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Animals' Pleasures

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Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek, Uniwersytet Łódzki
Peter Singer, Princeton University

Abstract
In this article we argue that it is reasonable to believe that normal vertebrate animals can feel pleasure, and that there is sufficient evidence for a capacity for pleasure in some invertebrates. It follows that the pleasures of animals are morally significant. We argue for that in a few steps. First, we explain why philosophers used to concentrate more on pain rather than pleasure in regard to animals. Second, we define the notion of pleasure and show how it implies to non-human animals. Third we discuss whether animals are conscious beings and how they may feel pleasure. It is true that we do not know exactly how pain and pleasure feel to nonhumans, but this is also true for other humans. Even though we can give a detailed verbal description of what we feel, pains and pleasures are subjective and we do not have any certain insight into what another human is feeling. This limitation should not stop us from behaving in a way that takes into account the fact that both we and many nonhuman animals are beings who can suffer and enjoy.

Keywords: animals, pleasure, pain, suffering, well-being, hedonism.

Abstrakt
W tym artykule dowodzimy, że kręgowce mogą odczuwać przyjemność i że istnieją wystarczające dowody na to, aby stwierdzić, że przyjemność odczuwają również niektóre bezkręgowce. Według nas oznacza to, że przyjemności zwierząt są istotne z moralnego punktu widzenia. Dochodzimy do tych wniosków w kilku krokach. Po pierwsze, wyjaśnimy, dlaczego w przypadku zwierząt filozofowie zwykli koncentrować się bardziej na bólu niż przyjemności. Po drugie, definiujemy pojęcie przyjemności i pokazujemy, jakie ma ono znaczenie dla zwierząt innych niż ludzie. Po trzecie, zastanawiamy się, czy zwierzęta są istotami świadomymi i w jaki sposób mogą odczuwać przyjemność. Prawdą jest, że nie wiemy dokładnie, jak ból i przyjemność odczuwają zwierzęta, ale prawda ta dotyczy również innych ludzi. Chociaż możemy podać szczegółowy, werbalny opis tego, co czujemy, ból i przyjemność są subiektywne i nie mamy żadnego pewnego wglądu w to, co czuje inny człowiek. To ograniczenie nie powinno powstrzymywać nas od zachowywania się w sposób uwzględniający fakt, że zarówno my, jak i wiele zwierząt innych niż ludzie, jesteśmy istotami, które mogą cierpieć i cieszyć się.

Słowa kluczowe: zwierzęta, przyjemność, ból, cierpienie, dobrostan, hedonizm.

"Being a pleasure-seeker adds considerably more to one's interests than if one were merely a pain-avoider. Being able to feel good means being able to enjoy life. There is more at stake, more to be gained, and lost."

(Jonathan Balcombe, "Pleasure and Animal Welfare")

Introduction

It is now widely accepted that a difference in race is not a reason for giving more weight to the interests of a member of one race than we give to a member of a different race - even if one of these races is our own, and the other is not. The same is true about a difference in sex. We hold that this also goes for a difference in species. The most fundamental form of the principle of equality is the principle of equal consideration of interests. This provides the basis for regarding all humans as equal, despite evident factual differences between human beings. It also provides the basis for giving equal consideration to the interests of human and nonhuman animals. We will not defend this claim further here, for to do so would only be to repeat arguments that one of us has already put forward in *Etyka* and other works.[1] Members of different species will, of course, have some distinct interests. Many humans, for example, have an interest in learning a foreign language. To the best of our knowledge, no nonhuman animals have such an interest. But humans and nonhuman animals also have some similar interests. Jeremy Bentham began his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* with the words: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure,"[2] but he could as well have said, and it would have been consistent with his views, that nature has placed all animals, including humans, under those two sovereign masters. We do not have to accept Bentham's view that the desires to avoid pain and to experience pleasure determines everything we do, but he was surely right to think that these interests are extremely important to us.

The principle of equal consideration of interests leaves open the question of how we should think of interests. The two main contenders are that something is in my interests if it satisfies my desires, and that something is in my interests if it leads me to experience a greater surplus of pleasure over pain than I would

1 P. Singer, *Zwierzęta i ludzie jako istoty równe sobie*, "Etyka", 18, 1980, s. 49-62; *Wyzwolenie zwierząt*, Marginesy, Warszawa 2018, *Etyka praktyczna*, PiW, Warszawa 2004.

