stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of *Animals.*

This paper will analyze both the animal-centric utility argument and the anthropocentric utility argument. I will weigh the pros and cons of both methods and discuss their persuasiveness and their role in implementing change in greater society. While both types of arguments could be used to grant higher moral status to non-human animals, I ultimately conclude that the anthropocentric utility argument to be the more effective method. Upon reaching this conclusion, I want to explicitly state that I do not believe the animal-centric utility argument put forward by animal rights groups or Peter Singer is incorrect. In fact, the animal-centric utility argument was persuasive enough to convince me to adopt a vegan lifestyle three years ago and has instilled a desire in me to become an animal rights attorney. As somebody who found Singer's *Animal Liberation* persuasive, it is not my intent to tear down his argument or regard it as morally incorrect. My conclusion simply states that the animal-centric utility argument is ultimately not as convincing to society as a whole, which has been rooted in anthropocentric practices for millennia.

In sum, Singer offers an animal-centric argument that attempts to undo speciesism. Speciesism refers to "a prejudice or attitude of bias towards the interests of members of one's own species and against those members of another species." (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals). As a concept, speciesism follows the same logic of thinking as racism or sexism; the in-group is of greater moral status. Theoretically, because society has found sexism and racism to be morally wrong, speciesism should follow. *Animal Liberation* is Singer's attempt to dismantle the concept of speciesism that has been deeply rooted in people's minds and lifestyles. However, his well-intended argument, made nearly fifty years ago, has yet to come to fruition on a grand scale.

While there are certainly more vegetarian and vegan options in grocery stores and local restaurants, there has yet to be a widespread animal rights movement in the last half of a century since Singer published his argument. Due to the lack of a large anti-speciesist revolution after the publishing of *Animal Liberation*, I suggest that instead of trying to unwire centuries' worth of speciesism, animal rights activists should embrace it and flip their narrative to persuade individuals to benefit themselves – something people already want to do. By taking speciesism for what it is, the narrative can place human beings at the forefront of the story *yet still achieve the same result of ending animal suffering and extending moral status and protection.* I argue that for the general society - whose economy is rooted in hundreds of years of animal exploitation, with multiple religious justifications for man's dominance over other animals, and an overall norm of consuming animal products – an anthropocentric utility approach to extend higher moral status to animals would ultimately be more successful in yielding a greater amount of utility for a greater amount of sentient beings.

CHAPTER 1: THE ANIMAL-CENTRIC UTILITY APPROACH

Introduction

The animal-centric utility approach can primarily be seen through the works of Peter Singer. A prominent figure of the modern-day animal rights movement, Singer introduced the idea of extending equal moral consideration to non-human-animals in his 1975 book, *Animal Liberation.* While *Animal Liberation* has become most widely known, Singer has devoted much of his life to the animal rights narrative through other works including: *Animal Liberation Now, Why Vegan?,* and *Ethics in Action: Learning from a Tube of Toothpaste.* Consistently throughout his works, Singer uses an animal-centric utility approach. In simplified terms, Singer would believe that humans should stop eating beef because the cow suffers during its life in animal agriculture. Thus, to stop eating beef would stop the cow from suffering and fulfill our moral obligation to consider the cow's interests. Singer's main argument in *Animal Liberation* is that humans should limit the amount of suffering that non-human animals face on our behalf.

Animal Liberation

Singer breaks down his argument in *Animal Liberation* so simply that the average reader would be able to understand his logic; this move was imperative for the intended audience of an omnivorous society. He begins by developing a clear line of logic which showcases that non-human-animals have the ability to suffer. He then follows by explaining why that suffering should be reduced and eliminated when possible. Singer then offers various anecdotes including cases of animal testing and slaughterhouse insights to explain the extent of current animal suffering. Finally, Singer lays out the implications of his argument for the future, which he then reevaluates in the most recent edition *Animal Liberation Now.*

In order to sufficiently advance his argument, Singer first scientifically proves that non-human animals do, in fact, have the ability to suffer and experience pain and pleasure.

In attempting to answer: "how does one determine whether or not non-human animals can feel pain?" Singer begins by asking a follow-up question: "how can we know if *anybody* feels pain?" "Pain is not something that can be explicitly, externally observed, rather it is an internal state of mind." (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals). Bystanders infer that someone else is experiencing pain through body language and other cues. Many critics to Singer will argue that because animals cannot tell us they are pain, they must not be. But in fact, nonlinguistic forms of communication are more effective at communicating with others than verbal language (Van Lawick-Goodall). This concept illustrates that animals' inability to verbally communicate with humans is not a valid counterargument. Upon reevaluating his argument in *Animal Liberation Now,* Singer concludes that in the last nearly fifty years between editions, "There is no longer any serious dispute among scientists that at least some nonhuman animals can feel pain and experience other conscious states, both positive and negative" (Singer, Animal Liberation Now: The Definitive Classic Renewed).

Singer then shifts his argument to address the distinction between harming animals and killing them. Singer attempts to keep the question of killing animals in the background of his discussion, on the grounds that philosophers cannot even agree when it is morally appropriate to kill human beings or why exactly human life has an element of sanctity (outside of religion). Nonetheless, Singer continues with the claim that the concept of the sanctity of human life, and only human life, is a speciesist concept and morally arbitrary. To highlight this arbitrariness, Singer compares a newborn infant with irreparable brain damage to a fully-grown chimpanzee. The chimpanzee, with a much higher degree for rationale and self-awareness, would have a

much greater capacity to think, experience pain, and create relations with others than the mentally handicapped infant who would never overcome its brain damage. Yet, laws exist which protect the infant from its parents or doctor putting it down, but not the chimpanzee. So arbitrarily granting the right to life to the infant, but not the more-sentient chimpanzee, is simply rooted in speciesism. The only meaningful distinction between the infant and the chimpanzee is that the infant "is, biologically, a member of the species Homo sapiens" while the chimpanzee is not (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals).

Singer then notes that one may take two different approaches to this hypothetical. On one hand, one may believe that we should treat senile or mentally handicapped humans akin to how we treat animals –there would be no moral injustice to killing them. On the other hand, one may believe that we should treat non-human animals akin to how we treat the most irritational of human beings – there is a moral obligation to ensuring their right to life, regardless of mental capacity. Singer himself does not attempt to reconcile these two arguments, instead expressing interest in some form of middle ground which grants non-human animals a right to life, with an exception for euthanasia to put them out of their misery (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals).

