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The first claim by Fox is that only autonomous beings qualify for rights. Fox conceptualizes autonomous beings in a holistic perspective rather than by looking at the specific attributes of these creatures separately. According to him these creatures belong to a moral community, which he defines as, “ a group of beings that shares certain characteristics and whose members are or consider themselves to be bound to observe certain rules of conduct in relation to one another because of their mutual likeness.” (Fox, 2006, p. 182) These shared attributes include critical self-awareness, manipulation of complicated concepts and using complex language to communicate ideas, and the ability to be responsible for one’s actions.

The above features lead to the rules of conduct as identified by Fox in his definition. These rules generate obligations among the beings. One should understand the creatures belonging to the moral community are a society and their relationships are by natural bonds. Moreover, the bonds of obligations control the behavior of these beings. Considering the aforementioned arguments, the premise is that the creatures have essential qualities of identifying that their counterparts possess the same attributes, thus they must treat them as prescribed in the rules of conduct. However, we should acknowledge there are exceptions of some beings in the community who will not adhere to the set regulations though they share the same characteristics with others. The sociopaths and the terrorists exemplify these exceptions. Despite these deviations, the theorists conclude they do

not interfere much with the moral community and the associations within it. Apart from when we have anarchy, which compromises the fundamental standards of political mandate and community. (Fox, 2006, p. 182)

In his argument, Fox highlights a number of reasons to substantiate his claim. First, he recognizes that the autonomous beings have the capability of determining responsible actions voluntarily and independently. In this case, they go through the process by themselves to identify the action that will promote their well-being and development. Second, he acknowledges the autonomous beings are able to observe the independence in their colleagues and take an active role in the moral community. (Fox, 2006, p. 186) In this justification, Fox refers to moral rights and not legal rights. He stipulates that persons are the only ones who possess moral rights. (Fox, 2006, p. 184)

These are rights, which assure the beings self-development in their respective community. Therefore, activeness is in the process of recognizing the need of providing these rights to other beings as they similarly expect. Furthermore, the basis of Fox's argument is the independence of the beings in decision making in the moral community as earlier discussed. (434 words)

The second claim by Fox is that deficient human beings should be treated as members of the moral community. In spite of, Fox's tactful approach of being neutral and his use of the term autonomous beings, and not human beings to include all the creatures that exhibit characteristics of members in moral community. This principle puts his arguments in controversy in reference to human beings who lack the autonomy as argued previously. However, Fox goes ahead to justify the inclusion of these beings in the moral community. Deficient human beings refer to the infants and the mentally handicapped or

those living with mental disorders. Critically looking at the examples aforementioned these classes of human beings suffer from inadequacy of independence. For instance, for the infant s/he is under the care of the parents or caregivers, and for the mental cases, they are under the respective caregivers. This makes them lose the autonomy thus their inclusion in the moral community is questionable. (Fox, 2006, p. 188)

The controversy is because some animals lack the autonomy as displayed by the under developed and mentally incapacitated human beings. In addition, these animals have some abilities associated with the independency herein stated. Yet we do not include them in the list of those enjoying moral rights. The confession that a being needs not to be a Homo sapiens complicates this discussion further. Since one must possess other, crucial features apart from being merely a human being. It is from these critical issues that Fox puts his case clear. (Fox, 2006, p. 188)

Nevertheless, Fox acknowledges the controversies on the infants and the mentally handicapped persons' inclusion in the moral community by giving some reasons. First, the infants have the potential of developing into fully autonomous beings it is a matter of time. On the other hand, the mentally weakened had the potential but some circumstances beyond their control curtailed their mental well-being. (Fox, 2006, p. 188) Second, human beings have an obligation to cater for the young until they attain full maturity, the mentally retarded and the disadvantaged in their species. Fox (2006) underscores that,

“ although underdeveloped and deficient humans are also, like animals, not fully members of the moral community because they lack autonomy, they

must nevertheless fall within the most immediate extension of the moral community and as such are subject to its protection.” (p. 189)

Third, we should look at each case differently as regards autonomy because we do not have a uniform class of such people. Moreover, some of these cases are becoming a concern of the scientists in a bid to address them such as autism. Therefore, the principle here is we should not rule out exceptions in moral community. (Fox, 2006, p. 189) (450 words)

According to Velleman, there are cases where having more options makes a person worse off. Human life comprises of situations that require one to make choices that determine one’s dignity and autonomy. (Velleman, 1992, p. 81). We should not simply grant choices just because of observing the dignity and autonomy because this may end up being detrimental. For instance, in a case of a patient requesting for euthanasia this stands to be immoral although one has this option. In addition, availing this choice to some patients Velleman (1992) in *Against the Right to Die* says,

“ may lead to harm rather than benefit (Kamisar, 1970).” (p. 82). This is because some patients may opt for euthanasia when they still want to live since they feel obligated to opt for the same. (Velleman, 1992, p. 81)

We should note the provision of alternatives to people, is to enable them make choices based on their reasons and favorites, rather than other people’s considerations. It is from this premise that choices can become harmful. In this discussion, Velleman equates the significance of having an option to that of exercising the same. It is his feeling that,

“ Exercising an option can of course be worse than nothing, if it causes harm.” (Velleman, 1992, p. 83) The assumption here is we are prone to

make mistakes. Furthermore, even by doing nothing it is equally risky. Velleman goes on to substantiate his claim as follows. First, options can be undesirable if one is under pressure in negotiations, as in the case of a union leader who has to opt to agree with the management or drop this, and call for a strike. Second, they can lead one into problems when s/he is under the control of circumstances, which one desires should not have been so. As with a case of a cashier who opens a safe for being under the directions of robbers. Although, giving in to the robbers demands may be the best option at that point in time. The cashier will feel better, if there was no such option. Third, is offering one choices against the status quo. Where choosing either the alternative or the status quo can lead one into problems, s/he did not expect. Lastly, options may express the undesirable, as in the case of a student opting for remedial classes hence others consider him/her not doing well. We note from the examples given above the options harm the choice maker despite one considering it to be the best. In addition, we observe the option selected does not redress the harm experienced. One simply chooses the best to reduce the losses incurred. (Velleman, 1992, p. 84) (438 Words)

Work Cited

Fox, A. M. " The Moral Community." LaFollette, H. Ethics in Practice: An Anthology (3rd edition). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006. 181-190.

Velleman, D. J. " Against the Right to Die." The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy (1992): 81-88.