2 J. Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation,* 1789.

otherwise have had (or, if I am so unfortunate as to experience more pain than pleasure, a smaller surplus of pain.) On the desire-satisfaction theory, at least in its pure version, having one's desires satisfied does not require that the satisfaction is actually experienced, or even that one is aware that it has been satisfied. In an example given by Derek Parfit, I strike up a conversation with someone sitting next to me on the train. I find her very likeable, and when, as the train arrives at our destination, she tells me that she has a life-threatening illness, I form a strong desire that she should overcome the illness. But she disappears into the crowd on the platform, and we have not exchanged names or contact details, so I will never know if she does. Nevertheless, on the pure desire-based view, it is in my interests that she survive.[3]

This example is a powerful argument against the pure form of desire satisfaction. A different version of desire theory accepts this point, and specifies that the satisfaction of a desire is only in someone's interests if that person knows that the desire is satisfied.[4] There is, however, a different objection to this view: some desires simply seem not to be worth satisfying. John Rawls offers the example of a man whose chief desire is to count the number of blades of grass in lawns. Doing so gives him no pleasure, even when he succeeds in getting an accurate count, and knows that he has done so. Nor would not counting blades of grass make him miserable.[5] Nevertheless, this is an irrational desire, and satisfying it does not make his life go better. It would, in our view, be in his interest for us to persuade him instead to do things that give him pleasure, even if at present pleasure is not something he desires. For these and other reasons, we reject the desire-satisfaction theory, and instead favour hedonism, that is, the view that it is in our interests to have the greatest possible balance of pleasure over pain.[6] This view implies that it is in the interests of any sentient being to experience pleasure. In this article we argue that it is reasonable to believe that normal vertebrate animals can feel pleasure, and that there is sufficient evidence for a capacity for pleasure in some invertebrates. It follows that the pleasures of animals are morally significant.

3 For the original version of this example and the uses Parfit makes of it, see D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons,* Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 151, 468, and 494.

4 Ch. Heathwood, "Desire Satisfactionism and Hedonism", Philosophical Studies, 2006, 128 (3), pp. 547-548.

5 J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* The Belknap Press HUP, 1999, p.379.

6 For a fuller discussion of our reasons for rejecting desire-satisfaction theories, see K. de Lazari-Radek and P. Singer, *The Point of View of the Universe,* Oxford University Press, 2014, pp.215-239; K. de Lazari-Radek, *What Should a Consequentialist Promote*, *The Oxford Handbook of Consequentialism*, ed. D. Portmore, OUP 2020, p. 208-9; K. de Lazari-Radek, *Godny pożądania stan świadomości*, WUŁ, Łódź 2021, s. 163-199.

Two Reasons for Focusing on Pain Rather than Pleasure

In practice, those who accept that we should be concerned about the interests of animals, and are active in trying to reform those practices that show little or no concern for animals, focus almost entirely on reducing the pain and suffering we inflict on animals. This is understandable, and there are two different ways in which that focus can be justifiable. The more straightforward reason is that it is often easier to know how to detect that an animal is experiencing pain and suffering than it is to know that an animal is experiencing pleasure and happiness, and similarly, it is often easier to know how to alleviate pain and suffering than it is to know how to increase pleasure and happiness. That is a generalization, of course, and isn't always true, but when we read accounts of painful procedures performed on animals, whether they are experiments in laboratories, or the branding of a cow's skin with a hot iron, we know that we could prevent these forms of suffering by persuading legislators to change the laws so that people could not do these things to animals. It is much harder to imagine legislating that would increase the pleasure of animals.

The second reason why we may be justified in giving priority to relieving pain and suffering, rather than producing pleasure, is that animals may be capable of experiencing greater extremes of pain than of pleasure. The meaning of this may not be obvious, so here is a thought experiment that may make it easier to grasp: suppose that a good fairy said that she had the power to grant you an hour of the greatest pleasure you have ever experienced; but unfortunately, before you could say yes, an evil fairy arrived and said that although she did not have the power to prevent you experiencing an hour of the greatest pleasure you have ever experienced, she did have the power to ensure that, if you accepted the good fairy's offer, you would also experience an hour of the greatest pain you have ever experienced. Now would you accept the good fairy's offer? We would not. Our intuition is that we may be capable of experiencing greater extremes of pain than of pleasure. There may be an evolutionary reason for this, because pain is a signal of a threat to our survival, and failing to respond promptly to it can lead to even immediate death. Failing to respond to a feeling of pleasure could also, in the long run, threaten our survival – for example if we stopped eating some delicious food – but less immediately. And indeed, the example of food shows the greater urgency of pain, for if we stop eating for long enough, we will not only miss out on the pleasure of eating food we like, but we will also experience the pain of hunger.

