
Preface

*Animal Welfare Ethics “versus”
Environmental Ethics:
The Problem of Sentient Life*

This book is about the relationship of environmental ethics to animal welfare ethics, especially, the animal liberation position represented by Peter Singer and the animal rights position represented by Tom Regan.¹ The approach of this book is historical. It covers in succession a series of articles and chapters in books that present the evolution of an environmental ethics stance on animal welfare matters as it developed in the last decade. Because this book does not include any author specifically advocating the animal liberation or animal rights perspectives, some readers may erroneously conclude that the book is intentionally biased in favor of environmental ethics literature. The animal welfare positions are not directly defended in this book for two reasons. First, a very large number of books already present those perspectives in great detail. A book that tried to incorporate that literature adequately would be very large and expensive and extensively duplicate selections of readings commonly available. This book has a more modest purpose: to present a series of positions from the standpoint of environmental ethics that has not found its way, in any consistent manner, into the animal welfare ethics literature. In this sense, the book is supposed to complement that literature, not present an alternative. Second, the papers presented in this book are concerned more with clarifying the environmental position than with trying to supplant animal welfare positions. The question at issue in this book is not whether we should adopt an environmental ethic or an animal welfare ethic, but whether an animal welfare ethic

can be an adequate foundation for an environmental ethic; for example, whether our ethical intuitions about the treatment of wild animals in natural ecosystems can be justified in terms of animal welfare ethics. The answers to such questions do not necessarily challenge the value of animal welfare ethics positions in those areas on which most of that literature primarily focuses: the treatment of domestic animals with regard specifically to scientific experimentation and factory farming.

The animal liberation position of Singer arises directly out of nineteenth-century utilitarianism as presented by Bentham, in which *good* is defined as pleasure and *bad* or *evil* as pain. When *good* and *evil* are defined in this way, the class of morally considerable entities includes all creatures that are sentient, capable of feeling pain and pleasure. In his book *Animal Liberation*, Singer makes the division between animals and “vegetables” somewhere between the oyster and the shrimp.² Regan’s animal position, as he presents it in *The Case for Animal Rights*, is a rejection of Singer’s position that is more narrowly focused on protecting the rights of those nonhuman entities with inherent value—those capable of being the subject of a life—which turn out to be mammals and no other forms of life.³

Neither of these ethics has dealt very effectively with wild animals and natural systems. Singer suggests in his book that humans have done enough if they stop inflicting unnecessary suffering on wild animals, and that it is none of our business what animals do to each other among themselves. We should not become Big Brother after giving up the role of tyrant, he writes, and we should recognize that attempts to manipulate ecosystems for the benefit of wild animals (for example, the elimination of all predators), based on past history, will likely cause more harm than good, increasing suffering rather than decreasing it. Singer specifically refuses to consider the possibility that plants may deserve moral consideration as well, arguing that even if plants do feel pain, eating them directly rather than eating animals that have been fed plants will still reduce suffering enough.⁴

Regan, in turn, argues against any direct moral concern for plants, animals other than mammals, or ecosystems; and he criticizes environmentalists for protecting species and systems instead of individual mammals, an approach he calls *environmental facism*.⁵ According to Regan, environmentalists have their priorities mixed up, showing too little concern for mammals and too much concern for other biological and botanical forms of life, which he argues are not morally considerable. He does not totally abandon nonmammals and plants, however, for he argues that the protection of the habitats of mammals

will also incidentally benefit them. Regan's disapproval of the environmental perspective is especially clear with regard to endangered species. He holds that the individual members of endangered species are no more or less worthy of moral concern than individuals representing nonendangered species.⁶ Like Singer, Regan ultimately recommends a policy of noninterference, letting animals be, although he does come close to suggesting the removal of predators from natural systems, a policy that, as already noted, Singer rejects.⁷

