

Roger Fjellstrom

**EQUALITY DOES NOT ENTAIL EQUALITY
ACROSS SPECIES***

ABSTRACT

I critique Peter Singer's view that equality across species is a natural extension of equality. Singer presents one minor and two major arguments. The first major argument is that equality across species is implied by the traditional principle of equality. The second is that it follows from a conception that is behind the principle of equality, namely the moral "point of view of the universe". The minor argument is a theory of the altruistic character and expanding circles of ethics.

Keywords: Animals, Equality, Ethics, Hare, Impartialism, Singer, Speciesism,
The Point of View of the Universe

* Umeå University, Dept. for Philosophy and Linguistics, SE-901 87 Umeå, Sweden. Fjellstrom's research interests are in environmental ethics, ethics of schooling, and ethical issues in connection with the Holocaust. He thanks David Littlewood, Shannon Moore, Ingmar Persson, Lars Samuelsson, an anonymous referee, Peter Wenz, and the editor of *Environmental Ethics* for comments.

*The life of a man is of no greater importance
to the Universe than that of an oyster.*

David Hume, "On Suicide"¹

Introduction

Long ago a philosopher, Diogenes of Sinope, who was known and referred to himself as "The Dog," announced that upon his death his body should be thrown to his brothers, the animals, so that they might have a good meal on him. His thought seems to have been that man is a kind of animal and that all animals should be considered equal (in so far as they live according to nature).² This position has been seen as an oddity. Now, however, a deep breath after Darwin and at the beginning of a new millennium, a number of philosophers think that mankind should abandon favoritism toward human beings: members of other (sentient) species are our moral equals and should be treated accordingly.

The natural way to view this is that a substantial change in ethical outlook has occurred, and that it has to be defended as such. But a stronger view, with considerable persuasive force, is often advanced, claiming equality across species to follow from the core of our tradition's conception of ethics. As for instance James Rachels puts it, the fundamental principle of equality "implies that the interests of nonhumans should receive the same consideration as the comparable interests of humans."³ Those who do not agree are consequently accused of being "speciesist," which would be on a par with being racist or sexist.

An influential exponent of that view is Peter Singer, renowned for his concern with equality across sentient species. In this essay, I limit myself to an examination of his stance. One minor and two major arguments used by Singer to support his claim can be distinguished. The minor argument points to the altruistic character of ethics and to the alleged historical fact

that the circles of altruism tend to expand. The function of this argument, it seems, would be to somehow support Singer's "escalator of reason," the core of which would be the traditional principle of equality. This principle, in its turn, is taken to be an application of the universal point of view that is essential to ethics. The first major argument, then, is that the principle of equality entails equality across species. The second major argument is that the universal point of view, notably in the version elaborated by Richard Hare, leads us to equality across species. I show that all these arguments fail.

Substantial Equality

According to Singer, the favoring of humans is ruled out by the principle of equality, a principle which he believes to be the only rational basis for ethics.⁴ As he puts it:

The argument for extending the principle of equality beyond our own species is simple, so simple that it amounts to no more than a clear understanding of the nature of the principle of equal consideration of interests.⁵

According to Singer the essence of the principle of equality (a minimal principle of it) is "that we give equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like interests of all those affected by our actions." He compares it to a set of scales, which weighs interests impartially:

True scales favor the side where the interest is stronger or where several interests combine to outweigh a smaller number of similar interests; but they take no account of whose interests they are weighing.⁶

The principle of equality is conceived of as substantial and not merely formal. To Singer this means that it is a basic ethical principle strong enough to exclude inegalitarian practices such as racism and sexism.⁷ But it does not dictate equal treatment of individuals, Singer says, since their

interests are not always equal. Still, the principle of equal consideration of interest “may be a defensible form of the principle that all humans are equal.”⁸

The traditional idea of equality has roughly the substance that all of humankind is in some way equal, notably that humans have equal worth, or equal fundamental rights to life, freedom and pursuit of their happiness, or else that they are equally entitled to consideration and respect. This is what Brian Barry has called fundamental equality, on which claims to political and social equality typically are based.⁹ Fundamental equality would mean equal concern for each individual and her/his set of (basic) ends, even if they differ. If such a principle of equality could be shown reasonably to apply to nonhumans as well as humans, it would be a serious blow to favoritism toward humans. Singer’s principle of equality, however, is both different and actually compatible with fundamental inequality in the more common sense between humans and nonhumans.