Our pain/pleasure scale might therefore look like this:

X----------0----------Y

Where X is the greatest pain we can possibly experience, 0 is the neutral point, where we are experiencing neither pain nor pleasure, and Y is the greatest pleasure we have ever experienced. (If you are unsure how to think about the neutral point, we would suggest that you think of it as the point at which, other things being equal, you would be indifferent between staying awake for a time in that state, or being in a deep dreamless sleep.)

This is speculative, and further research would be needed to show that it is correct; but if it is the case that we have a stronger preference for avoiding extreme pain than we do for gaining extreme pleasure, what conclusion should we draw from this? Not, we emphasize, the position taken by "negative utilitarians" who hold that the only consequences we should take into account are those that reduce pain and suffering. Negative utilitarianism prohibits trading off any suffering at all for the sake of pleasure or happiness. So, to go back to our earlier example, if the evil fairy had the power only to say that, if you accept the good fairy's offer of an hour of the greatest pleasure you have ever experienced, you will suffer a mild headache for one minute, the negative utilitarian would still reject the good fairy's offer. That is not, we believe, what most people would prefer. If we were able to quantify pleasures and pains, then we would give equal weight to both. If, as has been suggested, the basis for an objective measure of quantification is to use a "just perceptible increment" as the unit of measurement[7], then we would give equal weight to one unit of pleasure and one unit of pain. Our point here is only that to give a higher priority to reducing extreme suffering than we give to producing extreme pleasure *may* be defensible, even if, in practice, we were equally capable of doing both.

To say that it is defensible to give priority to reducing suffering, whether of humans or of animals, does not imply that promoting pleasure is unimportant. On the contrary, it is possible that our understandable focus on reducing suffering has led us to neglect opportunities for increasing pleasure, even when that could be done at little or no cost. That thought is an important motivation for addressing the topic of the pleasures of animals, to which we now turn.

7 F. Y. Edgeworth, *Mathematical Psychics*, Kegan Paul, London, pp. 98-102.

What is pleasure?

The greatest of 19th century utilitarians, Henry Sidgwick, defined pleasure as "desirable consciousness", a feeling "which the sentient individual at the time of feeling it implicitly or explicitly apprehends to be desirable – desirable, that is, when considered as a feeling, and not in respect of its objective conditions or consequences, or of any facts that come directly within the cognizance and judgment of others besides the sentient individual".[8] We embrace this definition but in order to explain why this is an illuminating way to think of pleasure, we need to discuss it and bring it together with some recent work in neuroscience.

Pleasure is a specific state of mind that we call a *feeling* – an experience that is different from thoughts, sensations, or emotions. It is important to distinguish between feelings and sensations, something philosophers often do not do.[9] In psychology and neuroscience, however, the distinction is easy to discern. Magda Arnold, an American psychologist, explained that feelings are responsible for a positive or negative reaction to what we experience. A positive reaction is pleasure defined as "a welcoming of something sensed that is appraised as beneficial and indicates enhanced functioning". Negative reaction is pain, taken as "a resistance to something sensed that is appraised as harmful and indicates impaired functioning". In Arnold's summary: "What is pleasant is liked, what is unpleasant, disliked."[10] Sensations, on the other hand, are experiences that are results of impacting on our senses: taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch. A sensation "informs" us about the world around us and a feeling "evaluates" that piece of information and signals how it could affect us. This differentiation explains well why the same sensation – e.g., of listening to the same song – is sometimes a pleasure and sometimes a nuisance, depending on other circumstances.

The distinction between a sensation and a feeling is clear in neuroscience, which has found two distinct systems, sensory and hedonic. The evolutionary function of the former is to "provide the facts about the world", while the latter gives "a subjective commentary on the information provided to them by sensory system"[11]. The hedonic mechanisms, as the neuroscientists put it, "take a mere sen-

8 H. Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed., Macmillan, London 1907, p. 131.

9 The views of pleasure suggested by Gilbert Ryle and Fred Feldman fail to make this distinction. For discussion, see K. de Lazari-Radek, *Godny…*, pp. 374-408.