After reading the first chapter of *Animal Liberation*, readers gain a clear understanding that 1) non-human animals have the ability to suffer and 2) this suffering is inherently bad. Singer then transitions into a detailed explanation of what precisely this suffering is, taking extreme care to highlight how *useless* it is. Singer covers many cases about animal mistreatment, particularly in the fields of animal testing, also known as vivisection, and animal agriculture. Singer chooses these two fields due to the large quantity of animals affected and the direct human involvement in them. With billions of animals being killed each year in animal

agriculture and an estimated hundreds of millions of animals being experimented on each year for academic research, the sheer quantity of animals suffering is predominately made up from these two fields. As Singer says, the two fields "cause more suffering to animals than anything else that humans do" (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals). Additionally, these fields only continue to be successful because of society's direct involvement in them. People continue to purchase and consume meat, dairy, eggs, and other animal products, directly sustaining the unethical practices of the agriculture industry. Animal testing receives much of its funding from taxpayer dollars and is approved by officials that society elects. Both of these fields could be altered to drastically lessen the amount of suffering put on animals if we, as a society, wanted to. Because of the quantity of animals impacted and the direct human involvement, Singer choose animal agriculture and animal testing as the two biggest cases for showcasing animal mistreatment.

Singer provides the ignorant reader with heart wrenching stories that provide details of what exactly animals endure throughout animal testing experiments. An important element of these experiments is that they do not typically yield life-saving results for human beings. Singer uses this distinction to promote his argument in a utilitarian manner. In most of the experiments, either

1) the experimenters already knew that those chemicals were dangerous,

2) the experiment tested copious amounts of pesticides that humans never would consume in their daily diet, or

3) the experiments were testing other brands of drugs that were already known to be effective.

Many experiments cause needless suffering for animals and do not generate any increase in human utility. What Singer's anti-vivisection argument does is express that animal testing often leads to a *decrease* in overall utility; the animals suffer and the research yields no benefit for human advancement.

Though Singer expresses a disdain for animal testing, he refuses to take an absolutist position on animal testing, claiming that if there were one animal experiment that could save the lives of millions of people, then perhaps that would be a morally justified situation. However, because the supermajority of experiments fail to provide humans with any proper answers or advance scientific research, the current state of animal testing is morally wrong. Additionally, "we already have the means to reduce greatly the number of animals experimented upon, in techniques like tissue culture…mathematical or computer models of biological systems; gas chromatography and mass spectrometry; and the use of films and models in educational instruction" (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals). In case the reader is not convinced by these arguments, Singer leaves readers with a striking realization: "either the animal is not like us, in which case there is no reason for performing the experiment; or else the animal is like us, in which case we ought not to perform an experiment on the animal which would be outrageous if performed on one of us" (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals).

Singer then continues *Animal Liberation* by shifting away from animal testing, showcasing instead the horrors that animals face on the farm. Raised to be slaughtered, chickens, cows, and pigs regularly suffer from restricted space, starvation, and a general lack of care. As previously mentioned, the immorality surrounding the killing of animals is still a grey area and remains in the background of the question. However, the suffering that animals face during their

lives in factories and farms morally obliges human beings to stop supporting the practices of animal agriculture. Singer focuses much of this argument on animals whose meat is frequently found in grocery stores – chickens, pigs, and cows.

Chickens face a double-edged sword in animal agriculture, as they yield two different products for human consumption, eggs and chicken meat. Chickens are naturally free-range animals yet are forced into close proximity in animal agriculture warehouses. As a result, the chickens begin to fight amongst one another - through pecking- in a manner that is abnormal for chickens in their natural habitat. In order to counteract the chickens harming one another, farmers often to turn a technique called "debeaking," where the chickens' beaks are cut off with a hot knife. Along with debeaking, the chickens suffer sores on their feet from cramped, wired cages. It is blatantly apparent that the chickens who are raised for both their flesh and for their eggs, suffer through horrific living conditions in animal agriculture.

Next Singer focuses on the pig. Because the pig is a naturally intelligent being, it requires more stimulation to maintain a healthy state of being. However, animal agriculture forces the pigs to become bored, and they too turn to fighting amongst one another - a vice previously noted in confined chickens. Instead of pecking at their fellow captives, pigs instead attempt to bite off each other's tails. Tail-docking, a painful method of cutting the pigs' tails, has been used widely across both Britain and the United States as a proactive method of reducing pig biting. However, tail-docking is a painful practice which adds to the suffering that pigs face in animal agriculture.

Singer concludes his discussion of animal agriculture with cows. Akin to chickens, cows also face a double-edged sword because they create two different products that are used for human consumption: beef and milk. Incredibly similar to both chickens and pigs, cows also

suffer from confinement, unclean habitat, forced proximity, unnatural dieting and environment, and mental stressors. Cows also suffer physical abuses through branding, castration, and de-horning. A cow's destiny is determined by its sex; male cows will be sent to slaughter to become beef, while the females will be used as reproductive machines. All cows in animal agriculture suffer some sort of harm at the hands of homo sapiens.

Singer, after going through extensive research and explaining the innerworkings of animal agriculture, ends with the conclusion that animal agriculture is operating unethically. The practices that occur inside of farms and slaughterhouses are morally unjustifiable, when analyzed through the lens of a utilitarianist. Singer's conclusion reveals that the amount of suffering that animals endure during their lives in animal agriculture does not generate enough human utility to justify the suffering in the first place. Thus, the reader leaves this section of *Animal Liberation* with the conclusion that the current status of animal agriculture is unethical, but they leave with the question of: what should we do about it?

Animal Liberation continues by analyzing the history of speciesism throughout civil society, which will later be addressed in chapter three of this paper. Singer then concludes *Animal Liberation* with actionable steps that readers may take to break out of the immoral cycle. Such actions include boycotting the consumption of animal products and those companies who test their drugs on animals. Singer even includes a vegetarian recipe book at the end of his argument to ensure a quick and easy transition to a plant-based diet.

Conclusion

Animal Liberation is Singer's attempt to convince society that speciesism is morally wrong through the usage of emotional rhetoric, gruesome anecdotes, and statistics. Singer uses

an animal-centric utility approach throughout *Animal Liberation* by focusing on decreasing animal harm and increasing animal utility. Though Singer's animal-centric argument is compelling, it remains insufficient to inspire change for the majority of society.

CHAPTER 2: THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC UTILITY APPROACH

Introduction

In contrast to the animal-centric utility approach is the anthropocentric utility argument. The anthropocentric utility argument seeks to maximize utility for a different focus group – homo sapiens. It is important to note that this second method is seldom used to primarily promote animal rights, with the majority of groups that put forward this message genuinely seeking to advance human utility via better health, cheaper prices, etc., Animal welfare often comes as a mere byproduct of the anthropocentric utility argument. Regardless, these companies still end up promoting animal rights, despite doing so in a roundabout manner, through basic supply and demand economics. If a plant-based meat company is successful, less consumers are buying competitive animal products, and less animals are killed to supply the demand for meat.

