**Can Animals Be Moral? with Mark Rowlands**

**[music: Cory Gray, Badlands]**

**Sandra Bertin, host and producer:** Examining Ethics with Andy Cullison is hosted by The Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics. Hi, I'm Sandra, one of the producers of the show, and with me is Christiane, my co-producer.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Hi, Sandra.

**Sandra Bertin:** Hi.

**Christiane Wisehart:** I'm really excited about the show today.

**Sandra Bertin:** Me too. Let's get right to it. Here's Andy to tell us more about this episode's topic.

**Andy Cullison:** Can animals be moral? That's the central question of the show today. I'm excited that Mark Rowlands will be joining us to talk about this. Rowlands is a professor of philosophy at the University of Miami. He's the author of 17 books. His autobiography, The Philosopher and the Wolf, was an international bestseller. We talked to him about his newest book from Oxford University Press, Can Animals Be Moral? Today on the show, we discuss his views about the possibility of animal morality.

We're going to discuss the concepts of moral agents, moral patients, Immanuel Kant, motivation, responsibility-

**Sandra Bertin:** Actually, Andy. First, could we watch some really cute videos of animals on YouTube?

**Andy Cullison:** Cute animal videos on an audio podcast? That sounds like a great idea.

**Mark Rowlands:** I think is kind of ironic actually, that YouTube is now becoming the biggest repository of potentially moral behavior in animals.

**Christiane Wisehart:** That's the voice of Mark Rowlands, whom we interviewed about his book, *Can Animals Be Moral?* He says that watching YouTube videos of animals rescuing one another is actually a pretty great way to start thinking about animal morality.

**Sandra Bertin:** When we talked to Rowlands, he was especially struck by a YouTube video of one dog rescuing another.

**Speaker from YouTube video:** An incredible video this morning of a hero dog that has been seen by hundreds of thousands on YouTube. Last week, the dog was caught on our surveillance camera on a busy highway in Santiago, Chile.

**Mark Rowlands:** Two dogs are on a busy highway in Chile. One dog has been hit by a car and lies unconscious in the middle of the road. This is a big six-lane highway. I cringe my way through this video actually, but the dog's companion weaves its way in and out of the traffic until it gets to the dog and then it proceeds to pull the dog using its paws curiously enough, not its mouth, but using its paws. It proceeds to pull the dog to the side of the road.

**Sandra Bertin:** Yeah. It's pretty easy to go down a YouTube rabbit hole of animals doing nice things for each other. If you actually look at the suggested videos on the sidebar of this YouTube video, there are things called Doberman protects baby, dog saves cat from fox, Koko the gorilla cries over loss of kitten. I feel totally justified watching this stuff because as Rowlands said, videos like these are interesting because they are this repository of potentially moral behavior in animals.

**Christiane Wisehart:** But what's interesting is that this kind of stuff doesn't just happen in these amateur videos that you can find on YouTube. Rowlands also told us about this remarkable group of elephants that was observed by some scientists. The scientists were watching a few different families of elephants... Before I go on, something you need to know about elephant behavior is that when elephants reach sexual maturity, they split off from each other along gender lines. The women or the female elephants congregate together and the male elephants congregate together.

**Mark Rowlands:** The female elephants form what are known as families, and the male elephants form pods. Families have very nice gentile affairs. The male elephants apparently have keg parties and knock over mail boxes and things like that, so there's a marked difference in behavior, especially at certain times of the year.

**Sandra Bertin:** So these scientists are observing a family or a female group of elephants. They call this particular family, the First Ladies family. As the scientists are observing this family, the matriarch, Eleanor, falls ill and is dying.

**Mark Rowlands:** She's lying on the floor, she's fallen and Grace, of a different family of elephants, the Virtues family, is trying to help her back to her feet. She does this by a combination, she tries to get underneath her and lift her up by pushing her with her head basically. Initially this is successful, Eleanor manages to get back to her feet, but there's no avail eventually she falls down again. So Grace stays with her for quite a long time until darkness falls.