10 See also K. de Lazari-Radek, *What should a consequentialist promote*, p. 212.

11 P. Shizgal, "Fundamental Pleasure Questions", p. 9.

sory signal and transform it into a hedonic and 'liked' reward". They liken pleasure to "an additional niceness gloss painted upon the sensation"[12].

This niceness gloss can be applied to whatever experiences we have: not only physical sensations like tasting something or having sex, but also thoughts, imagination, and understanding. For this reason, a common belief is that there are many different kinds of pleasures: bodily pleasures, mind pleasures, intellectual pleasures, and so on. John Stuart Mill distinguished between higher and lower pleasures, and gave overriding weight to the former,[13] and your everyday experience may suggest to you that the pleasure that we get from resolving a philosophical problem is very different from the pleasure we get from tasting delicious food. But if pleasure is a "niceness gloss" that our hedonic system puts on experiences, then it is the experiences that differ, rather than the pleasures we get from them.

So how do we know that what we feel when having our favorite dessert, and what we feel when we hold our child for the first time, are both pleasures? The common feature that is intrinsic to all pleasures is a positive evaluation of the sensations that we are experiencing. Sidgwick talks of the feeling of pleasure as one that we "apprehend as desirable." The word "apprehend" may be less commonly used today than it was in Sidgwick's time. It suggests grasping something, and can be used to refer to a physical grasping as when we speak of the police having apprehended a suspect, or to describe grasping something intellectually, as in apprehending a new idea. So, to apprehend a feeling as desirable is to grasp, to understand, or become aware of it as desirable.

The word "desirable" can mean either "what is desired" or "what is worthy of desire". In the first sense, pleasure would be connected with a simple fact that we desire something. In the second sense, it is more of a normative or evaluative judgment – something that we should desire, if, for example, we are rational. We interpret Sidgwick to be using "desirable" in this second sense.

Sidgwick's understanding of pleasure as a feeling distinguished by its evaluative component has not been always accepted. Instead, some philosophers still link pleasure with desire. That view appeared to be supported by an experiment conducted in 1951 by J. Olds and P. Milner. In order to find what they thought to be a pleasure center, they implanted electrodes in a specific part of the rats' brains and presented them with a lever they could press in order to stimulate it. The rats pressed the lever constantly, and to the exclusion of all other activities, sometimes

12 K. Smith, S. Mahler, S. Pecina, K. Berridge, Hedonic Hotspots: Generating Sensory Pleasure in the Brain, in M. Kringelbach, K. Berridge (eds.), Pleasures of the Brain, p. 27.

13 J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism,* edited by K. de Lazari-Radek and P. Singer, Norton, New York, 2021, pp. 12-16. (first published 1863)

even until they died from starvation. Olds and Milner interpreted the rats' intense and overriding desire to stimulate that area of the brain as an indication that they were experiencing pleasure. Critics of hedonism mockingly suggested that the experiments showed that for hedonists, an ideal world would be one full of sentient beings with electrodes in their brains who did nothing but press a lever. But current research does not support the conclusions Olds and Milner drew from their research. old claims. Berridge and his colleague Morten Kringelbach believe that Olds and Milner had not discovered a "pleasure center" at all, but rather a "desire center". The parts of the brain that are responsible for desire, Berridge and Kringelbach point out, are distinct from those that are associated with pleasure, and are associated with different neurochemical substances – dopamine -- whereas the parts responsible for pleasure are associated with opioids – morphine-like substances produced by the brain. What the rats experienced was "wanting," rather than pleasure itself. That is why they continued to press the lever.[14] Desire is not a reliable indication of pleasure.

Sidgwick's definition, in terms of apprehending a feeling as desirable was therefore closer to what neuroscience has discovered than the view that pleasure is to be understood in terms of what we actually desire. The language used by Berridge, portraying the system that provides pleasure as painting a "niceness gloss" on experiences, makes pleasure a form of evaluation, and fits well with the idea that pleasure is the feeling we get when we apprehend something as good, or intrinsically worthy of being desired.

To apply this view of pleasure to nonhuman animals, we need to note that Sidgwick says that the apprehension of pleasure as desirable may be implicit or explicit. An explicit understanding of the desirability of a feeling one is experiencing would seem to be possible only for self-aware beings who make normative judgments about their own experiences. This may be possible for some nonhuman animals, such as the great apes, or elephants, but for other animals, the understanding of the desirability of a feeling at the time of experiencing it would have to be implicit. What would that be like? We will return to this question after we first set aside a more fundamental objection to the idea that animals can feel pleasure.