The relationship of environmental ethics literature to the animal liberation position of Singer (which is not a rights position) and the animal rights position of Regan (which is not a utilitarian position) is inexact and sometimes confusing, not only because the differences between these two positions were not always clearly understood, but also because environmental ethics relates to and is troubled by each position in very different ways. Because the pain and suffering of wild animals is a difficult theoretical and practical issue in environmental ethics, there always has been a close relationship between environmental ethics and animal liberation literature. Nevertheless, because environmental ethicists are nearly unanimous in rejecting utilitarianism as the foundation of environmental ethics, on the grounds that the anthropocentric instrumentalism explicit in utilitarianism is one of the primary causes of the environmental crisis, it is difficult, if not impossible, for animal liberationists and environmental ethicists to find a common starting point for debate. Because environmentalists often speak as if nature has or ought to have rights, rights theory has also been an important topic in environmental ethics, inviting comparative debate with animal rights theorists. Nevertheless, because environmentalists are nearly unanimous in rejecting rights for nature, debate between environmental ethicists and animal rights theorists has not been very fruitful. Of the two positions, the animal liberation position of Singer has been discussed more fully in environmental ethics literature because the position was already fully developed before environmental ethics emerged as a distinct subject area.

Environmental ethicists have not been especially concerned with defending environmental ethics against animal welfare ethics. Environmental ethics as a professional field can trace its origins to the first Earth Day in 1970, when environmentalists began seeking out philosophers and asking them to deal with the ethical issues in environmental affairs. The field developed slowly during the 1970s and did not have a commonly agreed upon name until the philosophy journal *Environmental Ethics* began publication in 1979, thereby providing an appropriate label. During that first decade, environmental ethicists

did little more than tentatively look into the possibility of creating a field. At that time they were interested primarily in determining whether (and how) environmentalist attitudes could be morally justified. Animal liberation, which developed as a field much more quickly, because of the impact of Singer's *Animal Liberation*, was an important issue at that time, but not the primary one, for much more attention was usually focused on the Lynn White debate, which concerned the philosophical and religious origins of the environmental crisis. Animal liberation was not viewed as an alternative or competing theory, but as a position that ought to be taken into consideration and that might be usefully incorporated into the environmental ethics of the future, however it developed.

The formal debate about rights for nature officially began in 1974, the year before the publication of Singer's *Animal Liberation*, with the publication of three books: William Blackstone's *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis*, Christopher Stone's *Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects*, and John Passmore's *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions*.⁸ The Blackstone book, which was based on a conference held at the University of Georgia in 1971, contained a paper by Joel Feinberg, "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations." In this paper, Feinberg argues that rights can apply only to entities capable of having interests and that interests are based on desires and aims, which in turn presuppose some kind of belief or cognitive awareness.⁹ Feinberg concludes that it is meaningful to speak of animals having rights, but he finds vegetables, species, dead persons, human vegetables, fetuses, and future generations to be more problematic. Stone, in an extended version of an essay that originally was published in a special issue of the *Southern California Law Review* in 1972, takes the matter of rights in a different direction, toward legal rights for animals, plants, and ecosystems. Using the legal precedents of rights for corporations and human vegetables, neither of which have minds, he argues that any entity capable of being harmed and benefited can acquire legal rights by legislation or by the extension of legal precedent through court action. Although Stone's discussion is primarily legal, he suggests that legal rights for nature, once they are recognized by a court system, could gradually translate into moral rights for nature as well.¹⁰ Finally, Passmore, in the first full-length book on environmental ethics by a philosopher, argues against rights for nature on the grounds that rights are not applicable to nonhumans and that extending rights to nonhuman entities will bring about the end of Western civilization.¹¹ Passmore argues that changes in

behavior toward animals in the nineteenth century should not be interpreted as an extension of moral rights to animals, but rather as the restriction of human rights over animals.¹² Although he concedes that humans do have moral responsibilities with regard to nature, these are anthropocentric: they are not responsible *to* nature, but rather *for* nature *to* other human beings, the point of the title of his book. (Passmore's belief that environmental ethics requires a rights theory is apparently based on two passages in Aldo Leopold's essay, "The Land Ethic," where he speaks of the right of nature to exist and of the biotic rights of songbirds, and perhaps on the fact that environmentalists frequently talk in terms of rights, even though they have no idea what they are saying.¹³)

Taken together, these positions staked out a lot of territory—the extension of rights to animals, the extension of rights to nature generally, and the restriction of rights that humans had previously possessed by default—and provided the context within which Singer's *Animal Liberation* would be read by proto-environmental ethicists in the following year. Passmore, who is actually arguing that environmental ethics is not needed, takes a very conservative position, accepting that our behavior toward animals has changed, but denying that the change has any conceptual significance. The connecting thread between the other two positions is their discussion of marginal persons: human vegetables. Although Feinberg finds human vegetables problematic, he accepts rights for animals as a workable possibility. Stone, in contrast, embraces human vegetables, along with corporate entities, as noncontroversial rights holders. Singer's position falls into natural opposition to the conservative view of Passmore and the radical view of Stone. It is, however, at least on the surface, similar to Feinberg's position, because it elevates healthy animals to the moral status of defective humans and denies the further extension of rights to plants and other (nonliving) elements of nature.