When compared to the animal-centric utility argument, the anthropocentric utility argument is the more effective method of promoting animals to a higher moral status, because of how deeply rooted our society is in speciesist practices.

It is important to note that there is a potential tertiary argument – a "geocentric utility" approach. This utilitarian argument seeks to maximize utility for the planet itself, through less carbon emissions, using land more efficiently, and combating global climate change. The geocentric utility approach may be used to either support the anthropocentric utility approach via creating a better planet for human beings, or by the animal-centric utilitarians who want to create a better planet for all sentient beings. Because the geocentric utility argument could potentially be used by either group, it will remain in the background of this analysis.

Anthropocentric Harm

The current dependence of humanity's consumption on animal products does not increase potential utility for human beings. The consumption of animal products actually harms the health of the consumer, thus decreasing overall human utility. The majority of humanity's use of animals comes from daily diet but many negative side effects occur from frequent consumption. Such effects include health consequences, decreased physiological performance, and inadequate food distribution which directly leads to world hunger. This section will illustrate how granting animals a higher moral status may actually increase anthropocentric utility in the long run. The argument will begin with an explanation of the harm that homo sapiens suffer from consuming animal products and continue by illustrating how that harm may be lessened through granting animals a higher moral status.

Increasing human utility would result from increasing human health, pleasure, and happiness. The consumption of animal products does not allow for humans to fully experience any of those three attributes.

Health Consequences

First, consuming animal products in daily diet has been shown to cause negative health consequences. These consequences include - but are not limited to - heart disease, foodborne illnesses, and increased risk of cancer.

According to a statement to improve cardiovascular health released by the American Heart Association in 2021, "poor diet quality is strongly associated with elevated risk of cardiovascular disease morbidity and mortality" (Lichtenstein, Appel and Vadiveloo). One of the main focuses of the statement expresses a shift towards more heart-healthy and nutritious foods

as a means of preventing cardiovascular disease. This shift includes limiting the intake of red meat and instead replacing meat with heart-healthier options, such as beans and legumes. The American Heart Association is not alone in its recommendation. During a study performed at the University of Oxford's Nuffield Department of Public Health over thirty years and including over 1.4 million participants, researchers found that "red and processed meat have been consistently linked with bowel cancer and our findings suggest an additional role in heart disease. Therefore, current recommendations to limit red and processed meat consumption may also assist with the prevention of coronary heart disease" (University of Oxford). Additionally, the study also revealed an 18% increased risk of coronary heart disease for every 50g/day intake of processed meat and a 9% increased risk of coronary heart disease for every 50g/day intake of non-processed meat. Processed meat included sausages, bacon, and ham. Non-processed meat included lamb, pork, and beef. The scientific reasoning explained in the study as to the correlation between red meat and coronary heart disease is due to "the high content of saturated fat in red meat, and of sodium (salt) in processed meat. High intakes of saturated fat increase levels of harmful low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, whilst excess salt consumption raises blood pressure. Both LDL cholesterol and high blood pressure are well-established risk factors for coronary heart disease" (University of Oxford). The results shown in the Oxford study and the suggestions from the American Heart Association both reveal the impact of consuming red meat on human cardiovascular health, with scientific support for limiting the intake of red meat for better human health.

Aside from cardiovascular disease, various foodborne illnesses are also directly linked to the consumption of animal products. According to the Center for Disease Control, foodborne illnesses are more likely to occur from foods such as "raw and undercooked foods from animals,

including meat, chicken and other poultry, eggs, raw (unpasteurized) milk and products made from it, and seafood" (Center for Disease Control). While it is still possible to receive a foodborne illness from plants and grains, it is less likely. The higher chances of receiving a foodborne illness from meat and poultry are due to the enteropathogenic bacteria that primarily live and grow in food-producing animals (Lianou). Enteropathogenic bacteria include Escherichia coli and Salmonella enterica, which are well-known causes of foodborne illness. While these two types of bacteria may be more well-known amongst consumers, there are additional bacteria that deserve consideration, as well as parasites and prions.

Various experiments have been done to study the impact of several highly contagious bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. One such study begins with an analysis of campylobacter, the "leading cause of bacterial foodborne illness worldwide" (Lianou). Campylobacter is predominately found living inside of all major food-producing animals including chicken, cattle, and pigs, with poultry being the most prominent host. Contamination from campylobacter may come from consuming an animal's meat who was infected by the campylobacter themself, or from cross-contamination between slaughtered animal carcasses in-slaughterhouse. Most reported cases of campylobacter infection are "associated either with the consumption of foods of animal origin that are raw or undercooked, or with the consumption of foods that are recontaminated after cooking" (Lianou). Broiler chicken meat reigns as the number one host of campylobacter with a 38.4% occurrence of containing the germ. The study concludes that the consumption of animal meat, specifically poultry, increases the risk of contracting foodborne diseases from campylobacter.

Studies have also linked an increase of risk of cancer with the consumption of animal products. One study published in the National Library of Medicine analyzes the link between

meat, dairy products, and cancer. The study concludes that there is "a role of red and processed meat in colorectal cancer, as well as some evidence for other cancers sites, including esophagus, liver, kidney, and prostate" (Abid, Cross and Sinha). This conclusion is replicated by the World Cancer Research Fund International who also concludes that "there is generally consistent evidence showing that consumption of processed meat increases the risk of colorectal cancer" (World Cancer Research Fund International). In sum, it is evident that there is a scientifically proven link between consuming animal products and an increased risk of cancer.

Per the increased risk of heart disease, foodborne illnesses, and cancers, it is evident that consuming animal products increases human harm and decreases human utility.

Inadequate Food Distribution

Second, the vast amount of land required for growing animal-based food products decreases anthropocentric utility by increasing world hunger. Simply put, more people could be fed worldwide if humanity granted animals a higher moral status and ceased to consume animal products. The driving factor for this conclusion is the current inefficiencies of land usage.

Nearly eighty billion farm animals are killed each year to supply the worldwide demand for meat (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). In order for these eighty billion animals to die, they must first be raised, fed, and housed. These animals are often well-fed, in order to fatten them up for slaughter. In contrast, many people worldwide are not so well-fed or housed. Globally, 700 million people live in extreme poverty – meaning they live on less than $2.15 per day- while 47% of the global population lives on less than $6.85 per day (The World Bank).These statistics reveal a sad reality for humanity; humanity grows enough food to feed eighty billion farm animals, but not enough to feed eight billion human beings.

