TOURISM RECREATION RESEARCH VOL. 37(3), 2012: 239–249

Tourism and Animal Ethics Series - II

Tourism, Animals and Utilitarianism

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Abstract: Although tourism researchers have recently started to examine moral issues tied to the use of animals in tourism, there is much work that needs to be done. It is particularly important to introduce animal ethics theories into the tourism lexicon because of the vast number of ways the tourism industry uses animals for commercial and personal benefit. Such theories provide a basis from which to examine these uses from different vantage points. This paper employs utilitarian theory, in particular Peter Singer's views, in an attempt to more clearly understand the consequences of our use of animals in tourism. Emphasis is placed on broadly mapping the terrain of utilitarianism, identifying its central properties, examining some of the main criticisms of the theory, and exploring how utilitarian thinking can help in our consideration of the moral acceptability of certain tourism practices, especially zoos.

Keywords: animal ethics; utilitarianism; speciesism; tourism; zoos.

Introduction

Academic work on the interactions between people and animals in tourism has benefited from an expanding base of literature on ecotourism and wildlife tourism. These studies examine a broad range of different issues that tend to focus on benefits to humans and impacts on animals (Green and Giese 2004). What is missing from these studies, and from tourism more generally, are studies investigating the deeper moral undercurrents of these interactions (see for example Fennell and Nowaczek 2010). When it comes to *moral* issues tied to the use of animals in tourism, scholars in the tourism academy have had, traditionally, very little to say.

Tourism research that has investigated animal issues of a moral nature have elected to focus more on animal welfare and animal rights, with very few studies undertaken in a comprehensive manner. Efforts in the area of animal welfare include Hall and Brown (2006), Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001), Hughes (2001), Mason (2000), and Higham and Lusseau (2007). Efforts in the area of animal rights, but only in a cursory manner, include Hughes (1995), Robson and Robson (1996), Notzke (1999), Orams (2002), Boyne et al. (2003), Herrera and Hoagland (2006), Novelli et al. (2006), and Wearing and Jobberns (2011). Hughes (2001), Lovelock (2008) and Wearing et al. (2011) examined animal rights more broadly, with Fennell (2012b) employing animal rights as the central focus of his work.

Much less emphasis has been placed on utilitarianism in tourism, despite the fact that it is one of the most prominent of the animal ethics theories. Dobson (2011) used utilitarianism to examine moral issues tied to marine wildlife tourism. He concludes by suggesting that tourism agents need to be more effective at balancing the costs and benefits of all (both humans and animals) affected by the tourism industry. Fennell and Sheppard (2011) used utilitarian theory as a lens to deconstruct the sled dog cull after the 2010 Vancouver winter Olympics. These authors conclude that the killing of dogs was morally wrong because: (i) the act achieved more harm than good; ii) dogs showed signs of fear and distress demonstrating self-consciousness; and (iii) the killing of dogs did not result in the creation of new dogs (the replaceability argument). These conclusions touch briefly on many of the key features of utilitarian theory, which form the basis of the present review.

It is also the case that the use of animal ethics theory in tourism has generated mixed messages, perhaps in light of the infancy of this emerging sub-field. There is confusion over the link between theory and the philosophers who advocate these positions. For example, Shani and Pizam (2008) make reference to Peter Singer as a follower 'of the animal rights' position' (p. 685), and back this up in a subsequent publication (Shani and Pizam 2010). Singer is, in fact, a utilitarian scholar, and he makes this clear in a publication dated shortly after his primary work, *Animal Liberation* (1975). Singer (1978) writes:

> *Why is it surprising that I have little to say about the nature of rights? It would only be surprising to one who assumes that my case for animal liberation is based upon rights and, in particular, upon the idea of extending rights to animals. But this is not my position at all. I have little to say about rights because rights are not important to my argument…My basic moral position…is utilitarian (p. 122).*

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In an effort to more firmly establish animal ethics theory in the tourism lexicon, the purpose of this work is to provide a comprehensive statement on utilitarianism as it applies to animal ethics. Emphasis is placed on broadly mapping the terrain of utilitarianism, identifying its central properties, examining some of the main criticisms of the theory, and exploring how utilitarianism is applicable in a tourism context.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is a teleological or ends-based theory that focuses on optimum outcomes, ends or consequences of an action. An act is deemed good if it produces or intends to produce at least as great a balance of good over bad as other alternative acts (Frankena 1963). An act is wrong if it tends to do otherwise. In the realm of animal ethics, utilitarianism is often used in a reductionist or atomistic sense as good decisions are those which are specific to the individual, and not necessarily to the group.

Classical Utilitarianism

The historical figure most often linked to classical or hedonistic utilitarianism is Jeremy Bentham (1781), who formulated a calculus based on two sovereign masters: pleasure and pain. Actions leading to the greatest good or pleasure for the greatest number (the principle of utility) are said to be the best (Fennell 2006; Rollin 2005). Equality is important in decision-making, with the rule that we should 'sum up the interests of all the parties affected by all…possible actions and choose the action that results in the greatest net satisfaction of interests' (p. 14). In other words, we should 'imagine which actions I would choose if I had to live the lives of all those affected by me' (Matheny 2006: 14).