14 M. Kringelbach, *Pleasure Center*, OUP, Oxford 2009, p. 57.

Are Animals Conscious Beings?

Descartes famously declared that animals are nothing but mindless, emotionless machines.[15] His view may have made it easier for experimenters, in the days before anesthetics, to cut animals open to see how their internal organs functioned. This mechanistic view of animals did meet with some opposition. Voltaire described experiments in which dogs were nailed down and dissected alive. The result was, he wrote, that "you discover in him all the same organs of feeling as in yourself." He then threw out this challenge: "Answer me, mechanist, has nature arranged all the springs of feeling in this animal in order that he might not feel?"[16] Later Charles Darwin argued strongly that animals have emotions.[17] Nevertheless, animals continue to be denied feelings, or at least, the claim that it is "unscientific" to attribute feelings to animals has frequently been revived, especially by those who have an interest in causing pain to animals. In experimental psychology, for a period in the 1960s and '70s, it was unacceptable to say that giving an electric shock to an animal caused it pain. Instead, the "scientific" language was that the shock was a "negative stimulus" or that it elicited an "aversive response" because the attempts of the animal to avoid it could be observed, whereas the pain could not be.[18]

As recently as 2004, researchers working for the French National Institute for Agronomical Research denied that force-feeding ducks or geese to produce *foie gras* caused the birds suffering or pain, saying that "the use of these notions is inappropriate for animals because they imply a psychological element."[19] Marc Bekoff, a scientist who has spent a lifetime working with animals, describes a scientist with a similar stance when he tells a story about a man he calls „Bill," an animal behavior expert. Bill would happily tell him, in informal conversation, about how his dog Reno loved playing with other dogs, but would become anxious if Bill was away, and jealous if Bill paid too much attention to his own daughter; but then in commenting on a paper at a conference, Bill would be skeptical about attributing emotions to animals. When Bekoff tackled him about that, Bill would say that he didn't *really* know if Reno enjoys playing with other dogs, or becomes

15 Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* (1637) part 5, and 'Letter to Henry More,' February 5 1649.

16 Voltaire, *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764), see the entry 'bêtes.'

17 Ch. Darwin, *The Descent of Man,* (1871) ch. 3; *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872).

18 See B. Rollin, *The Unheeded Cry: Animal Consciousness, Animal Pain, and Science,* University of Oxford Press, New York, 1989.

19 We owe this reference to E. Reus and D. Olivier, "Mind-Matter for Animals Matters: Science and the Denial of Animal Consciousness," *Between the Species*, 13 (7) (2011), p20, available at https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/bts/vol13/iss7/6/. The original source is an article published on the website of the National Institute for Agronomical Research (INRA), on Dec. 15, 2004.

depressed or jealous. Like many other scientists, Bekoff suggests, Bill has to suppress the beliefs about animals formed from his everyday experiences with his dog, for fear that these beliefs will make him appear „unscientific" to his colleagues.[20]

To combat this lingering attitude that there is something unscientific about attributing feelings to animals, in 2012 prominent neuroscientists from all over the world gathered in Cambridge and issued "The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness." This statement summarizes the current state of neuroscience regarding the neurobiological substrates of conscious experience in both humans and non-human animals, and concludes that "the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness." This applies, the scientists state, not only to mammals and birds, but also to "many other creatures, including octopuses."[21]

Over the decade since the Cambridge Declaration, the study of animal consciousness has become a growing field, drawing together such fields as neuroscience, evolutionary biology, psychology, animal behavior, animal welfare science, and philosophy. The journal *Animal Sentience,* founded in 2016, brings together scientists interested in studying, in a rigorous manner, the subjective experiences and feelings of animals. As one recent survey of the field notes, "debates about animal consciousness have moved on from the question of whether any non-human animals are conscious to the questions of which animals are conscious and what form their conscious experiences take".[22]

The capacity of nonhuman animals has also now been recognized in the law in several jurisdictions, most notable in the European Union, where in 2008, the Treaty of Lisbon declared that "since animals are sentient beings," the member nations are to "pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals…"[23] Similar legislation exists in New Zealand, the Canadian province of Quebec, and the Australian Capital Territory. As we write, an Animal Welfare Sentience Bill is being considered in the parliament of the United Kingdom. Passage into legislation seems assured, with the main debate being whether the scope of the bill will extend beyond vertebrates.