When Singer's book appeared in 1975, it was viewed as an alternative rights theory and placed alongside the theoretical speculations of Stone and Feinberg in opposition to the conservative view of Passmore. For example, John Rodman's influential review discussion, "The Liberation of Nature?" which appeared in *Inquiry* in 1977, stresses the similarities between the positions of Singer and Stone, criticizing both for developing rights theories that although elevating the status of animals in some respects also degrades them by assigning them a status comparable to that of dysfunctional humans.¹⁴ There are several reasons why this "error" was made. First, as noted earlier, a rights debate had already begun, and it was natural to incorporate Singer's

views into that debate. Second, because Singer was coeditor with Tom Regan of a historical anthology called *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, the term *animal liberation* was taken uncritically to be a synonym for *animal rights*.¹⁵ Third, Singer discusses the possibility of rights for animals in the preface of his book and continues this discussion in the first two pages of the first chapter, where he shows that speculations about rights for animals arose directly and immediately out of the debate over the rights of women in the nineteenth century. Although Singer does not explicitly claim to have developed a rights theory, he does not speak against rights for animals or indicate explicitly anywhere in the book that his view is not a rights theory. Furthermore, the index directs readers to various parts of the book that are supposed to be discussing rights (although the word *right* frequently does not appear in those discussions). It seems likely that Singer, from his standpoint, though not actually arguing for a rights theory as such, did not want to speak against such theories and further wanted to make his own views appear more reasonable by tying them to the historical debate in the nineteenth century, which though developing out of Bentham's utilitarianism was focused on animal rights. It is even possible that Singer may have been undecided about the relationship of his position to rights theory at the time he wrote his book. In any event, the distinction between animal liberation and animal rights was not fully clarified until the mid-1980s, after Singer and Regan began debating each other and Regan's own book, *The Case for Animal Rights*, was published. Singer first acknowledged that his discussion of rights in *Animal Liberation* was inessential in an article published in *Ethics* in 1978, "The Fable of the Fox and the Unliberated Animals."¹⁶

This book does not follow up on all aspects of the animal liberation/animal rights debate as it developed in the late 1970s. For example, it makes no mention of (1) the argument that animals do not have rights because they do not speak a language and therefore are not able to make claims, or (2) the debate over the limits of moral considerability. The former is omitted because those discussions did not help clarify the relationship of animal welfare ethics and environmental ethics.¹⁷ The latter is omitted because it focuses on a boundary that is not contested within the animal welfare/environmental ethics debate, although many environmental ethicists do extend their conception of moral considerability to include nonliving components of natural systems. In environmental ethics literature, the argument that animals are unable to make claims because they cannot speak is undermined by Stone's legal rights position. The primary impact of the

debate over moral considerability has been the establishment of a term that allows ethicists to speak in general terms about the moral status of nonhumans without commitment to a specific theory or position.