The next day they return. Grace comes with another elephant called Maui from yet another family of elephants and they both try to get Eleanor back to her feet, but it doesn't work and Eleanor dies shortly afterwards. This is all accompanied by a lot of shrieking distress calls from Grace and Maui.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Okay. What do you think? Are these animals acting morally?

**Sandra Bertin:** They are acting morally. Is the question whether they know they are, or are we asking if they can feel empathy or if they can be motivated by moral thoughts?

**Christiane Wisehart:** Yeah, actually we're asking all of that. We're also asking, if all of this is true, do animals then have some kind of a responsibility to behave morally? And if they behave morally, should they be praised by us? Before I answer these questions though, let's hear a bit about our sponsor.

**Sandra Bertin:** Oxford University Press has generously provided us the books that we are discussing on the show today. I talked to Andy, our host, about how he feels about their sponsorship. How excited were you when Oxford University Press wanted to sponsor our show?

**Andy Cullison:** I was super excited about this. I was thrilled. When I was a poor grad student, my friends and I, we would go to the APA Conference. That's the American Philosophical Association. They had this book exhibit and the book exhibit had presses from all over the world and most of them would have 50% off sale on the last day of the conference. My friends and I would get up the only time at the conference that we would actually get up early, and we would stand in line, I kid you not, there would be a line of 50 to a hundred people. The place we wanted to go was the Oxford University Press book stand, that was where the gold was.

**Sandra Bertin:** Thanks, Oxford University Press for thrilling our host, Andy, with your fantastic sales.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Before our break, we were talking about these YouTube videos of animals behaving in what seems like it could be considered a moral way. Mark Rowlands also told us the heartbreaking story of a dying elephant and the attempts of other female elephants to try to save her and the grief that followed after the elephant died.

**Sandra Bertin:** I actually think that elephant story is especially compelling because a lot of the other ones you find are adult animals saving a baby animal from another species. I saw a leopard and he saved a little gorilla baby from certain death. These are adorable and they're beautiful, but it makes you wonder whether animals have some kind of programming or instinctual protection of young animals like baby animals, where just all have that visceral response.

**Christiane Wisehart:** You could say that can't be moral necessarily because it's that innate response that all animals including humans have towards babies in general.

**Sandra Bertin:** This elephant example is special because it's an old animal that was going to die anyway. It's not a freak incident. It's not out of the ordinary. Actually, it is ordinary. It's the circle of life. The elephants that save her, sure they're the same species, but they're not of the same family, they're not of the same group.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Yeah. There's resonance there. Rowlands actually uses that particular story to illustrate what he calls moral emotions. Doing things like caring for another animal outside your immediate family, making distress sounds when a fellow animal dies and all of that could be characterized as moral emotions.

**Sandra Bertin:** But Rowlands wants to make it clear that stories like these don't necessarily prove that animals are moral.

**Mark Rowlands:** I wouldn't want to say that this behavior definitely establishes that animals can act morally, but it does at least I think raise the question, is this a case of moral behavior? And then the question is whether you can construct a case for a moral behavior out of those sorts of emotions? A moral emotion is one which has as its object or its intentional content, the welfare of another.

**Sandra Bertin:** When we see animals exhibiting moral emotions like this, it's difficult not to praise the animal. But if animals can be praised for behavior like this, then can they also be blamed for immoral behavior?

**Christiane Wisehart:** There are actually all kinds of these insane examples of animals being put on trial and punished for their "crimes". There's this amazing book written in 1906, that it has details about all these different cases of animals being put on trial and then actually being punished.

Okay. Here are some of the chapter titles, "All animals are animated by the devil, gnats are especially dangerous devils, vermin excommunicated by the Bishop of Lausanne, criminal prosecution of field-mice." That's just a long list of chapter titles, of examples of ways in which animals were put on trial for their crimes.

There's one story that really caught my eye from 1379, in which they're a bunch of pigs that are being put on trial for being accomplices to the murder of a child. Three pigs actually killed the poor child, but 200 pigs were sentenced to death because they were squealing, so the judge claimed that the pigs were rooting for what he called the murderous sows. Crazy, right?