20 M. Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals,* New World Library, Novato, California, 2007, pp. 114-5.

21 *The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness,* proclaimed by Ph. Low, D. Edelman and Ch. Koch at the Francis Crick Memorial Conference on Consciousness in Human and Non-human Animals, Churchill College, Cambridge, UK, July 7, 2012. The Declaration is available at https://fcmconference.org/

22 For discussion see J. Birch, A. Schnell and N. Clayton, "Dimensions of Animal Consciousness," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* 24 (10) (2020) 789-801.

23 *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* (Lisbon, 2008), Article 13.

Can Animals Feel Pleasure?

Now, even when it is widely accepted that animals can feel pain, the significance of pleasure in their lives is still often minimized, if not denied outright. Jerrold Tannenbaum, an American veterinarian, for example, has written:

> It does not seem even remotely plausible to postulate that most animals in the wild, or bred for use in research laboratories, have a need or drive to be happy or to lead a generally happy life in the same way in which they have physiological needs to eat, drink, or eliminate. [24]

Perhaps, though, this does not seem "remotely plausible" because we have not, until recently, looked for it. Accounts of the sexual activity of animals, for example, tend to focus on its evolutionary function, and therefore to ignore the evidence that, in many species, it produces pleasure. This is in sharp contrast to accounts of human sexual activity, even though the evolutionary function of sex in humans is the same as nonhuman animals. To this some may object that in humans we observe a great deal of sexual activity that cannot lead to reproduction and so must be engaged in for pleasure, for example masturbation, oral sex, and homosexual acts. But masturbation, by both males and females, is common in mammals, and homosexual acts have been observed in about 300 species of animals, while oral sex also occurs. The clitoris is present in females of many species of mammals, and female orgasms have also been detected, especially in primates.[25] The evidence that animals of many different species find sex pleasurable is therefore strong. Perhaps, just as psychologists focused on psychological problems in humans, and it was only recently that positive psychology began to be considered an important area of human psychology, so too it is only recently that pleasures in animals have become of a field of scientific interest. It is also possible that neglecting animal sexual pleasures is part of a more general phenomenon of trying to maintain the greatest possible gulf between us and the "lower" animals.

The idea that animals cannot experience pleasure, or have no interest in it, is, of course, completely contrary to our daily observations. Anyone who lives with or

24 J. Tannenbaum, *The paradigm shift towards animal happiness: what it is, why it is happening, and what it portends for medical research*. In: E.F. Paul and J. Paul (eds), *Why Animal Experimentation Matters: The Use of Animals in Medical Research*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publisher, pp. 93-130, 2001, quoted from J. Balcombe,

25 B. Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity* ETC, we owe this reference to J. Balcombe…

near domestic animals can describe a situation in which we have at least a strong presumption that they feel pleasure. Kasia's cat Maya, for example, comes to her in the morning and lies on her back to be stroked. She does not like to be touched much but she definitely does in the morning. When Kasia stops doing that, Maya moves her paws and encourages Kasia to keep stroking her. It is also obvious that Maya likes certain kinds of food but dislikes others. It is easy to observe how enthusiastic Maya is about the food she likes.

A growing body of data shows that animals take pleasure in such obvious things as food and sex but also playing, getting high, or learning things. Dogs are famous for their eagerness to learn things when they are with humans they are attached to. Both domestic and wild cats (including lions, jaguars and leopards) are known to adore the scent of a catnip plant, while reindeer get high on hallucinogenic fly agaric mushroom.[26] The internet is full of videos showing wild animals having fun in ways we can easily understand and appreciate: ravens rolling themselves down a snowy slope[27], stoats playing on a trampoline[28], Australian magpies hanging upside down from towels on clotheslines[29],and a grandmother bonobo tickling her granddaughter[30].

Observation of animals' behavior is a powerful source of our knowledge about their pleasures. But it is true that it is easier to say something about the pleasures of animals who are biologically closer to us – mammals especially, and apes in particular – than it is of the pleasures of reptiles or fish, and the difficulty is even greater with invertebrates. Animals differ significantly in their sensory abilities – some species have a stronger sense of smell, while others hear a different spectrum of sounds, or experience different tastes. Cats, for example, do not have receptors responsible for a sweet taste, and therefore, in contrast to many other animals, show no interest if presented with something sweet. We do not always know what another human being is feeling, and it is even harder to be confident in our inferences, from observation alone, about the feelings of a nonhuman animal.