Animal agriculture, which uses 45% of the earth's total land, uses land in two separate, but related ways (Thornton, Herrero and Ericksen). First, animal agriculture must have a physical space for the farm animals to live. Second, animal agriculture must also grow fodder for the animals to eat. The dichotomy entails that animal-based food requires more land in order to be produced than plant-based food: land to house the animal and land to grow the animal's food. Plant-based food just requires one plot of land because plants do not need to eat other food to survive.

The land requirements for an animal-based diet and a plant-based diet differ drastically. A vegan diet requires approximately 1/6 of an acre of land to grow enough food to supply a vegan for one year. A comparable meat-eater uses up to eighteen times more land, or up to three acres (Robbins). If humanity refrained from eating animals, there could be eighteen times more land to use to grow food for *everyone,* including those who are currently living in extreme poverty.

Not only does growing animal-based food require more land usage, but it also produces food with lower protein content. On a given area of land, fifteen times more protein can be produced by growing plants than the same area of land being used to produce beef (Cowspiracy). In the current state of agriculture, less people are being fed and they are being fed less nutritional food, thus decreasing human utility.

Decreased Energy

Third, the consumption of animal products decreases the ability for human beings to feel happy and healthy. Along with increasing human health, maximizing human utility also includes increasing human happiness. Human beings should be able to physically do activities that please them, in order to maximize human pleasure. However, the consumption of animal-based foods

can limit the physiological functions of the human body and prohibit humans from maximizing their own personal pleasure. For example, a study on animal-based diets states "the consumption of animal products exposes humans to saturated fat, cholesterol, lactose, estrogens, and pathogenic microorganisms, while displacing fiber, complex carbohydrates, antioxidants, and other components needed for health" (Barnard and Leroy). Biologically, animal-based food displaces necessary aspects of a healthy lifestyle. Because the digestive system must work harder to digest animal-based food, consumers feel more sluggish and fatigued. According to the National Institutes of Health, around 68% of the world's population suffer from lactose malabsorption (Storhaug, Fosse and Fadnes). The indigestion that occurs from consuming lactose, an enzyme found in dairy products, can lead to bloating, nausea, and abdominal pain. Additionally, consumers of animal products take in a higher amount of tryptophan – an amino acid frequently found in meat and dairy products – which increases "neural and endocrine effects that regulate circadian rhythms of behavior, physiology, and sleep patterns" (Richard, Dawes and Dougherty). The foods that contain the highest percentage of tryptophan include whole milk, 2% milk, tuna, turkey, and chicken (Richard, Dawes and Dougherty).These animal products high in tryptophan, on a true physiological level, directly increase melatonin levels. It is chemically evident that people feel sleepier after eating foods high in tryptophan.

Additionally, the animal-based diet causes human beings to exceed their daily recommended intake of tryptophan. The "typical intake for many individuals is approximately 900 to 1000 mg daily, the recommended daily allowance for adults is estimated to be between 250 mg/day and 425 mg/day" (Richard, Dawes and Dougherty). This overconsumption heightens the fatigue that consumers feel from consuming products high in tryptophan – predominately meat and milk.

Fatigue, indigestion, and digestive pain do not allow for human beings to feel happy and energized in their daily lives. Instead of being able to physically thrive, humans instead feel tired and unenergized. The inability to pursue happiness, because of weak physiological functions, decreases overall human utility.

Minimizing Anthropocentric Harm

Per the previous section, it can be seen how consuming animal products decreases overall utility. Logically, the contrapositive would follow – not consuming animal products would increase overall utility. Taking this step and adopting a plant-based diet would increase anthropocentric utility in multiple ways. First, human beings would be significantly healthier and suffer less risk of cancers, heart diseases, and other illnesses. Second, more human beings could be fed more nutritionally. Finally, human beings would have more energy to do things that would maximize their own personal happiness and pleasure.

In terms of maximizing human health, plant-based diets generate more utility than animal-based diets. People who eat plants are less likely to develop cancers and foodborne illnesses. As a result of being less likely to suffer, people can increase their own utility by choosing to eat plant-based food instead of animal-based food.

In terms of more efficient land usage, plant-based diets generate more utility than animal-based diets. First, from a land usage perspective, more food can be grown if consumers choose a plant-based diet. Instead of having one plot of land for cows and another for cow food, both of those plots of land could be used to grow plants for human beings to eat. Second, plant-based food is of higher nutritional value than animal products. High protein foods are more nutritious, more satisfying, and healthier for consumers. Being able to grow more protein-dense foods on

less land not only allows for more people to be fed worldwide, but they are also fed better nutritionally.

In terms of overall physiological function, a plant-based diet generates more utility than an animal-based diet. The increase in utility stems from an increase in physiological function, which produces more energy for people to perform tasks that increase their own happiness. In sum, people feel better when they eat plants than when they eat animal products. An example of this heightened energy can be seen through personal daily experience; most people would claim they feel better physically after eating a salad than a burger and milkshake. As previously mentioned, animal-based products cause bloating, fatigue, and indigestion. By not consuming animal-based products, people feel more energized and livelier in their daily lives.

Along with increasing day-to-day function, plant-based diets are even effective at increasing physiological performance in professional athletes who must have remarkable fitness and push their body to the physiological limits. There are various case studies centered on professional athletes which showcase the increase in physiological function.

For example, the Gamechangers, a documentary advocating for plant-based diets in athletes, interviews a professional linebacker. The player, after learning about the health benefits of plant-based diets, convinced around half of his teammates to try a plant-based diet in order to maximize performance. After doing so, the team had better overall athletic performance. (Psihoyos).

Another example can be seen in Formula 1 racer, Lewis Hamilton. When Hamilton first decided to become vegan, he received some critique from doctors who believed he would not intake enough protein to meet the demands of intense racing. Hamilton responded “"when you watch this documentary and you see meat clogging up your arteries, you see all the stuff they put

in the meat, stuff we are all eating, there is no way I am going to disregard that" (Hamilton, Lewis Hamilton: F1 driver on going vegan and his fears for the planet). Since his switch to a vegan diet, Hamilton has won four more world championships and noticed "his energy levels became more consistent and his skin even cleared up" (Hamilton, Lewis Hamilton: The F1 Superstar on Racism, His Future, and the Shocker That Cost Him a Championship).