In the different cups of Singer’s true scales we find not individuals but interests, or satisfaction of interests. Interests we normally take to refer to quasi-permanent sets of dispositions, inclinations, desires, etc., such as are not always reflectively chosen, and it is not always possible to have these satisfied, at least not all at the same time. In the utilitarianism that Singer puts forward in *Practical Ethics*, *interests* has a different meaning. It refers to a set of wishes that has been singled out in a rational process. He defines it thus: “we make the plausible move of taking a person’s interests to be what, on balance and after reflection on all the relevant facts, a person prefers.”¹⁰

If “interests” in the principle of equality means such rational preferences, then no equality across species would be possible, since the cup with the interests of nonhumans would be empty. Nonhumans simply have no

preferences. If, on the other hand, it means interests in the common understanding, then equality across species is possible. The satisfaction of the interests of a rat might then weigh the same as the satisfaction of the interests of a human being; the detailed content of their interests would be irrelevant — only the number and strength of interests count.

On this latter understanding of the principle, beings with many interests — humans — would probably often be favored. To illustrate with an example used by Richard J. Arneson, suppose that we must choose between imposing a painful toothache on a human child and imposing a slightly greater toothache on a rat child. Would equal consideration of interests require us to give the toothache to the human child (if we disregard the distant consequences and consequences for others)? Arneson thinks that Singer's position, which says humans generally have more complex and rich interests than nonhumans, makes his principle allow for legitimate preference for humans when human and animal interests are in conflict.

Singer admits that when the whole set of interests is considered, then it is possible that the weighing will tilt the balance "in a different direction from where it would lie if we were to consider only the severity of the physical pain."¹¹ In Arneson's example Singer wants with regard to the human child to add, beyond the interest in not experiencing the pain of toothache, its "interest in being able to attend school" (I disregard his mention of the parent's interest). Singer position, then, opens up for inequality between humans and nonhumans in a common sense. As Arneson concludes, this "gambit by Singer might be regarded as reintroducing the elitism that he had seemed to want to disavow."¹² It does not, however, completely disqualify the ambition to impartialism, since the rat's interests also may be stronger than the person's, and rats can

outnumber persons in interests. But the inequality is strengthened in Singer's work since the interests in the cups are valued differently, and valued in a way that seems clearly to express a human point of view, as when Singer calls the highly future-oriented interests of people "the most central and significant preferences a being can have."¹³

Singer's principle of equality, then, does not yield fundamental equality across species. Even if the concept of interests were impartial with respect to species, the principle of equal consideration of interests (or other versions of the principle of equality) does not by itself imply equality across species. Logically, that principle may well quantify over human beings instead of, say, beings or sentient beings. Therefore Singer's inference has a tacit premise, viz. that the scope of the principle of equal consideration of interests includes nonhumans. This premise is exactly what should be proved. Does it perhaps follow from some formal aspect of equality?

Formal equality

Singer seems to believe that an inclusive scope, embracing nonhuman beings, is contained in one or other quality of the principle of equality that might be called formal, in the sense of articulating metaethical aspects of the principle. He presents equality across species as something that follows from a requirement of universality, or universalizability, which judgments and principles must fulfill in order to qualify as ethical.¹⁴ This normative metaethical requirement actually has at least three different dimensions, and only in the last might Singer's job be done.

One aspect is the semantic universality of terms. An ethical principle, according to this requirement, apart from logical and moral terms, should only have terms referring to universal properties, classes of beings, acts,

states or events — what Hare has called “universal properties.” Terms that refer to some particular being, act, state or event are forbidden.¹⁵ With only universal properties in the principle all ethical properties would be distributed without regard for who gets them.

