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Ethics and the Beast: A Speciesist Argument for Animal Liberation

Tzachi Zamir

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Many people think that animal liberation would require a fundamental transformation of basic beliefs. We would have to give up "speciesism" and start viewing animals as our equals, with rights and moral status. And we would have to apply these beliefs in an all-or-nothing way. But in *Ethics and the Beast*, Tzachi Zamir makes the radical argument that animal liberation doesn't require such radical arguments--and that liberation could be accomplished in a flexible and pragmatic way. By making a case for liberation that is based primarily on common moral intuitions and beliefs, and that therefore could attract wide understanding and support, Zamir attempts to change the terms of the liberation debate.

Without defending it, *Ethics and the Beast* claims that speciesism is fully compatible with liberation. Even if we believe that we should favor humans when there is a pressing human need at stake, Zamir argues, that does not mean that we should allow marginal human interests to trump the life-or-death interests of animals. As minimalist as it sounds, this position generates a robust liberation program, including commitments not to eat animals, subject them to factory farming, or use them in medical research. Zamir also applies his arguments to some questions that tend to be overlooked in the liberation debate, such as whether using animals can be distinguished from exploiting them, whether liberationists should be moral vegetarians or vegans, and whether using animals for therapeutic purposes is morally blameless.

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