**Sandra Bertin:** That's insane.

**Christiane Wisehart:** There is a whole long history of humans holding animals responsible, morally speaking.

**Sandra Bertin:** That's insane. But I see where they're going with that, where if you say that an animal can behave morally, that's not ridiculous for your next step to then expect them to behave morally. While that does seem little crazy, sentencing 203 pigs to death, I see how that came about. It's weird because it comes out of a belief that animals can be moral, which is opposite to how we feel today.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Because I think today we generally agree I hope, that animals shouldn't be put on trial, that we shouldn't necessarily even blame them for their actions because they can't really think their behavior through. They're not rationally thinking about these things in the same way that a human might. And this view that animals aren't moral because they can't think things through is pretty standard in the philosophy community.

**Mark Rowlands:** Yeah. That's the standard view and it's a view that manifests itself both in the work of Kant and also people like Aristotle, okay? So the idea is, in order to act morally, you need to be able to understand what it is you're doing. You need to be able to weigh your motivations then. Look, I'm motivated to act in this way, is this a motivation I should embrace or is it a motivation I should resist?

And in deciding that, you bring to bear various moral principles that you happen to hold and you evaluate your motivation in the light of those principles. So that is the standard view of, I think moral action.

**Sandra Bertin:** What we have here is this idea about morality that's pretty common, both among the general population and philosophers.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Right. Yeah. A Commonly held idea is that in order to act in a moral manner in the first place, you have to be able to understand your actions. You have to be able to understand your reason for acting the way that you do. Immanuel Kant is actually responsible for popularizing this idea. He's got this fairly famous saying, "Ought implies can."

**Mark Rowlands:** The idea goes like this, and I think it's a respectable idea in itself. I don't think it works in the end, but it's quite plausible. In order for a motivation to be a moral one, it must exert what we might call a normative grip on you. That is, for a motivation to be moral it must be the sort of thing you should do, or you shouldn't do. You ought to do, or you ought not to do. That's a necessary condition of a motivation being moral, it has this normative grip, okay?

But, we then bring in ought implies can, okay? A motivation can't have a normative grip if you're incapable of either resisting or acting on it. Okay? So you ought to do it but it makes no sense to say that you ought to do it if you can't.

**Sandra Bertin:** I'm not sure I understand that. Christiane, could you explain what you think he means?

**Christiane Wisehart:** What ought implies can means?

**Sandra Bertin:** Yes.

**Christiane Wisehart:** I think what Kant is saying is, if you're going to make a rule about something, a moral rule like you should do this thing, then it should also mean that whoever you're making the rule for, is capable of following that rule. If I were your God and I said to you, "Sandra, in order to worship me properly, I'm making a rule about praying that you have to pray for 20 minutes continuously underwater." Then you, as the human, would say-

**Sandra Bertin:** But I can't breathe underwater.

**Christiane Wisehart:** For 20 minutes. So for a rule to exist morally, it also should be something that beings are capable of following. Does that make sense to you?

**Sandra Bertin:** Got it. In other words, in order to be moral, we have to know what the right thing to do is, but we also have to be able to do the right thing.

**Mark Rowlands:** It makes no sense to say that you ought not to do it if you can't help yourself, so the idea goes. Morality requires normative grip and normative grip requires control. Then the idea goes, and this is the idea you find in Kant and Aristotle, control requires critical scrutiny.

**Christiane Wisehart:** This is why a lot of philosophers believe that animals can't be considered moral. Because they might have that motivation to do something right, like we saw with Eleanor the elephant or in those YouTube videos of the dogs saving each other. But they're not necessarily moral because they're not able to understand or think critically about their moral motivations. If you can't scrutinize your behavior, it's not under your control.

**Mark Rowlands:** Because the picture is this, someone who just has motivations and doesn't scrutinize them is like, is it the mercy of their motivations? They're like this cork, bobbing around on the seas of motivation. They're pushed this way and that. But the ability to critically scrutinize your motivations raises you above the sea. Now you can look down and see which way you should go and things like that.