This book begins with an essay by Richard A. Watson, "Self-Consciousness and the Rights of Nonhuman Animals and Nature," published in the second issue of *Environmental Ethics* in 1979. The paper is an attempt to develop and apply a historically accurate account of rights to the debate over animal rights and rights for nature. Although the paper has received little attention, it carefully maps out the limits of a traditional approach to the issues with some surprising results. Because Watson is a Cartesian scholar, the paper can be read as an example of the degree to which Cartesianism, believed by many to be the cause of the environmental crisis and the mistreatment of animals, can be stretched to accommodate the animal rights and environmental ethics perspectives. In the end, Watson concedes that many animals may qualify as rights holders intrinsically, and he also condones the assignment of rights to entities that do not qualify, if necessary, for behavioral convenience (the approach we take with regard to human children). Although Watson "falsely" attributes a rights position to Singer, his discussion, nevertheless, insightfully shows that key elements of Singer's view ultimately are based not simply on sentience, but on self-awareness, another name for the self-consciousness that Watson finds in traditional rights theory. His analysis of Stone's proposal also reveals moral problems that would develop if it were incorporated into current law, and he shows that Stone does not really manage to develop a theory that eliminates reference to higher mental functions. Watson, in my view, is less successful in his treatment of Leopold's discussion of biotic rights, which, as I have argued elsewhere, is not an important feature of Leopold's overall position and can easily be removed without any noticeable impact.¹⁸ Readers should bear in mind when evaluating Watson's position that, though he is a Cartesian, his position is not anthropocentric, because he acknowledges that some animals other than humans may qualify as rights holders. The pool of creatures eligible for rights-holder status is only slightly more restrictive than Regan's in *The Case for Animal Rights*, primarily because Watson insists that individual animals not be recognized as having rights unless they intend to act with or against moral principles; that is, are consciously trying to act as moral agents within a moral community.

The second paper in this collection, J. Baird Callicott's "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," is the single most influential paper

written by an environmental ethicist on the subject of animal welfare ethics. Callicott argues that animal liberation and environmental ethics require distinct and incompatible foundations. In particular, he argues that pain, a key element in the utilitarian calculus, is morally irrelevant in terms of the land ethic. Curiously, however, Callicott, who is the chief defender of and apologist for Leopold's land ethic, leaves open the possibility that a rights theory could be developed within the framework of the Leopold's position, although he does not elaborate on how one might go about it. With the publication of this paper, most animal welfare ethicists abandoned their efforts to create an environmental ethic based on animal liberation or animal rights foundations. Although Callicott now regrets his stridency in this particular paper and some overstatement, and is now trying to mend fences with the animal welfare movement, he does not seem to have rejected any part of his basic argument.

Bryan Norton's paper, "Environmental Ethics and Nonhuman Rights," is a third major attempt to clarify the relationship between animal welfare ethics and environmental ethics. In this case, however, it is not intended as part of a dialogue with animal liberationists, but rather as a guide to these matters for environmentalists who wish to argue for the preservation of nature in terms of rights. In a note, Norton speaks favorably of Watson's analysis, but points out that Watson's necessary conditions for rights holding have been viewed by rights advocates as being too restrictive to be taken seriously. To produce a more persuasive argument, he substitutes a more general set of conditions, which he argues would apply to any utilitarian or deontological rights theory. Although Norton is aware that Singer has abandoned rights as an essential element of his utilitarian position, he treats Singer's animal liberation position as a rights position, taking the word *right* in a broader sense in which it means something similar to Goodpaster's term *moral considerability*. Norton makes two critically important points in this paper. First, rights talk is of little help in efforts to preserve natural systems because rights are tied to the specific interests of individuals, and what is good for the individuals within a system most likely will bear little or no direct relationship to the good of the system as a whole. Although it is not in the personal interest of plants and animals be killed and eaten, it is essential for the continuation of the system in a natural state that many of them suffer this fate. Second, attempts to assign rights to natural collectives on the model of corporate entities in law, following out Stone's suggestion, is completely arbitrary, because any particular collective is also part of many other collectives. For example, a particular area could

just as easily be assigned rights as a mountain or a forest, and the assignment would depend not on the interests of the natural areas, but on the interests of the humans pushing for the designation; that is, whether they are mountain climbers, bird watchers, or representatives of a paper mill or a mining company.