Fortunately, to add to the knowledge we have from observation, we can now draw on recent findings in neuroscience. With minor exceptions, all vertebrates share the same basic anatomy with a skeleton and muscles enabling them to move; the same five senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste; similar neurological

26 J. Balcombe, pp. 161-162.
27 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnUN4wIxzmI
28 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVkH5EKxUBI
29 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV4qZ_lgStw; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJN5_1tfqXo
30 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPdf-BBL0co

structures (the amygdala and the hypothalamus); and the same brain chemicals (dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin).

We have defined pleasure in such a way that it has an evaluative element. But as we said in the previous section the evaluation does not have to be a deliberate or reflectively considered judgment. Most non-human animals, as far as we can tell, do not think in terms of "good", "bad", or "valuable" and do not self-consciously reflect on and evaluate what they experience. Nevertheless, they act in ways that lead them to experience pleasure, and to avoid experiencing pain or discomfort. An animal is conscious, in the sense specified by Thomas Nagel, and endorsed by many other philosophers, when there is something that it is like to be that animal.[31] If we imagine ourselves as Kasia's cat being stroked, or as a rat tasting something sweet, or, for that matter, as a laboratory rat receiving inescapable electric shocks, in each case, there is something there to be imagined. In contrast, if we imagine ouselves as a ball being hit around the court in a tennis match, there is nothing that it is like to be that tennis ball. The term "phenomenal consciousness" is sometimes used to distinguish this form of consciousness from self-consciousness, with the word "phenomenal" being used in the sense that the Oxford English Dictionary describes as chiefly to be found in philosophy and psychology, where it means "consisting of or belonging to the realm of phenomena or appearances; capable of being known empirically, esp. through the senses or through immediate experience, perceptible; of, designating, or relating to a phenomenon as directly perceived, sensed, or experienced..." When animals, or human infants, act so as to obtain states of phenomenal consciousness we may regard this as indicating an implicit judgment that these states are good, or when they seek to avoid them, an implicit judgment that they are bad, unless we have reason to believe that, as in the Olds and Milner experiment, it is only the "desiring" system that is controlling the behavior, in isolation from the hedonic system.[32]

How can we know, though, in nonverbal animals, that the hedonic system does in fact give desirable states of phenomenal consciousness? We have seen that neuroscientists talk of pleasure as something to which we give a positive evaluation. They have found brain mechanisms, so-called "hedonic hotspots," responsible for constructing what they call "an affective evaluation" to whatever stimulates the brain. In the brain of a rat, one hotspot is a cubic millimeter or so in size (roughly proportionate to a cubic centimeter in a human brain). The evidence that these

31 T. Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?", The Philosophical Review, Vol. 83, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 435-450.

32 For discussion of phenomenal consciousness and its moral significance, see G. Kahane and J. Savulescu, "Brain Damage and the Moral Significance of Consciousness," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 34, pp. 6-26, 2009.

hotspots are truly the parts of the brain that when activated give us a feeling of pleasure is that in humans reporting subjective experiences of pleasure while their brains are being scanned, these hotspots are activated. In addition, we are familiar with the way in which humans react in their behavior and facial expressions when they experience pleasure. Although nonhuman animals cannot report their subjective experiences to us, we can nevertheless see similar behavioral reactions in many mammals that occur when there is activity in the same part of the brain that is active in humans who report experiencing pleasure. Darwin already noticed that many animals, when tasting sweet or bitter substances have facial expressions that are recognizably similar to those that humans have when encountering the same tastes, and this has been confirmed by more recent studies.[33] These parallels hold, not only between humans and other primates, but also between primates and rodents, such as rats. For example, in response to a sweet taste, both rats and human infants stick out the tongue to lick their lips, and also the fingers or paws, while a bitter taste leads to gaping, shaking of the head, and wiping of the mouth. Not surprisingly, the liking reaction to sweet substances is stronger when the subjects are hungry. Twentieth-century scientists limited by the belief that science can only report what is observable would have been unable to make any further inferences about mental states from this evidence, but today neuroscientists are willing to talk of facial reactions to a sweet food as reflecting "a hedonic evaluation of it that incorporates physiological needs." Thus Kyle S. Smith, Stephen V. Mahler, Susana Peciña and Kent C. Berridge describe the "liking" reaction of the brain as having "objective neural and behavioral indicators" and note that there are methods of quantifying these indicators that apply "in animals and humans alike."[34]