The idea of semantic universality has played a role in the debate, since it has been taken to rule out what James Rachels has called “unqualified speciesism,” the view that “mere species alone is morally important.”¹⁶ It may well be that many biological criteria of species are unfit for ethical principles, but that would be for other reasons than lack of semantic universality. However, the property of being human seems to be universal enough to play a role in them, as much as the property of being sentient or being a person would. If this point is not supported in all understandings of the corresponding terms, it is not serious, since terms like these may be reconstructed to express universal properties — a possibility that Singer lately has recognized.¹⁷ Note, the requirement of semantic universality does not oblige us to shape general terms in a certain way. Hence, ethics favoring humans cannot be eliminated on the basis of this requirement alone.

Singer also seems to consider another metaethical requirement, viz., that ethical principles should have necessity or “law”-character. That is what universalization in Kant’s work is about, and Singer employs this idea as it is worked out by Hare. The basic requirement, one could say, is the modal universality of normative statements. It is not easy to define this requirement; let us just say that a proposed ethical principle is modally universal if it supports ethical contrary-to-fact-conditionals. Suppose a principle *E* states that it is a duty to secure the happiness of humans. If a certain fly in fact were a human person (as in the science fiction movie *The Fly*), then a modally universal *E* would support that the happiness of

this fly should be secured. It is obvious from this example that a requirement of modal universality does not exclude ethical principles favoring humans.

Yet another metaethical principle might be invoked when Singer says that in an ethical principle "an interest is an interest, whoever's interest it is."¹⁸ Suppose the principle *E* tells us to secure the happiness of humans, but there are other creatures that could be made happy as well, e.g., rats, cockroaches, and bacteria. If happiness is valuable when experienced by humans, why is it not so when experienced by the other beings? To ignore their happiness would seem to violate a requirement of universality of concern regarding instances of the ethically significant properties.

In order to assess this requirement we have to move to another dimension of metaethics. Here we touch the very heart of ethics, since it concerns our choice of normative point of view, from which we justify our principles and the requirements we put on them. Choice of normative point of view can therefore be said to constitute a higher (perhaps the ultimate) level of metaethics. Choices at that level are inescapably loaded with ethical import. Now, only one point of view would be ethical, according to Singer, viz., the universal point of view. He takes this to be the position of the tradition of ethics. Despite disagreements between proponents of different characterizations of the ethical, all "agree that an ethical principle cannot be justified in relation to any partial or sectional group."¹⁹ The universal point of view, Singer is convinced, would support equality across species.

The distinction between low and high metaethical levels has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the debate about impartiality.²⁰ Once this point is understood, it is evident that universality on the former level does not require or imply all inclusiveness on the latter level. But before I

examine Singer's conception of the universal point of view and its implications, it is of some interest to consider his minor argument for equality across species, since it actually undermines his major argument drawing on the idea of the universal point of view.

Weak and strong conceptions of ethics

Singer thinks that our concern for others is expanding in an ongoing historical process, bringing us to higher and higher levels of altruism, ultimately — through proper use of the “escalator of reason”²¹ — leading to a rejection of favoritism toward humans. This image of the expanding circles of ethics is a persuasive background for his recommendation that we as rational ethical beings should continue to widen the scope of our altruistic concerns. Every human society has some code of behavior for its members, and establishes some kind of altruistic behavior. Other social animals also have codes of behavior and exhibit forms of altruism. What we call ethics has evolved from patterns of altruistic behavior among the social animals, says Singer.²²

He plays here with two different conceptions of ethics. In one conception a normative or evaluative stance belongs to ethics when it is expressing a concern that transcends self-interests. As he writes, “the notion of ethics carries with it the idea of something bigger than the individual [...] I must address myself to a larger audience.”²³ For this weak conception of ethics it is sufficient that interests such as those of family, group or society are taken into account.²⁴ According to the other, strong conception of ethics a normative or evaluative stance is ethical only if it adopts a universal point of view, “a point of view that is maximally all-embracing,” as he puts it in *How Are We to Live?*²⁵ Essential to this is a principle of equality with a universal scope that goes across species.