Although Paul W. Taylor's paper, "The Ethics of Respect for Nature," was published approximately six months before Norton's essay, I have placed it after Norton's because it represents a new direction in the debate. Rather than simply evaluating and rejecting rights theory, Taylor develops an alternative position. This position takes a biocentric perspective, calling for respect for the inherent worth of plants and animals; that is, the value a living organism has because it has a good of its own. Taylor speaks in terms of an organism having a good of its own rather than in terms of interests to avoid the Feinbergian claim that interests require self-awareness. This position is not an animal rights position because Taylor calls for equal respect not only for humans and other animals, but for plants as well. Unlike the previous three authors, who are trying to find a way to account for and justify the environmental perspective, Taylor recommends a new perspective, biocentric egalitarianism, that would require significant new changes in our behavior toward plants and animals, if it were put into practice, comparable to the changes in moral practice toward animals and nature that occurred in the nineteenth century. Significant changes are required because Taylor's moral concern is placed on individuals rather than systems, creating the practical problems discussed by Norton in the previous paper. Despite these problems, however, Taylor's position, which he has expanded into a book-length treatise, proved to be influential in the theoretical debate in both the animal welfare and environmental ethics camps.¹⁹ Regan's position in *The Case for Animal Rights* is a variant that restricts inherent value or worth to those organisms that not only have goods of their own, but also, as noted earlier, have subjective, experiential (mental) lives. Moving in a completely different direction, Holmes Rolston, III has developed a similar position in his new book, *Environmental Ethics*, in which organisms are said not only to have goods of their own, but also goods of their kind.²⁰ One unfortunate confusion that has arisen out of this approach to environmental ethics and animal liberation has been Taylor and Regan's use of the word *inherent*, which is contrary to traditional usage. Traditionally, entities with inherent value or worth have been things that are valuable because contemplation of them has been good or rewarding intrinsically (noninstrumentally) from a human or anthropocentric perspective; for example, art ob-

jects.²¹ In accordance with the new definition, entities with inherent value or worth are valuable because they are teleological centers of purpose that are valued intrinsically (for their own sake) from a non-anthropocentric perspective.

The next essay is the first of two chapters from Mary Midgley's *Animals and Why They Matter*, the second of which is placed out of chronological but nevertheless in proper thematic order. Midgley's book is a valuable contribution to the animal rights/environmental ethics debate because she approaches the issues from a completely nonideological perspective; that is, she approaches each issue without preconceptions and does not try to develop an analysis in terms of a predetermined set of environmental or animal welfare principles. In this chapter, she challenges the claim made by Singer and others that speciesism is analogous to racism, pointing out, among other things, that species differences, unlike racial differences, must be carefully noted and taken into consideration if the needs and welfare of particular animals are to be properly attended to and that concern for one's own kind is natural part of species bonding, which must take place for an individual member of any species to be able to function normally.

"Moral Considerability and Extraterrestrial Life," an essay that I commissioned from J. Baird Callicott for *Beyond Spaceship Earth: Environmental Ethics and the Solar System*, an edited book of essays applying environmental ethics to the space program, is included in this volume because it reveals some unexpected limitations of Leopold's land ethic, at least as Callicott interprets it, and hints at his eventual shift to reconciliation with animal welfare ethics. Callicott insists that the land ethic has nothing at all to say about the treatment of extraterrestrial life, should it ever be discovered. In other words, species of life are morally irrelevant from the perspective of the land ethic unless they are part of our biotic community on Earth. Conceding that there ought to be some kind of theory available to provide them some moral consideration, Callicott goes on to suggest that reverence-for-life ethics, in terms of the writings of Feinberg, Goodpaster, and Albert Schweitzer, though a dismal failure on this planet, would be a "serviceable" extraterrestrial environmental ethic. Nevertheless, claiming that having a land ethic for Earth and a reverence-for-life ethic for off-planet would make ethics too complicated, Callicott concludes his paper, perhaps tongue in cheek, by recommending a weak anthropocentric position²² that could provide guidance for both kinds of life and would "elevate the human spirit and the human mind."

My paper, "Foundations of Wildlife Protection Attitudes," is in-

tended primarily as an examination of the history of ideas behind the environmental ethics/animal liberation debate, but it includes a criticism of Callicott's views on extraterrestrial life. I show that the histories of ideas out of which animal liberation and environmental ethics evolved are distinct, involving completely different concerns and completely different animals. Environmental ethics developed out of the biological classification activities of naturalists while animal liberation developed out of concern about domesticated animals. The key phrase with regard to the former was *wanton destruction* and the key phrase with regard to the latter was *unnecessary suffering*. In the final section of the paper, I argue that the same historical influences that produced the land ethic would also guide humans to similar ethical concern for extraterrestrial life if it were ever discovered. Further, I argue that the change in moral behavior in the nineteenth century on which Callicott claims the land ethic is based took place before evolution and ecology found their place in science and that, although evolution and ecology play a role in environmental ethics, our attitudes and behavior today toward wildlife would be little different without them. For the themes of this book, these discussions show that the history of ideas supports Callicott's radical separation of animal welfare ethics and environmental ethics in "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," but does not support the (terracentric or Earth-chauvinist) limitations of the land ethic that he describes in "Moral Considerability and Extraterrestrial Life."

