

In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave
Edited by Peter Singer
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In 1985 Peter Singer published *In Defense of Animals* (New York: Blackwell), a seminal volume in the field of animal ethics and politics that gathered together contributions from a number of leading theorists and activists to discuss the latest trends and ideas in the field. With *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave*, Singer and the contributors to the volume seek to take stock of the developments in the movement that have occurred in the subsequent twenty years and measure the movement's growth and maturation. While the essays included in the volume are uniformly well argued, there are various ways in which the volume as a whole fails to take full stock of the second wave of animal defense—and I will try to indicate in this review a few of the more important ways in which I believe the volume comes up short.

Part I of the book, "The Ideas," contains chapters dealing with various theoretical approaches to animal ethics. The lead essay from Gaverick Matheny, "Utilitarianism and Animals," is a lucid recapitulation of the main elements of the utilitarian case for extending the principle of equal consideration of interests to animals first articulated by Singer himself in *Animal Liberation*.

Marian Dawkins's essay "The Scientific Basis for Assessing Suffering in Animals" follows Matheny's piece, and develops the empirical approach needed for assessing whether and to what extent animals do indeed have an interest in how they are treated. Dawkins's essay is the only reprint from the first version of *In Defense of Animals*, and, given the clarity and influential nature of the argument developed here, there is some justification for reprinting it. Dawkins makes a case for a series of collective physical criteria (physical health, physiological signs of distress, behavior) and tests (designed to determine preferences and aversions) that can be reasonably relied upon to assess animal suffering and quantify it in meaningful ways. (That this concern to determine animal suffering along empirical lines through testing, which in some cases requires invasive experimentation, is itself ethically problematic is a problem that Dawkins does not fully explore).

David DeGrazia's essay "On the Question of Personhood beyond *Homo sapiens*" provides a definition of the moral concept of personhood and inquires into whether personhood can be located beyond human beings. DeGrazia argues that the concept of personhood cannot be clearly and distinctly defined inasmuch as it comprises a cluster of properties including autonomy, rationality, self-awareness, linguistic competence, sociability,

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and so forth. But if we take this cluster of properties as roughly demarcating the contours of “paradigm” persons (the standard examples of which are adult human beings), then empirical evidence would suggest that certain animal species such as great apes and dolphins are “borderline” persons, and (the very few) animals trained to have advanced linguistic competence are, in fact, full persons. DeGrazia leaves open the question of whether personhood should mark the definitive limit of which beings have moral standing and suggests that further discussion of the relation between personhood and morality is needed.

Paola Cavalieri’s essay, “The Animal Debate: A Reexamination,” offers a broad historical overview of the moral status of animals and makes a case for analytic moral philosophy as being the most powerful tool for reforming our thinking. Cavalieri finds part of the inspiration for her more positive view of animals in pre-Aristotelian philosophy, and argues that Aristotle’s and Descartes’s respective writings on animals have combined to give us a reductive and, ultimately harmful, vision of animals and our moral obligations to animals. Recently, there has been some interest in the possibility that Continental philosophers such as Heidegger and Derrida, who have offered profound criticisms of the metaphysical tradition, might be used to contest that tradition’s views on animals. Cavalieri argues that no such critical or positive potential is to be found in either Heidegger or Derrida, and that the only direct and successful challenge to the metaphysical tradition is found in the analytic moral tradition. Here Cavalieri has in mind Singer’s utilitarian argument for animal liberation, along with the various criticisms that have been mounted against the anthropocentrism of virtue ethics, contractarianism, and Kantianism by analytic animal ethicists.

In the final essay of this section, “Religion and Animals,” Paul Waldau seeks to uncover the positive views of animals that can be found in various religious traditions and demonstrate how such views can be pressed into the service of better understanding and respecting nonhuman animals.

Although the essays in this section are all fairly strong at the level of argumentation, it would be misleading to say that they constitute anything like a second wave or development of the ideas behind animal ethics. In fact, the essays included here do little more than rearticulate well-worn positions in the field. In recent years, theorists have created novel versions of virtue ethics (Rosalind Hursthouse), contractarianism (Mark Rowlands), and Kantianism (Christine Korsgaard) (to name only the most prominent theories and theorists) in animal ethics that have opened up new theoretical and practical perspectives. None of these new developments are fully represented here, and the book would have benefited from being more inclusive of such positions. Furthermore, the burgeoning literature on the intersection of animal defense and feminism associated with important philosophers such as Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan is not even mentioned in the footnotes in this section. Although it would be unfair to blame Singer for not including representatives of all of these trends, it does seem that a better cross-section of new trends and developments in the field could have been included here.