Conclusion

That animals are capable of experiencing pleasure may be clear to those who are close to them in everyday life, but when it comes to accepting this in scholarly or scientific deliberations, this truth is only slowly soaking into our heads. This may

33 C. Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872); P. Ekman, "Facial expressions." In M. Robinson, E. Watkins and E. Harmon-Jones, eds., *Handbook of cognition and emotion*, Wiley, Chichester, 1999, pp. 301-20; K. C. Berridge, Measuring hedonic impact in animals and infants: microstructure of affective taste reactivity patterns. *Neurosci Biobehav Rev*, 24 (2000) 173-98, as cited by Kyle S. Smith, Stephen V. Mahler, S. Peciña, K. C. Berridge, "Hedonic Hotspots: Generating Sensory Pleasure in the Brain". In K.C. Berridge and M. Kringelbach, *Pleasures of the Brain*.

34 K. S. Smith, S. V. Mahler, S. Peciña, K. C. Berridge, *Hedonic Hotspots…*, pp.28-9.

be a sign of just another prejudice that we have towards nonhuman animals. There is no reason why we, humans, would have this special capacity to experience pleasure while other animals would not.

It is true that we do not know exactly how pain and pleasure feel to nonhumans, but this is also true for other humans. Even though we can give a detailed verbal description of what we feel, pains and pleasures are subjective and we do not have any certain insight into what another human is feeling. This limitation should not stop us from behaving in a way that takes into account the fact that both we and many nonhuman animals are beings who can suffer and enjoy.

Our conclusions have implications for our interactions with animals. Animals with a capacity for pleasure have an interest in experiencing pleasure in their lives. Hence, in accordance with the principle of equal consideration of interests mentioned at the outset of this article, we should regard opportunities to add to the amount of pleasure in their lives with the same importance as we give to adding similar pleasures to the lives of humans.

Of animals under direct human control, by far the largest number exist in factory farms. At least 50 billion animals are raised in factory farms each year. These animals are exposed to severe suffering and there are, as we argued in Section 2, reasons for giving priority to the relief of this suffering, but that does not mean that we are justified in depriving them of many of the pleasures that animals can have when kept in conditions better suited to their social and behavioral needs. This deprivation adds to the already more than sufficient case for ending factory farming.

What about animals in their natural habitat? Recently some philosophers have raised the issue whether we are justified in interfering in nature in order to reduce the suffering of wild animals.[35] This question requires us to decide whether there is value in the preservation of nature and natural ecological systems, free, as far as possible in this period of the Anthropocene, from human interference. It is, therefore, beyond the scope of this article to discuss it, but we can point out that if such interference in nature is justified, it would appear to be justified, not only to reduce the suffering of animals living freely in natural habitats, but also to increase the pleasure in their lives.

35 O. Horta, Debunking the idyllic view of natural processes: population dynamics and suffering in the wild, Telos, 2010, XVII/1, pp. 73-88.

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Biographical Note / Nota biograficzna

Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek - Uniwersytet Łódzki

Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek jest profesorem uczelni na Wydziale Filozofii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego. Jest hedonistyczną utylitarianistką. Autorka książki *Godny pożądania stan świadomości*. Razem z Peterem Singerem napisała *The Point of View of the Universe, Utilitarianism: A Very Short Introduction* i redagowała *Utilitarianism* J. S. Milla.

Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek - University of Łódź

Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Łódz, Poland. She is a hedonistic utilitarian. The author of *Godny pożądania stan świadomości*, a book on the notion of well-being and pleasure. Together with Peter Singer she has written *The Point of View of the Universe, Utilitarianism: A Very Short Introduction* and edited J. S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*.

Peter Singer - Princeton University, University of Melbourne

Peter Singer, profesor bioetyki na Princeton University, napisał i zredagował ponad 40 książek, m.in. *Animal Liberation, Practical Ethics, The Life You Can Save, The Most Good You Can D*o oraz *Why Vegan?* Jego teksty stanowiły inspirację dla ruchu praw zwierząt i efektywnego altruizmu. Jest założycielem fundacji "The Life You Can Save".

Peter Singer - Princeton University, University of Melbourne

Peter Singer, professor of bioethics at Princeton University, has written, co-authored, edited or co-edited more than 40 books, including *Animal Liberation, Practical Ethics, The Life You Can Save, The Most Good You Can Do* and, most recently *Why Vegan?* His writings have inspired both the animal rights movement and effective altruism, and he is the founder of the charity „The Life You Can Save".