The next two selections, Mary Anne Warren's "Rights of the Non-human World" and Mary Midgley's "The Mixed Community," though published in 1983, are introduced at this point so that they can be read in the context of Callicott's admission that the land ethic may need to be supplemented by one or more other moral theories and my treatment of animal liberation and environmental ethics as distinct positions that deal with different animals, domestic and wild, respectively, and that have distinct and largely unrelated historical origins. Warren, in response to Callicott's "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," argues that animal liberation and environmental ethics, rather than being incompatible positions, are really complementary, dealing with different aspects of our moral intuitions and with different animals. In addition, she suggests ways in which separate (and complementary) rights theories might be developed for humans, animals, and, to a very limited degree, for plants and nonliving natural objects (though she does not encourage this view). Animals need not be regarded as having the same rights as humans, she says, merely some rights. Moreover, she adds, the term *right* is not really essential,

because we could speak equally well in terms of the *intrinsic value* of humans and animals. The details of Warren's position are not particularly new. Singer, for example, on the second page of *Animal Liberation* points out that we need not give animals rights that they do not need, noting that a dog does not need the right to vote. In addition, because she is not absolutely committed to a rights view, her approach toward rights for animals is similar to Watson's conception of rights assigned for human behavioral convenience. Nevertheless, her suggestion that animal liberation and environmental ethics be treated as complementary rather than incompatible positions provides an easy way to ameliorate the radical break between theorists in the two camps brought about by Callicott's analysis in "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair."

In "The Mixed Community," Mary Midgley takes a more general and long-term look at the historical relationships of humans and animals than I do in "Foundations of Wildlife Protection Attitudes," pointing out that it is simply not true that human (moral) communities until very recently have excluded animals. Rather, she argues, animals have had a place throughout human history and probably for tens of thousands of years in prehistory. Moreover, the relationship to most of these animals has been as persons. Treating them as persons has not been so much a reflection of a high moral view as a matter of expediency. As Midgley notes, if there was a better way to get work out of elephants than by taking into account that they have minds of their own and have good and bad, grumpy and happy days, it would have been found long (centuries) ago. In conjunction with her earlier paper in this book (the preceding chapter in *Animals and Why They Matter*), Midgley goes on to suggest that, though humans and other animals focus primarily on their own species, most animals have little difficulty crossing the species barrier; and the route is not specifically by way of concern for unnecessary suffering, but natural sympathy, which is most apparent in the special tolerance most animals show for the young of other species. Midgley's position in this paper, though focused on the relationship of humans and domestic animals, on the one hand, goes a long way toward undercutting the idea that animals have no part in the moral communities of humans, found in traditional philosophy and reinforced by Callicott's "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," and, on the other hand, parallels changes (specifically with regard to the role of sympathy) in Callicott's own views as he moves toward reconciliation with animal welfare ethics.²³

John Fisher's "Taking Sympathy Seriously" is included at this point in the book because it develops in some detail Midgley's sugges-

tion that humans and animals are tied together morally through sympathy. This paper, though perhaps little known in the animal rights/environmental ethics debate, has had considerable impact on my own thinking on the subject. At the time that I considered this paper for publication in *Environmental Ethics* I (naively) informed the author that he had failed to note the differences in treatment that we accord wild and domestic animals, as explained, for example, in Callicott's "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," to which he replied that the point of his paper was that this distinction was illegitimate in terms of the moral psychology of humans. On reflection, I found that I had to agree. The paper not only is a good answer to Callicott's excessive disregard of animal suffering in "Animal Liberation," a position he no longer holds, but is also an answer to the charges sometimes made by environmentalists (and particularly hunters) that those concerned about animal suffering in the wild are victims of the "Bambi syndrome." Nevertheless, because sympathy, as developed by Fisher, though natural, is selective—permitting us to have sympathy both for the wildebeest and the lion who kills it—it may not alter our attitudes and behavior toward wild animals in any significant way.

