



# ESSAY

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## Animal liberation in a just society.

### 1. The life of a pig is a simple life.

The pig it waddles, it rolls and it strolls.

It keeps thinking about what is outside the poles.

But surrounded by waddling, rolling, strolling friends and foes,

It arrives at the conclusion, that it'll never know.

But one day, the life of the pig became more.

It got to waddle, roll and stroll to somewhere it had never been before.

“Finally my life bears new horizons”, oinked the walking pork,

But horizons came to an end, fore the pork, had been destined to a fork.

The fate of the waddling, rolling and strolling is bitter,

Therefore, I ask for you to consider:

Does momentary joy for the meat-munching man,

Bring justice to the pig's destined placement on a pan?

### 2. If society consisted of merely beings

Justice and equality are two different terms which often coincide, fore many believe that justice contains principles of equality. The following essay will focus on two theories of justice which in large degree has this same perception of justice and equality being bound together. But when discussing justice, philosophers often take starting point in justice for humanity; the just society, for the humans inhabiting it – the following essay will discuss the problematics of this stance, as well as the idea of a just society which values non-human animals equally to that of the value of man. Fore throughout history, humans have heavily relied on those we now view as nothing



more than edible or entertainment. The dog is merely dirt to fill the hole of the soul. The tiger is but a sight for the Saturdays and Sundays. The pig is but a part of our supper. During the age of imperialism, especially regarding the race for Africa, the reigning men belittled the African people to no more than that of an animal, whose savagery had to be contained. In retrospect it is pure absurdity. I would argue that the same retrospective idea of absurdity will be present in a few years regarding the outlook on non-human animals; or so I would hope at least.

Peter Singer, one of the founding fathers of the *Animal Liberation*-movement, could be described as a first-mover in this direction. He argues that we should treat non-human animals with the same principles of equality as we treat humans: Despite our beliefs of superiority and greater intellect, one should not diminish the animals to that of mere objects for our enjoyment. To understand the real world implication of this idea, one must first lay down the grounds for which “the principle of equality” is to be understood. This principle of equality is by Singer described as currently being an accepted “sound moral basis for relations with others of our own species”, and despite the argument that certain people in certain nations are stripped of their rights to the principle of equality, the principle still stands in the eye of members of international organizations like UN, who have an accept of, and agreement upon, the strive for the universal principles of equality. Thus, one could argue, that it might not be a universally given right, but it is an internationally accepted moral basis, as Singer also describes it. It is this same international acceptance which Singer argues humanity should strive for moving forward in regards to non-human animals. But regarding the understanding and definition of “the principle of equality”, philosopher’s understandings vary greatly. It is important to lay the grounds for this principle, in order to understand the implementation of such treatment upon non-human animals:

## 2.1 John Rawls

Legal philosopher John Rawls, presents three main principles of justice, which all orbit around the term *equality*: The greatest equal liberty principle, the equal opportunity principle and the difference principle. These principles, he argues, are the principles of a just society, which would be formed if rational thinking individuals were to design a society behind a *veil of ignorance* in which they are stripped of all knowledge of their position and characteristics once born in the society they’ve created (the so-called *original position*). The theory describes justice for humans, but I’d argue, that one could broaden the perspective to rather try and discuss justice and equality for *all* beings:

The greatest equal liberty principle says, that one should have the greatest amount of liberty, as long as this liberty is in correspondence to an equal amount of liberty for others. Hereby, one cannot lower the liberty of all. In regards to the perspective of justice and equality for all beings, this would most likely lead to a society in which non-human animals such as farm-animals, pets, or alike, aren’t to be kept within farmhouses, fenced off land, apartments or alike. Furthermore, the limiting of other being’s liberation (for example through encapsulation) is also understood as going against this principle of a just society.

The equal opportunity principle says, that one should be able to achieve the same status as all who are born with the same physical and mental capabilities. Hereby, it is to be understood within the context of animal liberation, that for example dogs are from birth to have the same



possibility to live a life in freedom in the wild, as they are to live a life as man's best friend or alike. No beings shall be given an essence or have their destiny determined before they exist.

The difference principle says, that the lowest part of society is to be situated the best in comparison to any other societal structure. One could argue, that this principle would be the final nail in the coffin for the liberation of non-human animals; none are to be held captive from start, or be used for profit/personal gain – All beings are to be born in a society which structures provide the best possible situation for them in comparison to any other societal structures.