My argument then is, we never really get out of the sea of motivations. The critical scrutiny is inside that sea as well, so the idea that scrutiny itself gives you control is a very questionable one.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Basically, all people and animals are corks bobbing in the sea of motivations. They have no ability to influence their direction of movement. They're all at the mercy of waves and the movement around them that's kind of directing them.

**Sandra Bertin:** Right. That's kind of a metaphor for your environment influencing your decisions and your movements. Everybody accepts that animals are in this sea. They're just corks bobbing along, they can't control their own actions. But what Mark is saying is different, is that humans, they too are just corks bobbing along right next to the animals. And the ability to think about your actions doesn't mean that you have power over your actions. He argues people are just as influenced by their environment as any other animal. Can I just say that this is the exact opposite of what I learned in high school to be true?

**Christiane Wisehart:** Wait, what's the exact opposite?

**Sandra Bertin:** I feel like my entire high school experience was teaching me that I was nothing if I couldn't critically think about my own actions, so even if I did all of the good humane things in the world, if I didn't critically think about my actions, I was literally less than dirt. I feel like that's what was taught to me, so to hear someone have this opinion, I don't know, it's just blowing my mind.

**Christiane Wisehart:** The idea that humans might not be as in control or as able to scrutinize our motivations as we think we are?

**Sandra Bertin:** Yeah, and really you could argue that you shouldn't think through every single action and it would maybe even be immoral to think through every single action. Rowlands gives this great example of a burning building with a baby in it. There's this building on fire in front of you and you know for sure that there's a baby inside that you could easily run in and save.

**Mark Rowlands:** The baby in a burning building. You don't think, okay, I'm motivated to go and help this baby. Is this a motivation that I should embrace or is it one I should resist? To engage in that kind of reflection, those sorts of circumstances would be a sign of a moral questionability, not moral excellence. I think a lot of the time, our lives are just a lot more unreflective than that. We don't do this.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Yeah. Basically we've been talking about scrutiny of actions in two different ways. One, you don't necessarily have to think about out or be critical of your action before you do it. You can run into the building without thinking and save the baby from dying. But two, it's also important to note that understanding, or scrutinizing, or being critical of your actions doesn't necessarily mean you have any kind of control over them. Even if are able to stop and think about things, it doesn't necessarily give you control. Because you're still in that sea of motivation being tossed about by the waves of your environment. This means that we can reject the idea, according to Rowlands, that in order to be moral, you have to be able to scrutinize your actions.

**Sandra Bertin:** Right, so it'll be wrong to say right off the bat that animals can't be part of the moral realm just because they are not mentally capable of scrutinizing their actions.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Right, it doesn't mean that we have to include them in the moral realm, but it also isn't grounds for automatically keeping them out of it.

**Sandra Bertin:** Exactly.

**Andy Cullison:** Another common reason philosophers say animals can't be moral, is that they aren't moral agents.

**Sandra Bertin:** Ooh, what's a moral agent?

**Christiane Wisehart:** Could you possibly explain it to us like we're five?

**Andy Cullison:** Explain it like you're five. I have a four year old, Charlie. I'll explain it like I'm explaining it to him. If I were to talk to Charlie about the concept moral agent, I would try to talk to him about things that obviously aren't capable of moral behavior, so I would say imagine if a brick fell off of the top of a house and hit you on the toe. It would be weird to say that the brick was a bad guy. It would be weird to say that the brick had done something morally wrong to you because it's just not the sort of thing that's capable of thinking about moral reasons for and against [inaudible 00:20:23]. It can't do things for moral reasons. It's just not capable of that kind of thing, so it would be weird to get mad at the brick. Why wouldn't you get mad at the brick?

The brick can't be a moral bad guy. It can't be a moral bad guy because it's not capable of acting on the basis of bad guy or good guy reasoning. People are capable of that. We can act on the basis of reasoning that might be what you might call bad guy reasoning or good guy reasoning. A brick is not a moral agent because it can't act on the basis of good guy, bad guy reasoning. But a person can, so we say a person or at least most people who can do that are moral agents. The traditional moral landscape is divided into moral agents and what are called moral patients.

