

Philosophy - animal rights by peter singer



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Aditya Santoso Philosophy - Ethics - Sara Rettus 2/6 ' The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues" In the article ' The place of nonhumans in environmental issues', Peter Singer opines that humans do not treat nonhuman beings equally though they evidently have the right to be treated equally. According to the scholar, nonhuman beings too have interests and rights, and hence, they too have the right to get equality in moral consideration.

He says that when a ' reservoir' is constructed, though people express concern that it would drown a valley teeming with wildlife, the reason behind this concern often lies in the fact that the valley has value as a place for recreation like hunting, shooting, and bush walking.

In order to prove the hollowness of this ' speciesism', Singer provides the example of the history of slavery. The White slave owners never took the sufferings of the Black slaves into consideration because their moral concerns were limited to White people (135). Thus, according to him, if ' racism' is not moral, ' speciesism' too is immoral. Secondly, Singer opines that animals have interests because they have feelings like pain (135). Also, Singer points out animals have equal rights despite their lack of communication skills and intelligence because lunatics and infants too enjoy equal rights. The scholar says that equality in quality is not a necessary factor for giving moral value to nonhuman things. He claims that even within the human species, there is wide disparity in qualities like intelligence, physical strength, ability to communicate, and so on.

However, the problem with Singer's opinion is that in his effort to protect animal rights, he forgot the fact that humans too are animals with the right to protect their own interests like all other animals do. It is for Singer to show

a cow or a goat that tries to preserve some grass for another species before filling its own stomach. The mistake with Singer's opinion is that he failed to acknowledge the fact that all advanced species take maximum advantage of the circumstances to promote their own welfare. Singer admits the fact that there are pests in nature. Then he has to admit that humans are just another group of pests that takes advantage of the suitable circumstances to grow. This is the law of nature.

Another vulnerability of his opinion is that he has mixed morality with nature. The mere fact is that morality is just a social construct which is purely aimed at human welfare. Moreover, the concept of morality, as he admits, is not concrete. It varies from time to time, and population to population. According to the science of evolution, humans have been eating meat since the very beginning of human evolution, and studies have not shown that human intestine is not suitable for meat.

Works Cited

Singer, Peter. "The Place of Non Humans in Environmental Issues". Chapter six Animals, vegetarianism, and Environmental Ethics.