Methany (2006) identifies four main properties of utilitarianism. It is *universal* in the sense that all interests, regardless of gender, nationality and class, should be taken into account. It is *welfarist* because it defines what is ethically good on the basis of people's interests, such as happiness or pleasure (as above). It is *consequentialist* because it evaluates good and bad on the basis of outcomes or how our actions have satisfied these interests in the end. It also *aggregative* in how it sums up the interests of all affected by any action.

Important in the context of this work and animal ethics more generally is the belief that the type of utility to be maximized is not restricted to individuals on the basis of their superior status. This means that 'Any being with a welfare, be he or she [sic] Albert Einstein, Sojourner Truth, Hulk Hogan, Baby Jane Doe, Lassie, or Chicken Little, counts morally' (Pluhar 1990: 148). As moral agents with superior powers of reason and intellect, humans do not have open season to dominate other forms of life. This issue of superiority has surfaced in the replaceability argument, where classical utilitarians might argue that it is morally acceptable to raise, use and kill animals if:

a) the animal would not otherwise have existed;

b) the animal had a pleasurable life;

c) the death of the animal causes it no pain, fear or other disutility;

d) those close to the animal (e.g., mothers, mates) are not allowed to suffer as a result of its use and killing; and

e) the animal is replaced at death by another animal for whom conditions (a)-(e) hold (Pluhar 1990: 150).

Advocates of the replaceability argument suggest that it is morally acceptable to use animals for experimentation, agriculture, the fur industry, and recreation (zoos and game hunting ranches). Meat eaters have used this argument to justify their actions, by arguing that the death of one animal for human consumption leads to the creation of other animals, i.e., the animal is replaced through animal farming and factory processes.

Preference Utilitarianism

Theorists have questioned the extent to which pleasure and pain are the only two sovereign masters guiding human behaviour. If pleasure and the avoidance of pain are the only desirable ends to which we seek, we are no different than animals. Although a classical utilitarian in the same vein as Bentham, J.S. Mill (1781) focused on the quality of pleasures and pains instead of the quantity of these. Mill argued that humans are capable of other types of pleasures that animals are not, such that the lack of these in the life of a human would lead to an unhappy existence. Mill described lower order pleasures (e.g., sex), as well as higher order pleasure, (e.g., the opera), with the suggestion that the latter would lead us to a more intrinsically valuable life (Hauskeller 2011).

Hauskeller (2011) identified three issues at hand that are problematic in Mill's reasoning. The first concerns the notion that a higher order pleasure must be more important than a lower order pleasure. Sex, drugs and rock' n' roll may be more pleasurable to someone over a life spent at the opera. That is for the individual to decide. The second concerns how one pleasure is to be judged as more valuable over another. Mill argued for a type of preference utilitarianism constructed on the basis of expert judges. In stating a preference, the expert judge would not simply declare that one thing is better than another, but rather would also act according to his or her choice. The third issue is the problem

of who qualifies as an 'expert' judge, and how they themselves might determine higher and lower order pleasures.

The leading proponent of the utilitarian perspective as it applies to animal ethics is Peter Singer, whose landmark book, *Animal Liberation*, provided the groundwork for an emerging sensitivity towards the interests of animals (Singer 1975/2009). The bulk of Singer's book examines animals as experimental subjects and the evil of factory farms. But he also observes that activities like hunting, the capture and presentation of animals for human entertainment, the circus, and rodeos, are all practices that fail to take into consideration animal interests.

In reference to experimentation, Singer illustrates that there are several million animals used annually as subjects in commercial labs and universities. Scientists use animals to test new shampoos, floor waxes, cosmetics, food colouring, perfumes, and the list goes on. The reality is that these animals are viewed in the same way as other laboratory tools like microscopes, chairs, tables—as instruments of the trade—without regard whatsoever to the fact that they are 'living, suffering creatures' (Singer 2009: 69). What he is at odds with is the routine use of animals unnecessarily. For example, forcing thousands of animals to inhale cigarette smoke so they get cancer is problematic on two accounts. First, it is difficult to generalise across the species boundary in understanding how smoking harms humans; we should just use human subjects instead. Second, we could eliminate the disease simply by discontinuing the use of tobacco (see LaFollette and Shanks 1995, who argue that the benefits of using animals as experimental subjects are extremely minor).

In the case of factory farming, Singer illustrates that most urban folk have direct contact with animals, apart from companions, only at mealtime. There is little knowledge of how these animals are reared and the conditions in which they live, which are said to be miserable from birth to slaughter. It is impossible to produce such a magnitude of meat, eggs, and dairy without inflicting a massive amount of suffering on such a large scale. For example, stress from over-crowding of broiler chickens contributes to certain vices like pecking at the feathers of others, which has prompted farmers to debeak the birds causing extreme pain. The same holds for pigs, whom have their tails docked because the conditions in which they live encourage inter-personal conflict and various stereotypic behaviours. Rearing animals specifically for these purposes, Singer adds, is no benefit to them, but instead a significant harm.