The cases of professional athletes show how plant-based diets increase physiological function, especially in environments where physiological function is the most important factor. If professional athletes are able to adopt a plant-based diet and have physiological success, then everyday consumers with lower physiological demands can also experience better day-to-day function with a plant-based diet.

The Anthropocentric Utility Method in Practice

The anthropocentric utility method, as previously illustrated, has various avenues of increasing human utility and minimizing human pain. The anthropocentric utility method is not frequently used by animal rights activist groups but it is used by groups who create products specifically for human consumption. One major example of a company that uses the anthropocentric utility method is Beyond Meat, a plant-based company who produces meat alternatives. Some quick keyboard strokes can land one on Beyond Meat's website, where one is quickly flooded with "anthropocentric utility" advertising.

ZERO Added Hormones. ZERO GMOs. ZERO Cholesterol. ZERO Added Antibiotics. 35% LESS Saturated Fat. FEWER Calories. 35% LESS Total Fat (Beyond Meat).

All of these messages flash across the screen, trying to persuade consumers to consume the Beyond Meat vegan and vegetarian products. None of the taglines speak to animal cruelty,

abuse, or neglect. The animal itself is completely forgotten, replaced instead by dieting terminology and nutritional facts. The marketing technique that Beyond Meat uses to convince consumers to switch to a plant-based diet is all built upon how it could benefit *human* health – the anthropocentric utility argument at its finest.

Conclusion

This section has illustrated how the current states of animal agriculture and animal-based diets create real harm for human consumers. Animal-based diets directly lead to cancers, foodborne illnesses, and decreased physiological function. Because of these harms, it is evident that overall human utility is currently being decreased. However, human utility could significantly be increased if human beings were to grant animals a higher moral status and cease to consume animal-based food products.

CHAPTER 3: WHY ANTHROPOCENTRISM OUTWEIGHS ANIMAL-CENTRISM

Introduction

Throughout this argument, I have promoted an anthropocentric utility approach in order to promote more moral consideration for animals. My reasoning for adopting this position is simple; speciesism has been so interwoven into the fabric of society that it is nearly impossible to overcome. People care more about themselves then they do about other species.

In this section, I will expand on how deeply woven speciesism is into society through the historical usage of animals and the impact of religion on human morality. I will then continue with an explanation of the psychological instinct for human beings to choose themselves over others. Finally, I will explain how these factors make speciesism impossible to overcome.

Historical Usage of Animals

One major reason that speciesism is so woven into society is because humanity has relied on using animals for centuries. Humanity and animal consumption have been entwined all throughout history; nowadays, it is simply the norm. Ancient Rome used lions, gazelle, and other wild animals for entertainment in the Coliseum. Thailand has used elephants all throughout its history, from riding elephants in battle during ancient times to allowing tourists to pay for short elephant rides to boost their contemporary economy. Even short-term history has heavily relied on animal consumption. Colonial America rode on horseback and plowed fields with oxen. Not to mention, all of these cultures have consumed animals as part of their normal diet. Milk, cheese, butter, meat, and fish have been staples in Western cuisine for centuries. Thus, it is relatively apparent to see how dependent humanity's development has been on animals for over several millennia, as well as how humans naturally view themselves as better than other species.

Man's Dominion

Another major aspect of speciesism that has allowed it to take root comes from divine authority. Estimates place the number of worldwide Christians at just over two billion believers. These two billion people believe in God and consider the Bible as source of inspiration and morality. God explicitly showcases the moral permissibility of speciesism frequently throughout the Bible, though specifically in the books of Genesis, John, and Luke.

The first biblical account of speciesism comes in the story of creation. The Book of Genesis states "then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness: so that they may rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Biblica, Inc.). After God creates the earth and all of the animals on it, he then creates mankind. The verse explicitly states that mankind has God-given authority over all of the fish, birds, cattle, and other animals on earth. God's delegation of this power is the first and most prominent case of speciesism that can be seen in the Bible.

A second biblical account of speciesism can been seen in the Miraculous Catch of Fish, found in the Gospel of John. In this story, the disciples of Jesus were fishing for quite some time but were unable to catch any fish. Jesus, from the shore, told them to cast their nets on the opposite side of their boat. After the disciples did so, "Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn" (Biblica, Inc.). Because Jesus, the Son of God, considered catching the fish for food was morally permissible, this story acts as another example of biblical speciesism.

Finally, the Gospel of Luke reveals another instance of biblical speciesism through the story of Jesus and the Exorcism of Gerasene. Luke 8:26-39 depicts the story of a man in

Gerasene who was possessed by demons. Luke begins the story by stating, "When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house but had lived in the tomb" (Biblica, Inc.). Jesus, knowing the man was possessed, took the following steps to save the man:

> Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned" (Biblica, Inc.).

The Exorcism of Gerasene reveals how Jesus chose for the demons to curse a group of pigs, as opposed to a human being. This choice shows how even the Son of God views pigs as morally inferior to human beings. However, another element of this story elevates speciesism even further. When Jesus first met the possessed man, the man was unclothed and living in a cave – much like an animal. After Jesus had saved the man, "they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind" (Biblica, Inc.). Then Jesus told the man to return to his home. After Jesus had removed the demons from the man, the man was clothed and living a home – much like a human being. The context of this story reveals a speciesist rhetoric. When the man was possessed, he was seen as an animal. When he was no longer possessed, he was seen as a human being. This biblical rhetoric promotes the idea that animals are dirty and less worthy than clean and pure human beings.

Though the Bible frequently puts forth a speciesist narrative, three main instances can be seen through in the Books of Genesis, John, and Luke. Each of these stories reveal a biblical source of speciesism which influence the morality of billions of people worldwide. When billions of people turn to a speciesist source to derive their ethics, speciesism is bound to become an ethical norm.

Though religion plays a significant role in the lives of billions of people, there are also numerous people who do not derive their moral code from religion or divine authority. Some people seek to develop their morals on their own or through other sources. Nonetheless, because a significant quantity of people worldwide believe in the Bible, the biblical justifications for speciesism remain a prominent reason for speciesism today.

Psychological Egoism and Rational Self-Interest

Another explanation for the prominence of speciesism comes from human psychology and philosophy - specifically through psychological egoism and rational self-interest. According to the concept of psychological egoism, homo sapiens are more likely to choose something that benefits themselves personally, as opposed to benefiting somebody else. Essentially, "psychological egoism claims that each person has but one ultimate aim: her own welfare" (Shaver).

Psychological egoism explains how speciesism exists so persistently. People are motivated primarily by self-interest. If people would rather benefit themselves as opposed to somebody else, then people would certainly rather benefit themselves as opposed to a cow, pig, or chicken.