## 2.2 Robert Nozick

Another prominent legal philosopher, Robert Nozick, has a far more liberal view on the principles of a just society. He is of the belief, that just societies are those with a minimal state. The reigning power's only real task is to sustain and ensure the complete freedom of the citizens of the society (besides maintaining a military institution and order through law-enforcing institutions). Furthermore, a prominent part of Nozick's theory is his view on property right. If a product has been produced by one's own manpower (or rather beingpower), it is within one's right, to have complete ownership over it.

If one was to broaden the perspective of his theory, keeping all beings in mind, the sustainment and protection of one's freedom would actively argue against any and all suppression of humans as well as non-human animals, since their freedom is (in this given scenario) of equal importance as that of the humans. Thus, like Rawls' great equal liberty principle, all beings would have the greatest amount of freedom.

Regarding the views of property right, the use of for examples chickens as mere means for their eggs would be highly disapproved of in Nozick's minimal state-society. The achieving of eggs would only be acceptable, if the egg-layer was to approve of a trade which the egg-layer deemed fit. Hereby, I doubt that many beings can present a fitting trade for an arm or a leg for a fellow citizen's momentary enjoyment, so the production and distribution of meats and alike would most likely see its end.

## 2-3 Animal liberation in just societies

Despite the almost fable-like absurdity of the aforementioned examples regarding Rawls and Nozick's understanding of justice and equality, in regards to Peter Singer's argument of the principle of equality being accepted for "those outside our own species", it is the essence of the argument which is to be noted, not the seemingly impossibility of agreeing on a fair trade with a chicken. Fore despite Rawls and Nozick representing two vastly different ideas of just societies, their principles point towards the same conclusion: A just society for *all* beings, would require a liberation of animals, in which they are free to make their own choices, and live the life they wish. In the highly industrialized modern world, the use of animals for transportation or human needs can no longer be justified by practical standards: Automated vehicles have replaced the horses, and non-animal food can fulfill our humans needs. The use of non-human animals has become a question of human pleasure and of norms which some refuse to let go of. And because of this lack of "necessary" animal support, it is simply in no regards justifiable to use non-human animals simply with human pleasure in mind: The use of animals as means for one's own personal gain (one's own ends) is simply unjustifiable. And although the given actions required for change might be radical, and they definitely are, history has time and time again proven, that



it most often is the radical movements that lead to the withstanding changes; change with prosperity.

### **3. The life of man is a better life.**

But why should the fate of the curly tailed be discussed?

Isn't its existence worth lesser than us?

Fore we are free, we are human, we form our own way,

We are not just some meat that waddles, rolls and strolls all day!

### **4. Why doesn't society consist of beings?**

The main counter argument which would present itself in relation to the aforementioned conclusion, that the use of non-human animals for personal gain is unjustifiable, is the question of whether or not non-human animals and humans can be considered equals (and thus, whether or not non-human animals and humans should be treated the same). In regards to this question, I would like to propose the discussion of what makes a non-human animal a non-human animal; thereby, what makes the non-human animals not worthy of the same treatment as humans. Within existentialism, philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre would argue that man is defined by their essence being formed after their existence, thus making them subjects. Likewise, if one's essence was to be predetermined prior to their existence, they would be an object. Some of the spokespeople for this philosophy, would most likely argue, that non-human animals are to be considered objects, since their essence (which could be considering them a pet or means for food) is predetermined before their existence. But isn't this predetermination simply a societal prejudice? If total animal liberation, in accordance to the aforementioned principles, was to happen, the essence of the non-human animals would surely be undeterminable prior to existence, and thereby their choices free. A similar thought-process was seen during western colonization, where it was the western focus on personal gain and the western prejudice of how a functioning society should be, which caused the suppression of the colonized nations and its people.

If we keep considering non-human animal's capabilities from the perspective of human's societal standards, the suppression of non-human animals would never reach an end: We have to acknowledge, that even though non-human animals perhaps don't understand the language of humans or the human society, non-human animals are still capable of potentially being free- and rationally thinking beings, as well as capable of feeling: Thus non-human animals are still deserving of a life under the same principles of equality as humans.

### **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, if humans stopped judging non-human animals and the capabilities of non-human animals on human societal prejudice, animal's essence would not be determined prior to their existence, and thereby they should be treated in accordance to the same principles of equality as humans. Furthermore, these principles of equality would, according to the theories of justice as described by John Rawls and Robert Nozick, lead to the complete liberalization of non-human



animals. Thus, if we are to accept Sartre's idea of subjects being defined by their existence being prior to their essence, society should consider non-human animals with the same principles of equality as human, which would lead society to animal liberation.

## 6. Pig against man

Even if animal liberation would come, I'd prefer man's life,

But that doesn't mean the pig deserves the knife.

Fore, the pig lives simple, and the man lives better,

But even in a man's world, higher beings still choose the weather.