This book concludes with a third essay by J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again." In this essay, Callicott repents his extremism in "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair" and begins looking for a way to reconcile animal liberation and environmental ethics. Dismayed that Warren's position, that the two ethical positions are complementary rather than incompatible, might win the day (the view I personally support, independent of the particular details of her full position), Callicott calls for an attempt to find a common position that will account for our moral behavior toward animals in both the human and biotic communities. He finds the foundation for this common position in Midgley's account of sympathy in "The Mixed Community," which he joins with his own account, based on links between Hume, Darwin, and Leopold.²⁴ Interestingly, Callicott, who previously argued that Singer's concern about suffering went too far, now argues that Singer failed to go far enough. As Callicott notes, Singer pointedly refused to speak on behalf of sympathy on the grounds that to do so would be too much of a concession to the emotions. (It is possible that Singer was himself trying to avoid the equivalent of the Bambi syndrome in animal welfare ethics.)

Will animal liberation and animal rights unite harmoniously with environmental ethics and live happily ever after as Callicott now hopes? To be honest, it does not seem to be very likely. As I see it, environmental ethics will continue to be an unpleasant thorn in the

side of animal welfare ethicists, even though they themselves have no plausible solutions to the problem of what to do, and not do, with sentient wild animals. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, from the perspective of environmental ethics, a rights approach focused exclusively on animals is too narrow to cover all the entities living and nonliving that members of the environmental movement feel ought to be considered morally, and a rights approach that encompasses both living and nonliving entities stretches the traditional concept of rights too far, producing rights that are so watered down that they are hardly recognizable as rights at all. It is possible that animal welfare ethicists may succeed eventually in establishing moral rights for domestic animals with regard, in particular, to scientific research and factory farming. Because legal rights do not require the development of elaborate theoretical foundations, merely the act of an authoritative body, legal rights could be established that might prepare the way for the eventual acceptance of some kind of moral rights. Such legal and moral rights, nevertheless, seem unlikely to form the foundations of environmental ethics and at best would be complementary to an environmental ethic, established on some other basis.

Criticism of rights in environmental ethics is usually directed at the use of the concept by environmentalists, not animal welfare advocates. When environmentalists call for rights for nature, they are borrowing the legal concept of rights to express their belief that nature should be protected for its own sake, not simply because it is instrumentally valuable to humans. Because environmental ethicists have been unable to construct a theory to support the rights statements of environmentalists, these statements can appropriately be dismissed, in accordance with the emotivist critique of ethics, as developed by logical positivists in the early twentieth century, as arbitrary and subjective expressions of emotion. Having abandoned efforts to develop a rights theory for environmentalists, most environmental ethicists, following Warren's suggestion in the "Rights of the Nonhuman World," are looking into the development of a theory of intrinsic value as a way to establish an objective sake for nature. Whether environmentalists, environmental professionals, and ordinary people will accept intrinsic value terminology in place of their emotivist rights talk is a question that will not be answered for some time to come.

In speculating about the future of the animal rights/environmental ethics debate, it is important to recognize that ultimately the controversy will not be resolved by philosophers at the theoretical level, but by environmental professionals and concerned citizens at the practical level. The resolution of the controversy is not simply a

matter of finding a winning argument, but of finding a position that all those concerned about the environment can understand, feel comfortable with, and apply in their professional work and their daily lives. This position could be the actual position of a particular philosopher, but it need not be, for it could just as easily be a generalized position—or group of positions in accordance with moral pluralism—that borrows from the views of various theorists from both camps.

Whether the solution to the debate will be a single position that covers both environmental ethics and animal welfare ethics (moral monism) or several positions (moral pluralism) that are complementary, covering distinct areas, is an open question. Even if environmental ethics and animal welfare ethics remain distinct fields theoretically, in practice some areas will overlap. For example, when tourists find injured wild animals, they almost always seek out park and nature center officials expecting them to render immediate medical aid. If the animals are small enough, they are rushed to park interpretation centers by car. Although the naturalists or interpreters frequently accept the animals, they do so with misgivings, for usually they believe such aid to be pointless and counterproductive. Most are convinced that helping injured animals is an inappropriate interference in natural systems. They hold that there is little likelihood that such animals will recover adequately to continue their lives in the wild and that, even if they do, they will take up space and food that could more appropriately be used by healthy animals able to contribute to their species' gene pool through reproduction. Sometimes naturalists accept these animals but make no real effort to save them, performing mercy killings or simply using them as food for captured animals after the tourists have left. When they do attempt to save the animals, they do so without any conviction that they are doing the right thing. Their motivation for rendering assistance is a response to the feelings of the tourists, not any real concern for the injured animals. Some merely respond to these feelings, wishing not to cause offense. Others respond because they hope that the feelings of the tourists, which they regard as being inappropriate, can eventually be redirected away from concern for individual animals to concern for habitat preservation.