Along the same lines of psychological egoism, rational self-interest also explains why human beings naturally choose things that benefit themselves, as opposed to some other person (or some other species). Rational self-interest refers to an idea in economics where individual parties seek to benefit themselves in economic transactions, initially discussed in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations.* One can be considered a "rational" actor if they seek to maximize their own economic situation. Though the term "rational self-interest" is predominately used in economics,

the concept of rationally seeking to benefit yourself over others is not strictly confined to monetary situations.

Both psychological egoism and rational self-interest provide examples of innate human selfishness. If people are willing to benefit themselves over other *human beings*, it is natural to conclude that people would choose to benefit themselves over other *species*. People may not feel inclined to stop eating beef when told that the cow suffered from being killed; people already knew that. But people may feel more inclined to stop eating beef if they were made more aware of the personal health consequences that come along with consuming red meat. This line of reasoning shows why the anthropocentric utility method is more convincing to general society to give animals a higher moral status.

Conclusion

Speciesism, unfortunate as it may be, is a norm for society in the twenty-first century for a variety of reasons. Due to the historical reliance on animals since ancient times, the influence of religion on human morality, and various psychological explanations, it is plain to see how speciesism has become so normalized in human beings today. Because speciesism has become so normalized and developed throughout thousands of years, it would be nearly impossible for society to overcome it. To undo speciesism (i.e., Singer's goal) would require humanity to undo millennia of history, religious declarations, and rewire basic human psychology. Because of the extensive requirements to undo speciesism, I believe it is impossible to overcome on a societal level. Thus, the animal-centric utility method needs a subsidiary argument to help promote granting animals a higher moral status – the anthropocentric utility argument. The animal-centric

utility argument can only go so far in promoting better moral consideration for animals; it requires the assistance of the anthropocentric utility argument in order to finish the job.

CHAPTER 4: COUNTERARGUMENTS

Introduction

Throughout this piece, I have advocated for an anthropocentric utility approach in order to promote the progression of animals attaining a higher moral status. My argument depends on taking speciesism for what it has become and keeping homo sapiens at the center of utility. My anthropocentric argument is in direct contrast to that of many animal rights groups, whose main goals are to combat speciesism and place animals at the center of the debate. I foresee four potential counterarguments to the claims that I have made thus far.

First, critics may claim that I am wrong; the anthropocentric utility argument is not more effective at giving animals a higher moral status. Second, critics may bring to light that my argument fails to convince everyone; there are some people who still will not want to stop consuming animal products. Third, I predict people may believe animal testing is a crucial element of increasing human utility. Finally, I suspect critics may view my argument as "anti-Singer" and in contrast to the most fundamental tenant of the Animal Liberation movement. I will address each of these claims individually.

The "You're just wrong" Critique

A foreseeable critique of my argument is simply that I am wrong. Perhaps the anthropocentric utility argument is not more effective at persuading people to give animals a higher moral status. Perhaps the more persuasive method is Singer's animal-centric argument put forth by himself and other animal rights activists.

I find this critique to be speculative, rather than founded in evidence. The anthropocentric utility argument has not been produced on as large a scale as the animal-centric utility argument has. Singer's *Animal Liberation* has sold more than 500,000 copies worldwide in sixteen

different languages (Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Further, *Animal Liberation* has been available to consumers for nearly fifty years. The animal-centric utility argument has already been argued, but animals still do not have a higher moral status in general society. My anthropocentric utility argument simply acts as another avenue to reach the same destination. A human-centered approach has not had enough shelf time to come to fruition on a grand scale like *Animal Liberation* has. To proactively state that the anthropocentric utility argument is wrong is speculative; it has not yet been done. Perhaps the anthropocentric utility argument may end up being the less effective method in the future, but we cannot determine that conclusion until we first test out the theory to its fullest extent.

The "Well not everyone…" Critique

Another foreseeable critique to my argument is that my argument still will not convince everyone that animals should have a higher moral status. These critics may think that even if my argument is slightly more effective than Singer's, it still is not effective enough at convincing society see animals as more morally relevant.

In terms of utilitarianism, these critics admit that my method generates more utility. Assume Singer's method convinces every 1/10 readers to become vegan. The critics state that while my method is more effective than Singer, it is not going to change everyone. So it is safe to assume that my method convinces at least every 2/10 readers to become vegan. Two vegans produces more utility than one vegan – for both human beings and animals. Thus, from a strictly utilitarian view, my method is congruent with the belief of the critics.

I foresee that the critics will now respond: "Okay, but what about the other eight readers?" To this, I concede. Many people, even when given factual evidence, will still choose to

ignore it if it does not help their own stubborn argument. This concept is known as confirmation bias. Even if everyone on the planet read both *Animal Liberation* and this paper, there would still be people who are either simply too set in their ways to change or do not believe the facts. Whether this lack of willingness to change comes from overall convenience, ignorance, or plain stubbornness is irrelevant. My argument may not convince everybody; neither will Singer's. I simply believe that my argument is more convincing to increase from 1/10 readers to 2/10 readers. To convince 10/10 readers is likely impossible, regardless of the method put forth.

At this point, I would also like to concede against the argument on God giving mankind dominion over his creation in the book of Genesis. My argument is based on rational, philosophical logic. Faith is irrational, outside the realm of logic. For those who truly believe that God gave humankind dominion over all of his creation - that animal agriculture is currently running as God intended – then nothing I could say could convince them to change in their ways. Because faith cannot be explained, it also cannot be argued against.

The "If we don't test on animals, then how do we know products are safe for humans?" Argument

I suspect a potential counterargument to my opposition to vivisection may be as follows – if we do not test new products and drugs on animals before human usage, then how can we ensure those products are safe for humans? The main point of this counterargument is that using unsafe products would cause injury and pain to humans who use them, thus decreasing human utility.

To this point, I would like to express that my anthropocentric utility argument may fall short in this instance. Most of my argument attempts to increase human utility. In theory, if

testing on mice were to produce more utility for humans through producing lifesaving drugs, finding cures for diseases, etc., then the testing should be morally permissible.

I admit that this instance is where Singer and his animal-centric utility argument act as strong defenders for antivivisection. Per Singer, who I have previously mentioned that I agree with, the immorality of animal testing comes from the harm that the animals suffer during the tests. Because the animals suffer pain, their utility is decreased. The animal-centric utility method helps provide moral justification for antivivisection; if something suffers, we should prohibit that suffering in attempt to increase utility. Though my method of argument may be insufficient for this specific scenario, Singer's is effective.