To include animals in the ethical realm is in a weak conception of ethics perfectly consistent with favoring humans. If our altruism has the form of circles of concern extending beyond the individual's self-interests, the circles get wider in proportion to the decreasing degree of felt obligation, in its turn depending on the closeness we have to the objects of obligation. Roughly, the further out a circle is, the weaker is the felt obligation.²⁶ Singer seems to forget the latter part, because even if we were to continue the presumed historical process, it would only bring about a softening of the rule of the inner circles, not the replacement of them by the widest circle or the equalization of them. Singer, however, recommends that we identify with the point of view of the universe, and he urges people "to act only" in this sense²⁷ — that is, he advances the strong conception of ethics. But the theory of expanding circles actually offers a good reason for rejecting it as unrealistic. Further, it is not in agreement with the main tradition of ethics. Take the case of the great 19th-century ethicist Henry Sidgwick, to whose views on this issue Singer refers in several passages.²⁸ Singer's understanding of the point of view of the universe would place it within theology rather than ethics, according to Sidgwick. The primary subject of ethical investigation according to Sidgwick is actually "all that is included under the notion of what is ultimately good or desirable for man". The qualification 'for man' is important "to distinguish the subject-matter of Ethics from that Absolute Good or Good of the Universe, which may be stated as the subject-matter of Theology."²⁹

What Singer more precisely seems to appeal to (even though he rejected Sidgwick's intuitionism in an early paper) is Sidgwick's formulation of two rational but abstract intuitions that he believes we have. One of these is "that the good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view (if I may say so) of the Universe, than the good of any other; unless, that is, there are special grounds for believing that more good is

likely to be realised in the one case than in the other.”³⁰ This intuition is evidently assumed by Sidgwick to be valid both for theology and ethics. But utilitarianism, according to him, is the form into which the abstract intuitions tends to pass in the context of human action, and he points out that in order ”to make this transition logically complete, we require to interpret ‘Universal Good’ as ‘Universal Happiness.’”³¹ As a result of this transition, the utilitarian system comes to be characterized by ”impartial concern for human happiness.”³² The reason is that for Sidgwick, like almost all classical ethicists, ethical principles should apply the standpoint of “the party of humankind,” as Hume called it.³³

Are all equal unto God?

Even if Singer is mistaken about the support of the tradition for the theological version of the universal point of view, it is employed in contemporary ethical thought through, in particular, the work of Hare, on which Singer relies. Does equality across species follow from Hare’s version of universal point of view? I think not.

The concept of the universal point of view is at bottom the thought that some point of view is necessary for taking and validating normative positions. Values and norms are always constituted from a vantage point; they emerge and achieve their status only when the standpoint of a certain party is taken. This is Hume’s subjectivist conception of value. Singer, like Hare, seems to accept the Humean conception.³⁴ For Hume, it is our human sympathy that constitutes ethical values and norms. It is for us, and us only, that a human life has value. To the universe, strictly speaking, nothing has value — unless it is a reacting something, a God, which is a supposition that Hume rejects. Does Singer presuppose God to be at the center of the point of view of the universe? He avoids explicit appeal to

God, but invokes indirectly the archangel at the core of Hare's ethical methodology.³⁵

Hare sketched an epistemology of ethics based on Hume's subjectivist ontology, taking the generalized reactions of human sympathy under ideal conditions to be the measure of ethical validity. Central to it is a theory that we have a natural tendency to imagine ourselves in the situation of others, which makes us react to their situation as if we were in it. What we as human beings like and dislike for ourselves we also like and dislike in the shoes of the other. In this sense, it is our self-interests that we project onto others. He assumes that we react and choose as if we actually were the others. The method is that the ethical judge finds a judgment that he or she is prepared to make about a particular conflict-situation and also is prepared to make about all other possible situations that are the same in all relevant, universal respects. Since these will include situations where the judge is in the positions of all the other parties in the particular situation, no judgment will be acceptable to him or her that does not make the best, everything taken into consideration, for all the parties.³⁶