**Mark Rowlands:** Moral patient is something that's a legitimate object of moral concern. It's something you should take into consideration when you're planning on doing something that impacts on it.

**Sandra Bertin:** Most philosophers consider animals to be in the moral patients camp.

**Mark Rowlands:** Right. I don't know who would deny that. It's one thing to take, say a chainsaw, to a living tree. Which may be regrettable in many different ways, but it's one thing to do that and it's quite another to take it to a living conscious dog, for example. This shows that animals are in say, the moral club, they count morally.

**Christiane Wisehart:** When you think about morality, some beings are what are called moral agents. Moral agents are capable of rationally thinking through what is right and what is wrong and most humans fall into that moral agents' camp or philosophers put humans into that moral agents' camp. And there are these beings known as moral patients. Moral patients can't think through or think rationally about what is right and what is wrong. But even though moral patients can't think rationally about right and wrong, they still have rights, so the question is, are animals moral agents or are they moral patients?

**Sandra Bertin:** A lot of philosophers put animals in the moral patients camp, but Rowlands says we've got it all wrong if we think that animals can either be moral agents or moral patients. The fact that animals can have moral emotions shows that they're a little bit more than being a moral patient, but the fact that they can't scrutinize their actions means that they can't fully fit in to the moral agent camp either.

And that's not the only problem with saying that animals can be moral agents. According to Rowlands, animals aren't moral agents because we shouldn't hold them responsible for their actions.

**Mark Rowlands:** The idea is a responsibility and praise and blame are bound up with the idea of being a moral agent. You're a moral agent when you're morally responsible for what you do. And so can be morally praised or blamed in the broad sense for your actions.

**Christiane Wisehart:** The great thing about this book and about Rowlands work just generally, is that he carves out this third category.

**Mark Rowlands:** What I was trying to do in that book was carve out a sort of third category. The category of the moral subject, which is distinct from both the category of moral agent and moral patient. Instead of thinking of a rigid distinction between agents and subjects, think instead of positions on a spectrum. That the greater a creature understands what's required in a particular situation, then the greater that creature can be either praised or blamed through. I think animals, just as a matter of empirical fact cluster towards one end of the spectrum and normal adult humans tend to cluster towards the other end.

**Sandra Bertin:** That's incredible. Instead of having these two groups in opposition to each other, so either moral agent or on the completely other side moral patient, instead imagine a spectrum with moral agents on the right and moral patients on the left and this new category, moral subjects is somewhere in between. The spectrum is measuring capacity for moral behavior.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Yeah, the spectrum idea helps me see it a little clearer. It means that moral agents have the most capacity. They can think about it. They can scrutinize their actions. They feel like they have some kind of control, even though Rowlands is arguing that they don't actually have control.

**Sandra Bertin:** And they have the responsibility.

**Christiane Wisehart:** They have the most responsibility. Moral agents are who Kant was thinking of when he says, "Ought implies can." Then on the other end of the spectrum, you have moral patients who have the least capacity for a moral behavior, but that still doesn't mean that we should treat them like garbage.

**Sandra Bertin:** They still have rights. Everybody on the spectrum has rights.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Yeah, then somewhere in the middle and it doesn't even have to be directly in the middle, somewhere in between, agents and patients is this third category that Rowlands has carved out which is that of the moral subject who has some, but not as much as agents, a capacity for moral behavior.

**Sandra Bertin:** They still don't have any responsibility, they shouldn't be blamed if they don't perform a behavior morally or behave in a moral way. But still, occasionally they can exhibit these kinds of behaviors.

**Mark Rowlands:** The idea is that something is a moral subject if it is motivated by moral considerations. On the face of it, it should be that the category of the moral subject is distinct from the category of the moral agent, as much as the concept of motivation is distinct from the concept of responsibility. In general, I think these are obviously very distinct concepts. You can be motivated without being responsible.

