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## SOME PHILOSOPHERS ON ANIMAL RIGHTS

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"Non-human members of our communities have claims upon us, some of which are defended by law, and some merely by moral opinion. Those who beat dogs to death do something that society does and justly may, condemn without waiting to see whether the dog has abstract, metaphysical rights."

- **Stephen Clark** - Prof. of Philosophy, University of Liverpool - U.K. - Author of 'Moral Status of Animals and The Nature of the Beast'.

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"The kind of equality which animal liberationists wish to extend to animals, is a special kind - equal consideration of interests. And the basic right that animals should have is the right to equal consideration.

This sounds like a difficult idea, but it is really quite simple. It means that if an animal feels pain, the pain matters as much as it does when a human feels pain - if the pains are just as severe. Pain is pain, whatever the species of the being experiencing it.

Once we understand this, we may take a different view of the belief that all humans are somehow infinitely more valuable than any animal. We may see this belief for what it is; a prejudice. Such prejudices are not unusual - Racists have a similar prejudice in favour of their own race, and sexists have the same type of prejudice in favour of their own sex. Hence the term 'speciesism' has been coined to refer to the prejudice many humans have in favour of their own species.

Speciesism is logically parallel to racism and sexism. Speciesists, racists and sexists all say: the boundary of my own group is also the boundary of my concern. Never mind what you are like, if you are a member of my group, you are superior to all those who are not members of my group. The speciesist favours a larger group than the racist, and so has a larger circle of concern; but all of these prejudices are equally wrong. They all use an arbitrary and morally irrelevant fact - membership of a race, sex or species - as if it were morally crucial. If we reject racism and/or sexism we must, unless we are to be inconsistent or make arbitrary distinctions, also reject speciesism."

- **Peter Singer** - Prof. of Bioethics - University of Monash, Victoria, Australia.  
Author of 'Animal Liberation' and 'In Defence of Animals'.

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"Just as the worth of one human being is not to be measured by how useful that person is in advancing the interests of others, so the worth of individual animals is not to be measured in terms of their utility for us."

- **Tom Regan** - Prof. of Philosophy - State University of North Carolina.  
Author of "The Case for Animal Rights".

'..... animals too have interests growing out of the nature which are as central to them as human interests are to us. And if there are no morally relevant differences between humans and animals, animal interests too should be protected by rights, and the legal status of animals must be elevated from that of chattel.'

**Bernard Rollins** - Prof. of Philosophy - Colorado State University, USA,  
Author of 'Animal Rights & Human Morality'.

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"The concept of animal rights is founded theologically on the belief that God has a right to have his creatures treated with respect. Animals have - what I call - theos-rights (literally God-rights) because God loves and values them. All animals have an irreducible worth because God created them. When we speak of animal rights we do no more and no less than acknowledge the Creator's rights. We do well to remember that the creation around us is not 'our' world but God's world. It is not our plaything or our pleasure garden. Human beings own nothing in creation, not even our own life which like all life is a gift and must be returned. Animals do not belong to us but to God. They are subjects of God's creative love and must therefore be objects of value for human beings. Human beings have been given power over creation not to despoil what God has made but to serve it and protect it. We have nothing less than a sacred commission to serve the earth, to honour life and love our fellow creatures. To live a life without any sensitivity or compassion for God's creatures is to lead a deeply impoverished spiritual life."

**Andrew Linzey** - Chaplain & Director of Studies, Centre for the Study of Theology, University of Essex, U.K. Author of 'Animal Rights'  
Courtesy - Animal - Human Relationships: Some Philosophers Views - RSPCA.

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"Animals as part of God's creation have rights which must be respected".  
**Archbishop Donald Coggan.**

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## **FIDEL'S GUARDIAN**

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Shortly, the door of the house next to Vallejo's was opened, and (Fidel) Castro strolled out onto the porch alone, a long tan cigar in one hand and a gold snaptop lighter in the other. He sniffed the air and peered contemplatively at the uncertain sky. As he was about to light his cigar, a large charcoal-gray dog streaked out of the house behind him and hurtled against his calves with such force that Castro jackknifed backward, dropping the lighter, and almost fell flat. The dog, a young German shepherd, bounded around the lawn in high spirits, then ran back to Castro's side, panting and frisking its tail. Fidel, recovering from his surprise, laughed and patted its flank, talking to it affectionately.

I got out of the car. Castro saw me, picked up his lighter, and came down the steps. As we shook hands, we were knocked apart by the dog, which then leapt onto its hind legs and put its forepaws on the Jefe's shoulders, moaning with excitement. The dog minuetted with Castro, who staggered backward, laughing and fighting it off as it exuberantly tried to lick his beard.

"His name is Guardian," Fidel shouted proudly, ducking as the dog leapt again. "He is not very well trained yet! I got him as a puppy and raised him myself. I think he will make a good watchdog, no? Heel, Guardian! he ordered sharply. The dog paid no attention "Heel! Heel!" But Guardian only redoubled his efforts to kiss him. "Come," Castro said finally to me, giving up. "i must not stand outside here. It is too exposed. Let's get into the car"

We got into the back seat of Fidel's automobile - the three of us. The dog occupied half the seat, hulking and shifting nervously, leaving the Premier and me jammed together. Our thighs and shoulders were locked so tightly that as we talked we were forced to look straight ahead, unable to turn.

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