There are two opposite ways to understand Hare's method. The first interpretation, upheld by Hare and apparently appealed to by Singer, indeed makes theology of ethics. The judge is here an ideal, nonhuman being, with superhuman powers of thought, superhuman knowledge and no human weaknesses, lacking all partiality to self, friends and relations — it is an "archangel." The second interpretation takes the judge to be a somewhat idealized human being. There are several fatal problems with the first view. To begin with, the archangel construct is inconsistent with the metaethical setting. Hare stipulates that an archangel lacks partiality to self, but then her/his "I" would lack the prescriptivity that Hare considers essential in his method. This prescriptivity is a reflection in language of

the self-interested concerns that, according to Hare, makes a judge react with approval or disapproval to different actual and imagined situations of others as if they were her/his own.³⁷ But an archangel that lacks self-interests would clearly not have any reactions of approval or disapproval, and hence no preferences, in regard to any situation of any being! Unless Hare's archangel is to be a placid watcher of events, unable to issue directives and to validate ethical principles, he or she has to have self-interests and in a sense to be partial to him or herself. But wouldn't then the principles he or she justifies be so only in relation to the party of archangels, a partial or sectional group like that of humans?

Perhaps proponents of the theory could admit archangels to be self-interested, but counter by saying that the "I" of an archangel would embrace all beings. Yes, but then we cannot take for granted that human interests would be the most important interests a being can have, or that human life has a value superior to that of, say, an oyster (as both Singer and Hare think). To take it for granted that human interests would be most important would be to presuppose that archangels are inclined to favor humans – perhaps because they are similar to them and they are the only earthly creatures made in the image of God. But wouldn't it also be possible that archangels instead regard us as fallen angels, the offspring of Satan, deserving hell?

Assuming one or the other position in this question, however, is a matter of religious belief. We could neither grasp nor have any well-corroborated hypothesis about the precepts of godlike creatures. In the absence of good reasons the fair thing would probably be to adopt a suggestion made by David DeGrazia,³⁸ viz., to give the benefit of the doubt to everything created and regard each being, no matter what properties they have, as equal in value to all others. But it is quite certain that humans in general

and ethicists adopting the human point of view in particular would not accept this (at least not in a sense of “equal in value” with strong implications for how they ought to act).

To take the proper ethical judge to be an archangel poses another problem as well. According to Hare, the judgments that the archangel would end up with are universalized prescriptions — but prescriptions for whom? On Hare’s account of universalized prescriptions, what I judge right is what I prescribe for myself in the situation in question and which also I am prepared to prescribe for everyone else in any situation identical with it in all relevant universal characteristics.³⁹ But supposing the judging “I” to be an archangel would make the prescriptions proper for archangels only, since only they have the angelic characteristics (for instance, to identify with all beings equally) typical of the situations they would be in. As a result, humans would not have to comply with their prescriptions — plausible enough, since the parts of a collective being cannot reasonably have the same duties as those of the embracing unit.

Since Hare’s method is tailored to hum(e)an psychology, it is better suited to the second interpretation of it, making the proper ethical judge to be a human being. It is in this form that both Hare and Singer actually employ the method, doing “critical-level” reasoning. The judge is a human being with natural self-interests, but also willing to act on a principle of equality. Because this method builds on what one wants for oneself, and because it depends on our ability to understand and emotionally relate to different forms of nonhuman life, it inescapably makes for an ethical method restricted by human psychology.⁴⁰ This version of Hare’s method could be said to exemplify the human point of view, favoring humans. Hare on the whole avoids the issue, but he distinguishes between higher

and lower quality of life, tending to attribute the former to humans. The life of oysters, he is convinced, has no quality at all.⁴¹

Singer, too, thinks that human life is worth more than other forms of life, and probably would regard the life of oysters to be worthless.⁴² His application of the “impartial standpoint” for evaluating lives is illustrative of this view. He imagines his “I” to be successively transformed into individuals of different species, to come out of it with exact memories of the different lives, and to be obliged to choose between optimal versions of the lives of different species. After the transformation the “I” would decide “between the value of the life of a horse (to the horse) and the value of the life of a human (to the human).” Singer thinks he would find a principle to it:

In general it does seem that the more highly developed the conscious life of the being, the greater the degree of self-awareness and rationality and the broader the range of possible experiences, the more one would prefer that kind of life, if one were choosing between it and a being at a lower level of awareness.⁴³

Referring to a thought of John Stuart Mill, Singer spells out the implications of this view: “it is not easy to embrace the preference for the life of a human over that of a nonhuman, without at the same time endorsing a preference for the life of a normal human being over that of another human at a similar intellectual level to that of the nonhuman in the first comparison.”