**Christiane Wisehart:** You can be motivated without being responsible. That's fascinating. It makes a lot of sense, even with humans. I have a two year old and he goes back and forth between being really nice to me and stroking the side of my face and hitting me really, really hard. So hard that sometimes I see stars.

And when he does this, he's not just randomly doing it. I can tell that there's motivation there. I can tell that he's doing either one for some kind of a reason, but I'm not going to hold him responsible in the same way that I might if a grown man hit me in the way that he hits me.

I should just say I'm fine, everybody. He's two, I'm fine. I'm much bigger than he is. I'm doing okay. But anyway, I'm not going to hold him responsible in the same way that I might with a grown man. Let's get back to non-human animals though.

**Sandra Bertin:** To repeat one more time. We have this new category of moral subjects that is a useful way of describing animals. But aside from being a useful way to describe something in moral terms, why does this matter?

**Andy Cullison:** I actually asked him that very question. If animals aren't moral agents, so they're not subject to praise and blame, they're just in your words moral subjects. Then why does it matter to us and our actions concerning them? How would it affect our obligations to them if they can act morally?

**Mark Rowlands:** Yeah, no, it's a good and it's a tricky question. I have to be very, very clear because I've been misunderstood on this before in various ways. Let me first make it clear, that the vast majority of the moral entitlements that animals have stem from the fact that they're moral patients. They're subject capable of feeling, capable of suffering and enjoying life and therefore it's incumbent upon us, morally incumbent to take them into consideration when we do things that impact on their welfare in various ways.

The vast, vast majority of the moral entitlements animals have stem from the fact that they're moral patients. And the issue of moral agents and moral subjects doesn't come into the picture. Sometimes you hear people who like slogan saying things like no rights without responsibilities. But when you think about that for a moment that's just insane. Babies don't then have rights, for example. Young children don't have rights and so on.

Babies and young children are moral patients, but they're not moral agents and the rights and the moral entitlements they have stem from their being moral patients. Okay, then. That I think is true in the case of the vast majority of entitlements animals have, that is because they're moral patients.

But I think that the idea of a moral subject does add probably something to the picture relatively minor, relatively subtle, but it does add something to the picture. And if we accept the distinction between moral patients, moral subjects and moral agents, we have to conceptually modify the way we think about praise.

I could put it this way. The distinction between moral agents and moral subjects is going to force I think, a distinction between what we might call praise, moral praise and moral respect, where the idea is that praise is appropriate only to moral agents or blame being the converse. Whereas there's a kind of respect that goes with being a moral subject, which is different from the sort of entitlements animals have because they're moral patients. It's a kind of respect that should be accorded them because they're moral subjects.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Okay. Let's make sure we're getting this. Because animals are definitely moral patients, they get some entitlements from that.

**Sandra Bertin:** In traditional philosophy, you get certain entitlements and if you're moral agent, you get entitlements plus you can get praise for your moral actions. Basically, if you are responsible for doing something moral and then you do it, you can then be praised for doing it.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Right. As we've already discussed, it's really silly to try to blame animals for their moral actions. If you can't be blamed for your morality, you also can't really be praised for it. But I think this third category of moral subjects opens up a realm that's not necessarily praise, but might be something closer to respect for their morality.

**Mark Rowlands:** When I first started thinking about this, I was organizing it along the lines of aesthetic appreciation. This is where everyone thinks I'm saying animals only count morally because of their aesthetic value and I'm not saying that at all. It's the fact that they're moral patients, which makes them count morally, but there's a certain kind of appreciation that I think should be accorded something that's capable of acting morally.

I used to have... He was sold to me as a wolf but I suspect he was a wolf-dog mix or whatever he was. He had certain eccentricities let's call them, which required that I kept him constantly exhausted, so I used to run with him a lot. On our runs together, I realized something that was just sort of humbling and profound that I was never going to be aesthetically worthy as this wolf when running. I was just sort of graceless ape who was huffing and puffing and thumping along beside him and he just used to glide along the ground, like he was floating above it.

