

Manuscript Title

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Abstract

The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research

[1]

Highlights

USING animals as research subjects in medical investigations is widely condemned on two grounds: first, because it wrongly violates the rights of animals, 1 and second, because it wrongly imposes on sentient creatures much avoidable suffering.² Neither of these arguments is sound. The first relies on a mistaken understanding of rights; the second relies on a mistaken calculation of consequences. Both deserve definitive dismissal.

A right, properly understood, is a claim, or potential claim, that one party may exercise against another. To comprehend any genuine right fully, therefore, we must know who holds the right, against whom it is held, and to what it is a right.

Rights arise, and can be intelligibly defended, only among beings who actually do, or can, make moral claims against one another.

The assertion that all animals, only because they are alive and have interests, also possess the "right to life" ¹⁰ is an abuse of that phrase, and wholly without warrant.

In our dealings with animals, as in our dealings with other human beings, we have obligations that do not arise from claims against us based on rights.

The issue is one of kind. Humans are of such a kind that they may be the subject of experiments only with their voluntary consent.

but, Can they suffer?" ¹⁴ Animals certainly can suffer and surely ought not to be made to suffer needlessly. But in inferring, from these uncontroversial premises, that biomedical research causing animal distress is largely (or wholly) wrong, the critic commits two serious errors.

The first error is the assumption, often explicitly defended, that all sentient animals have equal moral standing

The racist violates the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of his own race when there is a clash between their interests and the interests of those of another race. The sexist violates the principle of equality by favoring the interests of his own sex. Similarly the speciesist allows the interests of his own species to override the greater interests of members of other species. The pattern is identical in each case.²

This argument is worse than unsound; it is atrocious

I am a speciesist. Speciesism is not merely plausible; it is essential for right conduct.

The elimination of horrible disease, the increase of longevity, the avoidance of great pain, the saving of lives, and the improvement of the quality of lives (for humans and for animals) achieved through research using animals is so incalculably great that the argument of these critics, systematically

pursued, establishes not their conclusion but its reverse: to refrain from using animals in biomedical research is, on utilitarian grounds, morally wrong.

It would be a serious error to suppose, however, that alternative techniques could soon be used in most research now using live animal subjects.

Should we not at least reduce the use of animals in biomedical research? No, we should increase it, to avoid when feasible the use of humans as experimental subjects.

This frankly ad hominem observation aims chiefly to show that a coherent position rejecting the use of animals in medical research imposes costs so high as to be intolerable even to the critics themselves.

One cannot coherently object to the killing of animals in biomedical investigations while continuing to eat them.

How can the many common uses of animals be judged morally worthy, while their use in scientific investigation is judged unworthy?

We surely do have obligations to animals, but they have, and can have, no rights against us on which research can infringe.

Comments

Rights arise, and can be intelligibly defended, only among beings who actually do, or can, make moral claims against one another. → Weak position, so babies have no rights?

The capacity for moral judgment that distinguishes humans from animals is not a test to be administered to human beings one by one → He tries to escape, but his argument is already tainted.

"The issue is one of kind" → Why is the human species the master kind? Why is the species concept that relevant?

The first error is the assumption, often explicitly defended, that all sentient animals have equal moral standing → This I tend to agree.

All the utilitarian arguments pro research assumes *good research*. Is irreproducibility by omission an ethical flaw?

How can the many common uses of animals be judged morally worthy, while their use in scientific investigation is judged unworthy? → I think there are academically interesting answers to that. Mostly on conservative, natural x unnatural grounds.

The Case for Animal Rights

[2]

Highlights

I regard myself as an advocate of animal rights-as part of the animal rights movement. That movement, as I conceive it, is committed to a number of goals, including:

- the total abolition of the use of animals in science; -the total dissolution of commercial animal agriculture; -the total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping.

the pulsing pain of the chimp with electrodes planted deep in her brain is repulsive;

The fundamental wrong is the system that allows us to view animals as our resources.

Philosophers do-to use the jargon of the day- have a right side to their brains. If it's the left side we contribute (or mainly should), that's because what talents we have reside there.

A second possibility is that though both humans and your dog are hurt when kicked, it is only human pain that matters. But, again, no rational person can believe this. Pain is pain wherever it occurs.

-> Nah, bad argument. Actually, it is plainly wrong, as 2 reasonable people might disagree.

I have, then, according to contractarianism, no duty directly to your dog or any other animal, not even the duty not to cause them pain or suffering; my duty not to hurt them is a duty I have to those people who care about what happens to them.

That is very well and good for the signatories but not so good for anyone who is not asked to sign.

-> Simple: all people matter in the equation.

And yet it seems reasonably certain that, were we to torture a young child or a retarded elder, we would be doing something that wronged him or her, not something that would be wrong if (and only if) other humans with a sense of justice were upset. And since this is true in the case of these humans, we cannot rationally deny the same in the case of animals.

-> Again, returns to the rights of species x of individuals

A utilitarian accepts two moral principles. The first is that of equality: everyone's interests count, and similar interests must be counted as having similar weight or importance. White or black, American or Iranian, human or animal-everyone's pain or frustration matter, and matter just as much as the equivalent pain or frustration of anyone else. The second principle a utilitarian accepts is that of utility: do the act that will bring about the best balance between satisfaction and frustration for everyone affected by the outcome

-> I`m not an utilitarian in his view, then.

This same kind of argument can be repeated in all sorts of cases, illustrating, time after time, how the utilitarian's position leads to results that impartial people find morally callous. It is wrong to kill my Aunt Bea in the name of bringing about the best results for others. A good end does not justify an evil means.

-> This kind of mentality leads to anti vaxxers and anti maskers.

inherent value have it equally, regardless of their sex, race, religion, birthplace, and so on. My value as an individual is independent of my usefulness to you.

-> What is value, then? Value to whom?

Of course, if it were possible to show that only human beings are included within its scope, then a person like myself, who believes in animal rights, would be obliged to look elsewhere.

-> That is the fundamental point of rights theory. But rights theory can be used to justify killing as it could balance rights (e.g. killing one to save ten)

But I would not want to rest my position on a controversial ethical issue on the even more controversial question about who or what has an immortal soul.

-> Is "soul" even within the scope of rational debate?

All who have inherent value have it equally, whether they be human animals or not.

-> Comer sardinha é moralmente pior que atum, então?

In the case of the use of animals in science, the rights view is categorically abolitionist. Lab animals are not our tasters; we are not their kings. Because these animals are treated routinely, systematically as if their value were reducible to their usefulness to others, they are routinely, systematically treated with a lack of respect, and thus are their rights routinely, systematically violated

-> É uma visão essencialmente conservadora. All great movements, it is written, go through three stages: ridicule, discussion, adoption. It is the realization of this third stage, adoption, that requires both our passion and our discipline, our hearts and our heads. The fate of animals is in our hands. God grant we are equal to the task.

Comments

- What is an animal?
- Como ele justifica os animais carnívoros? E as plantas carnívoras, cometem elas atrocidades morais? E os animais onívoros? Eles tem direitos morais com a vida, mas não tem deveres morais com a vida?

References

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