

The Ethics of Animal Dis-Enhancement

Rachel Robison-Greene

What other interests besides simply avoiding pain might we think animals have? What kinds of obligations do you think we have to other animals and their interests? What justification can we offer to explain why we should treat these potential interests just as seriously as we treat our own?

Most (if not all) people are speciesists to some extent – we automatically give priority to the interests of other human beings over those of non-human animals. However, the fact that we *have* this automatic response doesn't mean we *ought* to privilege members of our own species (just because something is a certain way doesn't mean it ought to be). Are there any good *moral* reasons for this prioritization? That is, are there any differences between humans and other animals that would justify how we currently treat animals? How might we combat our speciesist tendencies?

How might we explain what separates an ideal solution from a non-ideal solution? Can you think of any other viable non-ideal responses to the problem of animal suffering besides disenchantment? Do you think we should pursue a non-ideal solution or an ideal solution in responding to animal suffering? Why?

Are there reasons we should avoid pursuing non-ideal solutions to tough moral problems like this one? For instance, does our focus on half-measures and incremental change - like merely minimizing the pain that animals feel - allow us to ignore more demanding moral obligations - like reducing our dependence on animals? Or should our conception of what is right always be constrained by what we think is actually achievable?