I grant that a human judge probably would prefer an optimal human life, but then a human point of view is already adopted. (It could be said, however, that Singer’s evaluative principle is more contemporary Western than universally human.) This bias is avoided only if the judge would be stripped of initial species characteristics, which however makes it far from

certain that human life would be the highest ranked. But is a being stripped of species characteristics at all imaginable?

The second-level way out and other escapes

Hare and Singer do not let the (theological) universal point of view upset us too much, after all. Though strictly impartial at the ultimate, critical level, their method is taken to accord ethical validity to partial norms at the lower and intuitive level of common life.⁴⁴ Hare mentions a certain degree of self-love and prudent business investments, and roles and vocational norms in the professional sense.⁴⁵ But to take these partialities to be validated at the critical level is reasonable only if we have good grounds to believe that the satisfaction of the human interests in question would be right at that level — which simply is impossible to know with an archangel judge, and only too easy to know with a human judge. Hare ends by lifting up the human individual and his or her surrounding to the role of the practical ethical judge.⁴⁶

Singer also backs away from his recommendation that we shall act only on principles that adopt the point of view of the universe. Those who do not broaden their concerns or go all the way to adopt this point of view are not irrational, nor are they in error, he says in *Practical Ethics*.⁴⁷ Does he mean that ethics in the weak sense, compatible with a favoring of humans, is sufficient for determining right and wrong? In this work he confesses that he cannot refute the arguments of Henry Sidgwick or Thomas Nagel, leading to the conclusion that self-interests must somehow be included in the ethical.⁴⁸ In another work, *Rethinking Life and Death*, published after the second edition of *Practical Ethics*, Singer concedes that a viable ethic perhaps "must allow us to show a moderate degree of partiality for ourselves, our family and our friends."⁴⁹ In an essay Singer (writing

together with Leslie Cannold and Helga Kuhse) says that the two-level, would-be impartial consequentialism of Hare still holds, but that it ... is, admittedly, a muted impartialism. It does not require us to be impartialist in our everyday life. For that reason it cannot be strictly said to require us to save Fénelon rather than our mother or father.⁵⁰

Where apart from everyday life could impartialism be practiced? The muted impartialism is rather the silence of strict impartialism. Note, however, that in no passage conceding an ethical role for partiality does Singer mention partiality to humans, even though this would seem to be as natural as partiality to ego, family and friends.⁵¹ Why not? After all, the highly future-oriented interests of (human) persons are, according to Singer's supposedly impartial judgment, the most central and significant preferences a being can have.

In the final chapter of *Practical Ethics* — and also in *How Are We to Live?* — Singer says that the ultimate justification for choosing ethics in the strong sense is that it offers a meaning and purpose in life that one does not grow out of.⁵² He would then ground the ethical in the strong sense in something selfish, viz., the prospect of the individual having a lasting meaningful life, which would be nonethical even in the weak sense of ethics. Responding to this kind of criticism Singer says that all he meant was to give a theory of ethical motivation.⁵³ Hence, his position would only be in descriptive ethics. Why, then, his normative exhortations?

Singer makes a final retreat in the same text, when clarifying what he meant by saying that a choice that does not apply the point of view of the universe need not be irrational or wrong. As it turns out, ethical reasons do not for Singer have a trait often considered to be essential to ethicists (according to Hare, for instance), viz. to override other reasons for

action.⁵⁴ There is no principle telling us which reason overrides, he says, and it is the business of the individual to decide upon it. He writes:

Finally, my account of these issues explains why Scheffler and others have not been able to find a principled way of allowing the personal point of view to outweigh impartial considerations. If what we are talking about is a clash of different kinds of reasons for action, independently of morality, then the weight that the different kinds of reasons have for any individual will vary with their long-term preferences, and it would be a mistake to expect there to be any general standard for balancing impartial and partial concerns.⁵⁵

This is an interesting position, and one with which I tend to agree, but it collides with Singer's exhortation of the strong conception of ethics and the principle of equality as the only rational basis for ethics. What Singer seems to reject here is the very idea of a rational, intersubjectively valid normative ethics and metaethics, rejecting in particular the high level metaethical requirement of a (theological) universal point of view, which was found to be at the heart of his claim that equality entails equality across species. His universal prescription of equality across sentient species then collapses, and with it probably also the very ambition to ground equality across species in principles of traditional ethics.