Part II, “The Problems,” comprises essays on some of the leading issues in animal ethics and politics: experimentation, factory farms, welfare, and zoos. The two essays that lead off this section, Richard Ryder’s “Speciesism in the Laboratory” and Jim Mason and Mary Finelli’s “Brave New Farm?,” are exceptionally strong contributions. Ryder’s essay details the wide range of routine and extreme experiments done to animals in laboratories in

the US, UK, Europe, and elsewhere, and provides a host of useful empirical details that most animals activists will know about but that are not always readily accessible by the general public. Particularly important as well is Ryder's discussion of emerging humane alternatives to animal research.

Mason and Finelli's succinct overview of the historical formation and present conditions of factory farms is a superb place for students, academics, and interested laypersons to enter the debate over raising animals for consumption. The authors discuss the practices involved with raising and slaughtering a wide range of farm animals (broiler chickens and layer hens; dairy, veal, and beef cattle; pigs; ducks) and also take into account the massive number of aquatic animals that are killed for human consumption each year (a number that, even at the lowest estimates, dwarfs the number of farm animals killed each year). Mason and Finelli include an overview of recent developments in biotechnology and genetic engineering as it has been applied to farm animals, as well as the concomitant human health concerns associated with industrialized animal agriculture.

The manner in which some of these horrific and cruel practices have been contested and reformed through public pressure and legislation in the European Union is the subject of the third essay in the section, Clare Druce and Philip Lymbery's "Outlawed in Europe." Druce and Lymbery examine three specific reforms involved in rearing animals in factory farms: stalls used for raising pigs, crates used for veal production, and cages used for battery hens. In each case, the negative impacts of standard rearing practices on the welfare of animals have been recognized by law and steps taken to rectify them through sanctions. Although the full enactment of many of these reforms will not take place for several years, the authors nevertheless see the legal reforms as being "the most remarkable victory yet" for the animal welfare movement (130). (Whether such reforms should be the ultimate goal of people working in defense of animals is, of course, a hotly contested point of debate among activists. I will leave discussion of this issue to another occasion.)

Turning from experimentation and farm animals to zoos, Dale Jamieson's essay "Against Zoos" accomplishes exactly what its title implies: it makes a case for the complete abolition of zoos. After rehearsing the various arguments in favor of zoos (keeping animals in zoos provides amusement for humans, educational opportunities, research opportunities, and a venue for species preservation), Jamieson provides a series of counterarguments, making the case that zoos cause animals immense suffering, reinforce human exceptionalism, and ultimately treat animals as little more than tools for research and amusement. Dale Peterson's "To Eat the Laughing Animal" follows Jamieson's essay and takes up the issues associated with researching on, hunting, and consuming nonhuman primates. He argues, much like Jamieson, for a complete abolition of these practices.

What is perhaps most remarkable about the essays in this section of the book is that nearly all of them touch (either directly or indirectly) on the havoc that global capitalism wreaks on animal life and the manner in which global capitalism is poised to undercut many of the hard-won advances achieved by activists. For example, factory farming reforms (such as the ones discussed by Druce and Lymbery) instituted in one nation to protect animals can be undercut simply by importing animals from other countries where such regulations are lacking and where animal products can be produced more efficiently and less expensively. Or consider the fact that multinational corporations heavily invested in objectionable scientific practices using animals can simply move their research to another country if their

main countries of origin impose laws that make their research unprofitable. Such examples can be endlessly multiplied, and the authors in this section offer their own versions in their respective essays.

What is missing from this section, and from contemporary animal rights discourse more generally, however, is a careful and sustained analysis of how *global capitalism itself*, combined with specific modes of anthropocentrism, gives rise to these problems—which is another way of saying that one of the chief problems facing animals today *is* global capitalism. By focusing on specific reforms/abolitions of specific practices, as is done in this section of book, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the spread of global capitalism is at the very heart of the problems under discussion here (namely, the growth of factory farms, invasive animal experimentation, and the more general marketing of animals). Capitalism is not a side effect of these practices or something that might potentially thwart reforms made in the name of animal defense; it is one of the chief causes of these problems as well as one of the main obstacles in the way of achieving and sustaining genuine reforms/abolitions. It strikes me as naïve in the extreme to believe that thoroughgoing changes for animals are going to occur without simultaneously developing alternatives to global capitalism. If animal defense activists decide to accept global capitalism as the only game in town, they should likewise decide to accept the fact that the fate of animals on this planet will only get increasingly worse in future years. It is high time, especially in this era of “second wave” animal defense, to confront squarely the problem of animals within global capitalism and to begin to imagine and enact alternatives to the current state of affairs.