I would also like to counteract this point by expressing that there are easily available alternatives to animal testing, such as in vitro methods, computer modeling programs, voluntary human studies, and stem cell research. Furthermore, many companies have adopted cruelty-free mindsets and have stopped performing testing on animals all together, so the switch to alternative testing is attainable.

The "You're actively undoing what Singer is doing" Argument

The final critique that I foresee is that my argument directly opposes Singer's. Singer attempts to dismantle speciesism; I attempt to promote speciesism.

To this point, I find this critique to be unnecessarily technical. While it is true that Singer attempts to undo speciesism and I attempt to advance it, we still share a core conclusion - animals should be granted higher moral status. The animal-centric utility and anthropocentric utility arguments are simply different means to the same end. Singer and I both agree on several foundational levels. First, we both share a belief that animals should receive higher moral status

in civil society. Second, we both share a belief that utilitarianism can be a logical, persuasive method of achieving that goal. I have also explicitly stated that Singer's argument convinced me to adopt a vegan lifestyle and sparked my desire to become an environmental attorney with a focus on animal protection. I do not find Singer's argument to be wrong or logically unsound. I believe my anthropocentric utility argument may convince more people than Singer's animal-centric argument, though it is likely that some combination of the two methods would be the most successful.

Singer's argument and my own do not need to compete against one another; they can work in tandem to promote better moral treatment of non-human animals. The different processes that Singer and I both use are merely technical elements that differ from one another, but our common goal is what unites our two arguments.

CHAPTER 5: THE FUTURE OF ANIMAL RIGHTS

Introduction

Throughout this piece, I have expressed my belief that non-human animals should be granted a higher moral status – regardless of if one takes an animal-centric or anthropocentric method to get there. However, it is necessary to discuss how this moral obligation must translate into action. Granting animals a higher moral status is step one in a multi-step process to achieving animal rights. The moral obligation to protect animals must be translated into the modern legislative process in order to increase utility for *all* sentient beings – humans and non-humans alike.

The modern legislative process has granted certain protections to non-human animals through a variety of statutes. Two major pieces of such legislation are the Animal Welfare Act and the Endangered Species Act. In theory, both of these acts appear to be significant strides in the animal rights community. Yet in execution, these two acts fail to properly protect non-human animals from the inhumane practices of animal agriculture, vivisection, entertainment purposes, and other uses by human beings. In this section, I will address the faults of these statutes and how they could be amended to protect more animals. I will then conclude with suggestions for the average reader and explain how they can make a difference without needing to take to the legislative stage.

The Animal Welfare Act

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) was signed into law in 1966 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The AWA is the only federal act that regulates the handling and treatment of animals in experiments, research, and exhibition in the United States. The AWA "requires that minimum

standards of care and treatment be provided for certain animals bred for commercial sale; used in research, teaching, or testing; transported commercially; or exhibited to the public" (8. U. Congress). On a surface level, the goal of the AWA appears to be congruent with animal rights activists who want to limit vivisection and prohibit animal suffering. However, analyzing the terminology in the statute reveals just how little protection is granted to animals. The two biggest flaws with the AWA are its exclusion of species who are predominately the subjects of animal testing and its flimsy standards that can easily be avoided by researchers.

The first major critique of the AWA is that it does not protect the majority of species who are the primary subjects of vivisection; the species most strongly protected under the AWA are those who do not typically find themselves as subjects in animal testing anyways. The AWA states that certain animals are guaranteed humane treatment, whereas other animals are not. Section 2132 (g) defines an "animal" as:

"any live or dead dog, cat, monkey (nonhuman primate mammal), guinea pig, hamster, rabbit, or such other warm-blooded animal, as the Secretary may determine is being used, or is intended for use, for research, testing, experimentation, or exhibition purposes, or as a pet; but such term excludes (1) birds, rats of the genus Rattus, and mice of the genus Mus, bred for use in research, (2) horses not used for research purposes, and (3) other farm animals, such as, but not limited to livestock or poultry, used or intended for use as food or fiber, or livestock or poultry used or intended for use for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency, or for improving the quality of food or fiber. With respect to a dog, the term means all dogs including those used for hunting, security, or breeding purposes" (8. U. Congress). The Act then explains the standards of care that the animals are guaranteed. Such protections seek to "ensure that animal pain and distress are minimized" (8. U. Congress).

Essentially, the AWA states standards of care for dogs, cats, monkeys, and several other animals but excludes rats and mice from this standard of care. Per the AWA, researchers may do whatever harm they please to mice and rats, without violating the law. But according to the Office of Technology Assessment, "between 17 million and 22 million animals are estimated to be used annually in the United States in research, education, and testing. About 85 percent of these are rats and mice, and less than 2 percent are cats, dogs, and nonhuman primates" (National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Use of Laboratory Animals in Biomedical and Behavioral Research). In practice, the AWA only protects around two percent of the animals who are used in animal testing, while the remaining supermajority of species, who are the most frequent test subjects in vivisection, are left with no protection.

The second major flaw with the AWA is its flimsy provisions allowing for exceptions to standards of care. The AWA states, "that exceptions to such standards may be made only when specified by research protocol and that any such exception shall be detailed and explained in a report outlined under paragraph (7) and filed with the Institutional Animal Committee" (8. U. Congress). In simplified terms, the AWA allows researchers to file a report requesting that they may breach the standards of care, for the sake of the experiment to function as intended. In practice, this exception can be seen through the following example.

In 1971, thirty-three dogs were randomly selected from local shelters and found themselves involuntarily participating in a study on heat exhaustion (Shapiro, Rosenthal and Sohar). The dogs were put into an isolated, temperature-controlled chamber and forced to run on a treadmill. The researchers controlled the temperature of the chamber, rising the dog's environment to up to 113º F. Twenty-five of the dogs died immediately after the exercise, while the remaining nine were placed in a 122º environment without exercise for twenty-four hours.

Seven of those nine dogs did not last the entire twenty-four hours. This study, funded by the United States Public Health Service, relied on harming the dogs in order for the study of heat exhaustion to provide valid results. Because the harm was necessary to provide authentic results of heatstroke, these researchers did not have to follow such standards as set by the AWA.

The study above shows how as soon as researchers state that inducing pain is necessary for the study, the AWA crumbles on itself. There is no questioning as to whether or not the experiment itself is necessary; rather, if the study requires analyzing animal pain, it gets approved. This provision in the AWA essentially creates a loophole for researchers to circumvent the standards of care that the AWA was intended to protect.

Due to the limited number of species listed as having guaranteed protection and the exception clause, the AWA currently remains an inadequate piece of legislation to properly ensure animal protection for non-human species.

The Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA), passed in 1973 with bipartisan support, "establishes protections for fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered" (9. U. Congress). Endangered species are determined to be on the brink of extinction and require immediate protection to replenish the species' population. The ESA provides the process for listing a species as endangered, which can occur through two different avenues. First, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) may directly list a new species through their internal assessment program in their own agencies. Second, individuals or organizations may also petition that the FWS or NOAA add a species to the list. Species who become listed as "endangered" then receive certain protections, such as

bans on killing, selling, and purchasing, as well as receiving a designated "critical habitat" to live in. Though the ESA appears to provide significant opportunity for endangered species to receive protection and hopefully restoration, there are two significant flaws that prohibit the ESA from being maximally effective. These two flaws are the lengthy process for listing a species and the consideration of economic value in the listing process.

The first flaw with the ESA is the prolonged process for listing a species as endangered. According to a study on the ESA, "species waited a median 12.1 years between first consideration and ESA listing" (Puckett, Kesler and Greenwald). Waiting twelve years, for a species already on the brink of extinction, could mean the difference between life and death for its *entire species.* The reasoning for the prolonged nature of listing a species as "endangered' is due to the lengthy process that agencies must use to prove a species needs to be considered "endangered." Agencies gain their power from statutes specifically and have relatively little power outside of what is explicitly given to them by Congress. As a result, agencies are forced to comply with regulations provided to them from Congress and do not have the autonomy to speed the process up themselves.

The second flaw with the ESA is the consideration of economic value in the listing process. Per the statute, to label a species as "endangered" should not include any economic evaluation. However, in practice, economic consideration plays a strong role in the listing process. A prime example of this economic consideration can be seen in the case of the Northern Spotted Owl.

The Northern Spotted Owl case was a controversial debate in the late 20th century. The Northern Spotted Owl, which primarily lived in the old grove forests in the Pacific Northwest, was on the brink of extinction. Initially, interest groups sought to list the species as "endangered"

under the ESA in order to save it. However, the habitat of the Northern Spotted Owl was the same forest that the Pacific Northwest lumber and timber industries relied on for their economy. Listing the Northern Spotted Owl as "endangered" would also prohibit loggers from entering or cutting down trees from the old grove forests – the owl's designated critical habitat. (Layzer and Rinfret). Even though the ESA specifically states that economics should not be considered when deciding to list a new species, the economics of the timber industry played a significant role in the years-long controversy over the bird. President Trump even attempted to amend the statute during his presidency to explicitly allow for economic consideration in the listing process. Though, it is evident that even without explicit language, economic value has been taken into consideration under the ESA.

Due to the lengthy listing process and consideration of economic value, the ESA fails to properly protect non-human species from harm.

Amendments

Though both practical in theory, the Animal Welfare Act and the Endangered Species Act fail to properly protect animals from human harm. I suggest these acts be amended in order to increase utility for human beings and non-human animals.

First, the Animal Welfare Act should be amended to include the majority of test subjects – mice and rats. Including these two additional species in the statute would increase protection for an additional 85% of species who are victims of vivisection. Additionally, the act should also close the loophole that allows for researchers to simply state that pain is a requirement of the study in order to circumvent humane treatment of animals. Another suggestion for revision is a separate form that requires researchers to state the significance of the study overall. While it may

be true that studying the effects of cocaine in felines requires the cat to experience pain and distress (which would be tolerated under the AWA), it may not necessarily be true that that study is significant in the field of science. The significance form could allow for better management of studies that do promote advancing knowledge and seek to increase utility, while eliminating useless studies that cause a decrease in overall utility. For those projects that are deemed "insignificant," the request would be denied and the study may not continue.

Second, the Endangered Species Act should be amended to allow agencies more autonomy when listing species. Agencies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association are more specialized in their profession; the agencies know more specifics about wildlife than Congress. The agencies should be able to bypass some of the legislative hoops in order to list more animals faster, as well as eliminating the de facto consideration of economic value.

These suggested amendments to the Animal Welfare Act and the Endangered Species Act could result in increasing legal protection (and utility) for non-human animals. These resolutions act as a means of translating the moral obligation of granting animals a higher moral status into true legislative action.

The Personal Approach

Amending federal statutes is not a simple task, nor is it a task that everyone may easily partake in. Though federal protection is the strongest means of ensuring a strong moral status for animals, individuals can still play a significant role in holding animals to a valued moral status. Individuals who advocate for higher moral consideration for animals not only personally help increase utility for animals and themselves, but their actions also help convince other people to

do the same. One of the strongest ways individuals may take matters into their own hands is through practicing veganism.

Veganism is defined as “the practice of not eating or using animal products, such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese, or leather” (Cambridge Dictionary). A vegan lifestyle commits oneself to considering animals morally significant creatures, whose interests should not be outweighed by something as minute as a food craving or desire for specific clothing products. When someone adopts a vegan lifestyle, they increase utility for themselves, other humans, and non-human animals.

Firstly, a plant-based lifestyle is healthier, provides more energy, and lessens the risk of disease for the individual consumer. Second, a plant-based lifestyle allows for more efficient land usage to feed more people worldwide. Third, a plant-based diet requires less animals to be raised in slaughterhouses and killed to supply the demand for meat. By choosing to personally view animals as having a higher moral status, vegans can increase utility for all sentient creatures – not just themselves.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this piece, I have promoted granting animals a higher moral status. In order to achieve this goal, I argue that the anthropocentric utility approach is the more effective method of persuading general members of society. This method is in competition with the animal-centric utility method that is predominately put forward by animal rights groups, as well as philosopher and animal rights activist Peter Singer.

I have expressed how the current state of animal agriculture and vivisection decreases utility for human beings and animals alike. I have also provided explanations for both the animal-centric utility method and the anthropocentric method and their use in practice. I have defended my support for the anthropocentric utility method with physiological studies, health results from medical professionals, and case studies. My support for the anthropocentric utility method may raise several counterarguments that have all been addressed and refuted. Finally, I have concluded with actionable steps that can be taken in order to ensure the moral obligation to protect animals be translated into legislative policy, as well as providing individuals with potential next steps.

To conclude, I would like to reconcile my anthropocentric utility argument with Singer's animal-centric argument. Ultimately, both arguments attempt to reach the same goal – animal liberation – though doing so via different paths. Regardless of which argument one personally finds more convincing, both arguments act as a steppingstone towards promoting a higher moral status for non-human animals and increasing utility. Ultimately, promoting either method allows us "to speak up on behalf of those who cannot speak up for themselves" (Singer).

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