Although animal liberationists, following Singer, frequently insist that feelings and emotions are not the issue, if one attends to the matter closely, it is difficult to conclude that there is any other issue. Animal liberationists apparently deny that they are emotionally concerned about the suffering of sentient animals because they are afraid that they will be accused of not being rational and objective.²⁵ In denying the emotional basis of their concern, however, they paradoxically

become appropriate targets for the ecofeminist criticism that they have improperly divorced themselves from the emotional side of their natures. The animal liberationist approach is basically an extensionist approach. On the basis of some characteristic that humans and animals hold in common, the ability to suffer or to be the subject of a life, some moral concern is extended to some animals (but not to non-sentient animals, plants, and other lower organisms). As I indicated earlier, neither Regan nor Singer, nor any other animal liberationist, has offered a realistic plan to manage natural systems; nor have they expressed any inclination to try. According to Singer, for example, humans have done enough if they do not contribute further to natural suffering in the wild.²⁶ Viewed in this way, the problem is not determining appropriate ethical action, but simply coming to grips with our emotions, our natural expressions of sympathy as they cross species boundaries. And this problem is one that also plagues environmentalists, who frequently also deny the relevance of their natural sympathies when they invoke the Bambi syndrome in defense of hunting or natural regulation. Resolution of this emotional discomfort about the natural and human-induced suffering of sentient wild animals, if and when it comes, will likely eliminate most of the conflict (the incompatibility) between animal welfare and environmental ethics, leaving proponents of each perspective to focus on matters that are truly complementary: the problem of unnecessary suffering among domestic animals (those living in the mixed community), which is not a major concern of environmental ethics; and the problem of ecosystemic health, which because it includes nonsentient animals, nonanimal organisms, and nonliving entities, is not a concern of animal liberation and animal rights.

Notes

1. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: New York Review, 1975); Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983). Page numbers for *Animal Liberation* refer to the commonly available Avon edition, first published in 1977.

2. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, pp. 178-79.

3. Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, p. 78.

4. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, pp. 238-39; 248-49.

5. Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, p. 362.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
8. William T. Blackstone, ed., *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974); Christopher D. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects* (Los Altos, Calif.: William Kaufmann, 1974); and John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Duckworth, 1974).
9. Joel Feinberg, "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations," in Blackstone, *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis*, p. 52.
10. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?*
11. Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature*, pp. 116-17; 178-79.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
13. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), pp. 240, 247. The book was originally published by Oxford University Press in 1949.
14. John Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?" *Inquiry* 20 (1977): 83-145.
15. Peter Singer and Tom Regan, eds., *Animal Rights and Human Obligations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976).
16. Peter Singer, "The Fable of the Fox and the Unliberated Animals," *Ethics* 88 (1978): 122; see also Tom Regan, "Animal Rights, Human Wrongs," *Environmental Ethics* 2 (1980): 99-120; Peter Singer, "Animals and the Value of Life," in Tom Regan, ed., *Matters of Life and Death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1980), pp. 338-80; and Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
17. See R.G. Frey, *Interests and Rights: The Case Against Animals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) and Kenneth E. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1978): 308-25.
18. Eugene C. Hargrove, *Foundations of Environmental Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1989), pp. 177-78.
19. Paul W. Taylor, *Respect for Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).
20. Holmes Rolston, III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).
21. See William Frankena, *Ethics*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 82.
22. Bryan G. Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," *Environmental Ethics* 6 (1984): 131-48.
23. Callicott first introduced sympathy as a key element in the

intellectual foundations of the land ethic in "Hume's *Is/Ought* Dichotomy and the Relationship of Ecology to Leopold's Land Ethic," *Environmental Ethics* 4 (1982): 163-74, a year before the publication of Midgley's book.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, p. 255.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 239.