/Environmental Ethics 24 (Winter), 2002: 339-352

NOTES

¹ David Hume, "On Suicide", *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, vol. 4 (London and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898), p. 410.

² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, translated by R.D. Hicks (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1931), vol. 2, bk. 6. For an interpretation of Diogenes' view of men and animals, see for instance Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, "Religion and the Early Cynics," in R. B. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, ed., *The Cynics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

³ James Rachels, *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), p. 182.

⁴ Peter Singer, *The Expanding Circle* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983 — first published in 1981), p. 109.

⁵ *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993, 2nd edition — 1st edition in 1979; all references are to the 2nd edition), p. 56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷ See Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: New York Review/Random House, 1st edition), p. 5, and *Practical Ethics*, pp. 21ff.

⁸ *Practical Ethics*, pp. 23f.

⁹ Brian Barry, "Equality" in Lawrence C. Becker, *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (Chicago and London: St. James Press, 1992).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94. I ignore here Singer's attempt in the first edition of *Practical Ethics* to prescribe different versions of preference utilitarianism for persons and nonpersons, since in the second edition he regards this as unsatisfactory, and opts for some preference version applying to all beings. I also ignore a couple of hints that preference utilitarianism is for persons and hedonistic utilitarianism is for nonpersons.

¹¹ Peter Singer, "A Response" in D. Jamieson, ed., *Singer and His Critics* (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publ., 1999), pp. 294.

¹² Richard J. Arneson, "What, if Anything, Renders All Humans Morally Equal?" in Jamieson, *ibid.*, p. 105.

¹³ *Practical Ethics*, p. 95.

¹⁴ See in particular Singer, "A Response" in Jamieson, *Singer and His Critics*, p. 298.

¹⁵ Singer, *Practical Ethics*, p. 319, and "A Response," in Jamieson, *ibid.*, p. 298.

¹⁶ James Rachels, *Created from Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), p. 182. For an analysis of the notion of speciesism, see Roger Fjellstrom, "Specifying Speciesism", *Environmental Values* 11, no. 1 (2002): 63-74. For a discussion of speciesism and Singer, see Roger Fjellstrom, "Is Singer's Ethics Speciesist?" (forthcoming in *Environmental Values* 12, no. 1, 2003).

¹⁷ In an essay he shows how a principle, stating that "I am morally entitled to help my mother commit suicide", on semantic grounds can be made universal by exchanging the nonuniversal property "being my mother" for the universal property "being the mother of the person helping one to commit suicide." See Peter Singer, Leslie Cannold, Helga Kuhse, and Lori Gruen, "What is the Justice-Care Debate Really About?", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 20 (1996): 357-377.

¹⁸ Singer, *Practical Ethics*, p. 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁰ Lori Gruen, for instance, in her discussion of Singer's views on impartiality, confuses the lower level requirement on the scope of normative principles (having to do with the content of their terms) and the ultimate level requirement on the choice of point of view. See her essay "Must Utilitarians be Impartial?" in Jamieson, *ibid.*, p. 130.

²¹ Peter Singer, *How Are We to Live?* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997 — first published in 1993), p. 268.

²² Singer, *The Expanding Circle*, p. 27 and p. 90.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁴ See Singer, *How Are We to Live?*, as when he says that in "our life with our family and kin, and with our lovers, friends, partners and colleagues, very often self-interest and ethics will point in the same direction" (p. 180), and that to "live ethically is to think about things beyond one's own interests" (p. 205). See also *Practical Ethics*, p. 333.

²⁵ Singer, *How Are We to Live?*, p. 263.