Part III, “Activists and Their Strategies,” examines a few of the more common approaches to raising consciousness about animals and specific modes of direct action that animal activists have undertaken in recent years. Martin Balluch’s “How Austria Achieved a Historic Breakthrough for Animals” relates the story of how the Austrian Parliament was pressured to vote for a battery farm ban. Essential to this victory, Balluch suggests, was the concerted and united effort of animal advocacy groups to focus on specific targets (in this case, the ruling Conservative Party), attract media sympathizers, and push for specific, incremental legal changes through non-violent means. Balluch is particularly critical of the guerilla tactics used by the Animal Liberation Front and argues that they are not nearly as effective as the kind of reforms that activists have achieved through legal means in Austria. (I will address this point again briefly below.)

Pelle Strindlund, a Swedish activist, offers first-person narratives of his acts of civil disobedience on behalf of animals in “Butcher’s Knives into Pruning Hooks.” The acts related by Strindlund include the rescue of a laboratory dog and sabotage of a slaughterhouse, after both of which he turned himself into authorities. In addition to telling the story of his strategies and tactics, Strindlund offers his personal reflections on the most effective strategies for civil disobedience. It is notable, and notably frightening, that the two compassionate actions Strindlund describes for the reader would (although performed abroad several years ago) probably, today, be considered acts of terrorism by law enforcement officials in the United States under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act.

In “Opening Cages, Opening Eyes,” Miyun Park tells the story of how her animal advocacy group, Compassion Over Killing, did an exposé of a chicken factory farm in Maryland that was suspected of being exceptionally abusive. Park and her group captured evidence of the abuse of the chickens on videotape and in photographs, saved as many birds

as they could while on the premises (only eight from among the nearly 800,000 hens located at this factory farm), mounted a media campaign against the corporation that owned the farm, and received widespread national coverage.

Matt Ball's essay, "Living and Working in Defense of Animals," argues that the kinds of direct and investigative actions carried out by Strindlund and Park need to be supplemented by widespread and fundamental changes in our diets. Ball makes the case that, in terms of the sheer numbers of animals affected, there is no more important project for animal activists than finding ways to abolish factory farming and to convert people to vegan diets.

The final four essays in this section examine ways to make animal rights activism as effective and successful as possible. Bruce Friedrich's contribution, "Effective Advocacy," provides activists with a series of tips aimed at making activism attractive to individuals outside of the animal rights movement. In "Moving the Media," Karen Dawn examines how the media can be used, sometimes despite itself, to provide a forum for presenting progressive positions on animal rights. CEO of Whole Foods, John Mackey, is interviewed by Karen Dawn and Lauren Ornelas in "The CEO as Animal Activist," and explains his personal conversion to veganism and how Whole Foods has sought to support farmers who oppose factory farming. Finally, in "Ten Points for Activists," Peter Singer expands upon and explains a list of strategies for activists developed by well-known animal defense activist Henry Spira shortly before his death in 1998. All of these pieces provide cogent and pragmatic strategies that will certainly help to make animal defense more effective than it has been in past years.

As with the previous sections in the book, the essays here introduce some novel material into current debates in animal ethics and politics but leave out other important recent developments. In particular, this section leaves out a discussion of: (1) the relation between the animal rights movement and other progressive social and political movements; and (2) the debate over the use of violence in advancing animal defense. With regard to the first point, it is becoming increasingly clear that, if the animal defense movement is to be more effective politically, it is going to have to find ways to link itself with other progressive movements for social change. There are three main avenues along which such links are currently being formed: through feminist approaches to animal defense, through animal and environmental defense coalitions, and through the linkages being constructed between animal defense activists and the various alternative globalization movements. Exploration and further development of these kinds of political strategies and linkages will no doubt be essential to the future success of animal defense movements in an era of global capitalism.

Concerning the issue of violence, here, too, it would have been useful for Singer to provide space for a rigorous philosophical discussion of competing ideas about the use of violence on behalf of animal liberation. In his introduction to the volume, Singer defends his exclusion of this debate by suggesting that the animal defense movement is largely opposed to violence (by which he seems to mean primarily physical harm and intimidation of human beings rather than economic sabotage and property damage), and that the use of violence ultimately undermines the movement's ethical basis. He further suggests that violence is only effective in the short-term, and that education, persuasion, and non-violent civil disobedience are the best means for effecting change in democratic societies. Whatever merit one might grant to Singer's (problematic and contentious) position on this issue, his

arguments are far from being universally accepted. In view of the increasing and absurd criminalization of non-violent civil disobedience on behalf of animals (which is forcing more and more activists underground), and the rise of the strategic use of property damage, economic sabotage, and physical violence by animal activists, it seems that the question of violence is more central and more pressing than ever in this era of the second wave of animal defense.