Introduction (Day 1-2)

* Ethics aka. Moral Philosophy
* The study of how we should live
* Four area’s are: (No single right answer)
  + Value Theory: What is valuable in itself?
  + Normative Ethics: Identifying supreme principles of right action.
    - Divine Command Theory: Acts are just because God commands them.
    - Natural Law Theory: Tries to show that moral action is a matter of acting in a way that respects our nature.
    - Utilitarianism: Attempts to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
    - Social Contract Theory: morality is essentially a cooperative enterprise.
    - Virtue Ethics: Consider what a virtuous role model would do. (WWJD)
    - Feminist Ethics: A distinct look at how women see philosophy.
  + Metaethics: Competitively comparing different types of ethics against scenarios.
    - Objective Ethics: We are caused to have the moral beliefs we do because moral facts somehow impress themselves upon us.
    - Cultural Relativism: moral views are the product of social influences and agreements.
  + Moral Problems: Try to understand ethics by using specific situations.

Puppies, Pigs and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases (Norcross)

Intro

* The good we get from eating meat is far outweighed by the suffering of animals.
  + Assuming the only reason meat is being eaten is because it’s preferred.
* Counterpoints addressed:
  + Inability as a single meat eater to make a difference.
  + That harm is not intended for the animals by meat eaters.
* Argues that:
  + Animals are moral agents, so they can respond to moral reasons and control their behavior accordingly.
  + If we are unwilling to confine and kill humans, we should be reluctant to do so with animals.

Chapter 1

* Fred’s Basement Analogy
  + Fred tortures puppies because it allows him to experience his deep love for chocolate.
  + Puppies are left in horrible conditions and treated terribly because they aren’t seen as being rational actors.
  + Upon being discovered he is widely denounced by society.
  + Due to an accident, using puppies in this way is the only way he can experience chocolate which he feels his life would be impoverished without.
    - Conclusion: Fred wanting to experience chocolate is not a morally excusable reason to torture and kill puppies.
* A very similar situation is happening to animals in factory farms.
* Most people would suffer no ill health from excluding meat, but could expect health improvements.

Chapter 2

* Counter Points Addressed:
  + Most meat eaters don’t kill the animals themselves.
  + Consumers are unaware of the treatment of animals.
* Authors Stance:
  + If every individual stopped eating meat, there would be no industry for it.
  + The fact that immoral behavior will happen with or without you is not a reason to be immoral.
  + The fact that moral behavior may not have substantial impact is not an argument to be immoral.
  + Your actions no longer have unintended consequences when you are aware of the result.
  + Personal pleasure is not sufficient to meet Doctrine of Double Effect standards to justify the cruelty.
  + Farm animals are virtually indistinguishable from puppies in a rational sense, therefore you should be willing to do to a puppy what happens to farm animals.

Chapter 3

* Counter Points Addressed:
  + Humans have superior ethical status to animals and therefore it is morally correct to give humans interests greater weight than those of animals.
    - Animals are not “rational” beings which separates them from us both morally and metaphysically.
  + Human’s, like infants, should still be treated morally due to pragmatic reasons even though they can’t engage in moral reflection.
  + We can not expected to behave differently than the norm of our society.
* Author’s Stance:
  + Many qualities we claim are important and are often lacking in marginal cases. Those humans still deserve to not be tortured and killed.
    - I.E. it could be argued that animals are incapable of engaging in moral reflection. But following this same logic babies, the mentally handicapped and people are injured meet the definition for being allowed to be caged, tortured and killed.
  + There is no morally relevant difference between an infant and a chimpanzee in regards to their capacity for reasoning and moral responsibility.
  + Human history is full of examples of times where what was culturally accepted is deemed to be deeply immoral.

Chapter 6?

* Counter Points Addressed:
  + Aristotelian criteria of rationality deems animals non-rational beings.
  + The animals have no moral agency.
* Author’s Stance:
  + The question is not whether the being is rational, but whether or not it’s being caused undue suffering.
  + The animals are moral patients and should be treated with care. Just because animals cannot understand moral obligations does not mean we can turn away from our responsibility to be morally responsible.