²⁶ In Singer, *The Expanding Circle*, p. 29, Singer brings up the idea from Henry Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics*, where Sidgwick describes a principle regulating the duty of benevolence which is based on biological and culturally determined emotional closeness.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

²⁸ See, for instance, Singer, *Practical Ethics*, p. 334, and *How Are We to Live?*, p. 263.

²⁹ Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1993 — a reprint of the 1886 edition), p. 2.

³⁰ *The Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publ. Comp., 1981 — a reprint of the 1907 edition), p. 382.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 484.

³³ David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1966 — reprinted from the edition of 1777), p. 114.

³⁴ See Singer, *How Are We to Live?*, p. 275. See also Singer, *Practical Ethics*, p. 7, where Singer declares an agreement with John Mackie, the forceful defender of Hume's views.

³⁵ See for instance *Practical Ethics*, p. 12, p. 92, and p. 326. In an essay written with Leslie Cannold and Helga Kuhse, "William Godwin and the Defense of Impartialist Ethics", *Utilitas* Vol. 7, No. 1 (1995): 67-86, Singer says that "the perspective of the critically thinking 'impartial spectator' [is] of an angelic nature" (p. 85).

³⁶ See, for instance, Richard M. Hare, *Moral Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 42.

³⁷ Hare writes: "in identifying myself with some person either actually or hypothetically, I identify with his prescriptions [...] In so far as I think it will be myself, I now have in anticipation the same aversion as I think he will have" (*ibid.*, pp. 96f) and "by calling some person 'I,' I express at least a considerably greater concern for the satisfaction of his preferences than for those of people whom I do not so designate" (*ibid.*, p. 98). If Hare is right in this, then the prospect for impartiality in ethics would seem to vanish, since moral questions are typically phrased as "What shall I do?" Hare's theory of the prescriptive "I" in effect supplies an answer to William Godwin's question, "What magic is there in the pronoun 'my' to overturn the decisions of everlasting [i.e., impartial, RF] truth?" (quoted from Singer, Cannold and Kuhse, "What is the Justice-Care Debate *Really* About?", p. 69).

³⁸ David DeGrazia, *Taking Animals Seriously* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 50f.

³⁹ "Moral judgments are, I claim, universalizable in only one sense, namely that they entail identical judgements about all cases identical in their universal properties", Hare writes (*ibid.*, p. 108).

⁴⁰ This is stressed by Richard Holton and Lae Langton in their essay "Empathy and Animal Ethics" in Jamieson, *Singer and His Critics*.

⁴¹ Hare, "Why I Am only a Demi-vegetarian" in Jamieson, *Singer and His Critics*, p. 243.

⁴² Singer, *Practical Ethics*, pp. 85-95.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴⁴ Hare writes: "prima facie principles requiring partiality have in some cases a high acceptance-utility even when judged from an impartial standpoint" (*Moral Thinking*, p. 44).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁴⁶ "It may be that archangels give away all their goods; and obviously some saints do. But the question each person has to ask himself is what prima facie principles are appropriate for *him*; and this may depend on his capacities. It also depends partly on his situation, because there is a limit to which one person's prima facie principles can diverge from other people's without causing serious and damaging misunderstandings" (*ibid.*, p. 199).

⁴⁷ Singer, *Practical Ethics*, p. 334.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 321 and 334.

⁴⁹ Peter Singer, *Rethinking Life & Death* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), p. 196.

⁵⁰ Peter Singer, Leslie Cannold and Helga Kushe, "What is the Justice-Care Debate *Really* About?" p. 85.

⁵¹ In *The Methods of Ethics* Sidgwick classifies the duties affirmed by common sense, the first duties being "duties arising out of comparatively permanent relationships not voluntarily chosen, such as Kindred and in the most cases Citizenship and Neighbourhood" (p. 248).

⁵² Singer, *Practical Ethics*, p. 334.

⁵³ Singer, "A Response" in Jamieson, *Singer and His Critics*, p. 305.

⁵⁴ He explicitly denies Nagel's view "that if morality did demand that we give so much to famine relief, then there must be overriding reason to do so" (*ibid.*, p. 308).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 309.