I think the content of that aesthetic respect was something like this. It's a good thing that the world comes to contain creatures that can do this, that can move like this. It's a good thing aesthetically speaking. I think there's a parallel attitude that you have where you can adult with regard to the creature that's capable of doing things like the dog on the highway in Chile, right? It's a good thing. It's a thing that's worthy of respect that the world produced an animal, which is like this. I would model the sort of idea of moral respect along the lines of aesthetic respect without saying that they're the same thing.

**Christiane Wisehart:** He sees that this wolf is a beautiful runner and he's like, "I love living in a world where there's a creature that can run like this. That's built to run." And he can appreciate that. By the same token, there are some actions or some ways of being moral that are just elegant, beautiful.

**Sandra Bertin:** We can see that sometimes babies and children can be moral, but we don't really expect them to be and it would be insane to remove their rights just because they can't make the decision to behave morally. That's the same thing for animals.

**Andy Cullison:** It's worth noting just how radical the idea that animals can be moral is in philosophy.

**Mark Rowlands:** Philosophers have said very strange things ever since Descartes came along and said animals can't think, arguably can't feel depending on how you interpret Descartes. Donald Davidson for example, very, very good philosopher thought animals couldn't believe anything. Peter Carruthers argued in the recent past that animals weren't even conscious. These are very, very strange, I think grotesquely implausible claims.

**Andy Cullison:** It's radical in the sense that it attributes a lot to animals that philosophers historically might not attribute to animals. Most people might think that animals deserve a little bit of moral concern because they can feel pain.

If animals can be moral, then you might think we have a new, different reason for taking the interest of animals into account. That's one reason to care about the question, but there's an even simpler reason to care about the question and Rowlands summarizes that quite nicely.

**Mark Rowlands:** Let's suppose for a second that animals can be moral. They can act for moral reasons or their behavior can be characterized as moral. If this claim is true, then it's true and true claims are things that philosophers should be interested in.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Oxford University Press has generously provided us the books that we are discussing on the show today. To find out more about Oxford University Press, visit them on the web at global.oup.com. Oxford University Press has kindly offered to provide you, the listener, with a 30% discount on *Can Animals Be Moral?* To get a link for a 30% discount on *Can Animals Be Moral?* by our guest, Mark Rowlands, visit our show notes page at examiningethics.org. And thanks again to Oxford University Press for sponsoring today's show.

**Sandra Bertin:** Thanks for listening. If you'd like more information about the topics we've discussed today, visit our show notes page for this episode at examiningethics.org.

**Christiane Wisehart:** When you visit, be sure to sign up for our newsletter. You'll be eligible to win a copy of Mark Rowlands book or any other book we give away in the coming months.

**Andy Cullison:** For updates about the podcast, interesting links and more follow us on Twitter at ExaminingEthics. If you like what you've heard, please consider rating us on iTunes. You can subscribe to the show on iTunes or your favorite podcast app.

We'll be taking a break during the month of December, but don't worry. We'll be back with a new season of shows in January.

**Christiane Wisehart:** Examining Ethics with Andy Cullison is hosted by The Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics, Sandra Bertin and Christiane Wisehart produce the show. The photograph in our logo was taken by Cynthia O'Dell. Our music is by Corey Gray, [inaudible 00:35:48] and Podington Bear can be found online at freemusicarchive.org. Thanks to Oxford University Press and he Prindle Institute for supporting this show.

**Andy Cullison:** I [inaudible 00:36:13] about that, because it's all exciting stuff to me. Like moral agents [crosstalk 00:36:16]-

**Christiane Wisehart:** Andy.

**Andy Cullison:** Moral patients. Hell, yes.

**Sandra Bertin:** Oh. Wow. Okay. Whoa. I realize why he's saying this. These animals, he already said that they don't deserve praise because they equally don't deserve blame. But he's saying you can aesthetically respect them.

**Christiane Wisehart:** I love it. Yeah.

**Sandra Bertin:** That's why he talks about this.