

CONSEQUENTIALISM APPLIED

REVIEW

UTILITARIANISM PROVIDES A KIND OF MORAL DECISION PROCEDURE

1. True
2. False

ACT CONSEQUENTIALISM SAYS THAT THE ONLY GOOD THING IS PLEASURE

1. True
2. False

UTILITARIANISM

Two components of utilitarianism:

- Act Consequentialism
 - An act is morally right if and only if that act maximizes the good
- Hedonism
 - Pleasure is the only intrinsic good and pain is the only intrinsic bad

AN INTRINSICALLY VALUABLE GOOD IS ONE THAT IS VALUABLE ONLY IN RELATION TO SOMETHING ELSE

1. True
2. False

UTILITARIANISM CONSIDERS AN ACT ONLY IF IT MAXIMIZES PLEASURE & MINIMIZES PAIN

1. True
2. False

PROBLEMS FOR UTILITARIANISM

- Four potential problems
 - Ignores the seperateness of persons
 - "Utility monsters"
 - Self-effacing
 - Overly demanding

THE CASE OF FRED

Fred explains that he keeps the puppies for twenty-six weeks, and then butchers them while holding them upside-down. During their lives he performs a series of mutilations on them, such as slicing off their noses and their paws with a hot knife, all without any form of anesthesia...

- Fred suffers from the inability to taste/enjoy chocolate and needs the hormone "cocoamone" from tortured puppies to experience the joy of eating chocolate

Six months of intense puppy suffering, followed by a brutal death, produced enough cocoamone to last Fred a week, hence the twenty-six cages. He isn't a sadist or an animal abuser, he explains. If there were a method of collecting cocoamone without torturing puppies, he would gladly employ it. He derives no pleasure from the suffering of the puppies itself. He sympathizes with those who are horrified by the pain and misery of the animals, but the court must realize that human pleasure is at stake. The puppies, while undeniably cute, are mere animals. He admits that he would be just as healthy without chocolate, if not more so. But this isn't a matter of survival or health. His life would be unacceptably impoverished without the experience of chocolate. (Norcross, 230)

- Is Fred's behaviour morally wrong?
- Should the legal system prohibit Fred from treating puppies this way?

If we are prepared to condemn Fred for torturing puppies merely to enhance his gustatory experiences, shouldn't we similarly condemn the millions who purchase and consume factory-raised meat? Are there any morally significant differences between Fred's behavior and their behavior? (Norcross, 231)

MORALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

1. Fred kills the puppies himself
2. Most consumers are ignorant of factory farm conditions
3. Fred could prevent the suffering of the puppies
4. Fred intends that the puppies suffer
5. The animals that suffer are *puppies*

THE CAUSAL IMPOTENCE DEFENSE

if I did not buy and consume factory-raised meat, no animals would be spared lives of misery. Agribusiness is much too large to respond to the behavior of one consumer. Therefore I cannot prevent the suffering of any animals. I may well regret the suffering inflicted on animals for the sake of human enjoyment. I may even agree that the human enjoyment doesn't justify the suffering. However, since the animals will suffer no matter what I do, I may as well enjoy the taste of their flesh. (Norcross, 231)

- Any particular individual consumer of meat is causally impotent with respect to the occurrence of animal suffering in the industrial food system

REPLIES

1. Causal impotence is no excuse: The case of "Chocolate Mousse á la Bama"
2. There is no causal impotence: The case of a "threshold chicken"

THE DOCTRINE OF DOUBLE EFFECT DEFENSE

The doctrine of double effect

it is permissible to cause a harm as a side effect (or “double effect”) of bringing about a good result even though it would not be permissible to cause such a harm as a means to bringing about the same good end

Fred acts impermissibly, according to this line of argument, because he intends the suffering of the puppies as a means to his pleasure. Most meat eaters, on the other hand, even if aware of the suffering of the animals, do not intend the suffering. (Norcross, 234)

REPLIES

1. The Doctrine of Double Effect requires not merely that a bad effect be foreseen and not intended, but also that there be an outweighing good effect, and there no such good effect in the case of factory farming
2. Fred's behavior would be bad even if it accorded with the DoDE

THE PUPPY DEFENSE

Fred's behavior is abominable...because it involves the suffering of puppies. The behaviour of meat eaters, on the other hand, 'merely' involves the suffering of chickens, pigs, cows, calves, sheep, and the like. Puppies...are morally different from the other animals. Puppies count (morally that is) whereas the other animals don't, or at least not nearly as much. (Norcross, 234)

- What morally relevant difference is there between puppies and farm animals?

REPLIES

- There is no plausible relevant difference between puppies and other farm animals
- The mere fact that some people sympathize with puppies but not farm animals tells us nothing morally relevant