The Survival Lottery (Harris)

Intro

* Many people die of organ failure.
* We could likely save many lives by sacrificing one person to the greater good when organs are needed.
* If this could be successfully implemented Harris believes this would be the moral and rational thing to do.

Body

* Analogy:
  + Two people ( x and z) are dying and need organ transplants.
  + They are innocent and are ill from no fault of their own.
  + It is proposed that if only one healthy person (A) was killed for organs it would save both of them.
  + X and Z insist that if A is not killed for his organs then the doctor should be held accountable for letting two of his patients die.
  + They argue that the doctor’s inaction is killing both X and Z as sure as shooting them in the head. Would he rather kill A or kill both X and Z?
* Author’s Stance:
  + If this practice was the cultural norm it would not be seen as sacrifice, but rather like you were doing your duty for your country.
  + Acknowledges the concept that some people believe there is a moral distinction between killing and letting die.
  + Proposes a lottery system so that when organs are needed a number is drawn similar to the draft.
    - This would prevent any one person being held morally responsible for the death.
    - People who refused would be seen as traitors and murderer’s by society.
  + Harris believes that if our society did not have a belief of “absolute right to life” that this would solve a large problem in a utilitarian way.
  + He argues that the chance to be drawn would be significantly lower than the chance to die in a car accident.
    - Over time, the constant fear of being drawn would not be considered in day to day life. (Like the draft)
  + He argues that our lives would probably feel more secure because we would know that if anything ever happened with our organs we would be taken care of.
  + The reluctance to “play God” is dismissed by Harris saying that if we can act and do nothing we are playing God anyway.
  + If there was a stipulation that one could opt out, they would be permanently shamed by society and would be blamed for the deaths of the people they could have saved.
  + Dismisses the idea that X could be killed to save Y or Y for X by stating that in the original proposition we are saving two lives at the cost of 1, but in the latter scenario it’s 1-1. The author states that this is not the moral situation he’s arguing for.

The Singer Solution to World Poverty (Singer)

* Premise:
  + Our ordinary patterns of spending money on ourselves are immoral.
  + The money that we spend on luxuries could be being spent to save lives if given to charity.
  + Not knowing our beneficiaries is morally irrelevant.
  + Because the cost benefit so dramatically favors the disadvantaged, it’s morally equivalent to walking past a dying kid on the street to buy a ticket to the movies.
* Analogy 1:
  + A nice old lady is offered a job for 1000 dollars to take a homeless child to the home of his adoptive parents.
  + She successfully completes the job and spends her money on a new TV.
  + The lady is then advised that the boy would have been too old to be adopted, and that the scenario she found herself in was likely a child being lured to be harvested for organs (Harris would understand.)
  + She decides the next day to go get the boy back, presumably forfeiting her money and tv.
  + Moral:
    - People in affluent countries would be quick to condemn the old lady if she did not return the tv for the kids life.
    - Singer believes this is morally equivalent to someone buying an extra TV instead of donating all that money to charity.
    - Not knowing the kids personally is not a moral defense.
* Car Owner Analogy:
  + Bob owns a car that he has 100% of his capital in.
  + One day he leaves his car on the train tracks and is forced to choose between letting a kid die or flipping the switch and destroying his car.
  + Bob decides to not throw the switch and let’s the kid die.
  + Moral:
    - Bob is a son of a bitch who should have thought about diversifying his portfolio.
    - Not donating to charity is like watching a train kill a child.
  + Everyone should be giving to charity because it only takes 200 dollars to save a life.
  + If you spend the money you worked for on anything other than charity, you are literally Hitler.
  + No seriously, 10% isn’t enough. If you spend 1 cent over 30k no matter what you had to do to get the money -> Hitler.
  + Even though we give significantly more money than any other country, USA = Hitler.
  + The only thing I think we can say conclusively is that Singer better be living on 30k/yr because the last thing he needs is to be a hypocrite AND Hitler.

Why Abortion is Immoral (Marquis)