Singer (2009) argues that there are other things in life besides the calculation of pain and pleasure that are intrinsically valuable. Some people are willing to forego times of happiness or pleasure if in doing so this contributes to the satisfaction of other preferences. Training to be a top 400m runner, for example, involves a great deal of pain and sacrifice that is at odds with a life in search of comfort and pleasure. We might simply choose to spend our free time pursuing more sedentary activities that are less painful. But training might be said to fulfil other important preferences in the life of the athlete, including the achievement of top fitness, associating with a group of friends that hold similar values, and so on. For Singer, 'The right act is the one that will, in the long run, satisfy more preferences than it will thwart, when we weigh the preferences according to their importance for the person holding them' (Singer 2003: 527). Singer is an act utilitarian, which is an approach that weighs moral acceptability on the basis of how much pain or pleasure an act will result in (Bovenkerk et al. 2003). Rule utilitarianism, by contrast, is an approach where good ends are the result of following established rules (Fennell 2006).

Utilitarianism is thus a theory of choice about what is in the best interest of the being in question. Referring back to the replaceability argument, above, preference utilitarians argue that, 'we would not be maximizing the fulfillment of preferences by killing and replacing the self-conscious. Instead, we would be frustrating the preference to continue living…This would be the case even if the individual dies in a state of blissful ignorance about our actions' (Pluhar 1990: 156).

There are three important and related concepts that are central to Singer's overall thesis, including equal consideration of interests, speciesism, and pain and suffering. Each will be touched on briefly, below.

Equal Consideration of Interests, Speciesism, and Pain and Suffering

Singer's main theoretical premise is equality, which follows from the early pioneers of utilitarianism. Bentham, for example, argued for a system of morality based on 'Each to count for one and none for more than one'. This idea suggests that any assessment of the goodness or badness of an act should only take place in consideration of the interests of all of those affected by the action, and weighing these interests equally. This applies both to humans and animals on the basis of the capacity to suffer. The argument Singer defends is that the interests that non-human animals have in not suffering outweigh the many marginal interests (of their use) for human benefit. This means that those beings (animal or human) that suffer more should be accorded a higher level of concern than those suffering less:

> *If a being suffers there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. No matter what the nature of the being, the principle of equality requires that its suffering be counted equally with the like suffering – insofar as rough comparisons can be made – of any other being. If a being is not capable of suffering, or of experiencing enjoyment or happiness, there is nothing to be taken into account. So the limit of sentience…is the only defensible boundary of concern for the interests of others. To mark this boundary by some other characteristic like intelligence or rationality would be to mark it in an arbitrary manner (Singer 2009: 9).*

Furthermore, Singer contends that not all lives are of equal worth. Normally, in choosing between the life of an animal and the life of a human, it should be the human whose life we should save. However, there are sometimes special cases where this formula should not hold in our attempts to avoid speciesism. He says that:

> *The preference, in normal cases, for saving a human life over the life of an animal when a choice* has *to be made is a preference based on the characteristics that normal humans have, and not on the mere fact that they are members of our own species. This is why when we consider members of our own species who lack the characteristics of normal humans we can no longer say that their lives are always to be preferred to those of other animals (p. 21).*

This means that human beings who lack the capacities of normal human beings are living lives that may not always be preferred to the lives of other animals. If we use animals for experimentation over humans, even though an animal has a higher level of intellect than a severely mentally disabled human, we are acting in a speciesist manner. We are demonstrating, 'a prejudice or attitude of bias in favour of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species' (Singer 2009: 6). According to Singer the lives of these non-human animals hold more value than the lives of senile or severely disabled humans in terms of self-awareness and other standards. As such, we must grant these other beings a right to life that is at least the same if not better than these disabled people if we are to avoid being speciesist. Being a member of *Homo sapiens* is not enough to grant life to one over the other.

The idea of equality across the species boundary corresponds to Dawkins' (1993) concept of the discontinuous mind— the thought that there is no continuity between species, and especially in reference to apes and humans. 'Human', Dawkins argues, is an absolute concept, and there is much evil that flows from this ideology that pertains to the idea of speciesism.

There is evil when we choose to use animals instrumentally in the most inhumane ways even though there is ample evidence that animals do in fact experience pain and can suffer. Singer makes clear three conditions for this: (i) by their behaviour when exposed to painful stimuli; (ii) by the nature of their nervous systems, as not unlike ours in many respects; and (iii) because of the evolutionary usefulness of pain. In this latter condition, pain has adaptive value—the organism learns from its encounters with myriad stimuli in the environment, which provides the necessary responses to increase fitness and survival (see also Rollin 2011).

Sentience is thus a core characteristic of Singer's position, and applies to those beings 'capable of subjectively perceiving or feeling by means of the senses. This includes not only being capable of the feeling of being happy and / or unhappy, but also includes beings just capable of perceiving things without having any affective feelings' (Clarke and Ng 1995: 408). There are important welfare considerations built into the difference between beings that are affective sentients and those determined to be non-affective sentients. Kangaroos, as Clarke and Ng (2006) write, are affective sentient beings. Bugs may not be.

What the foregoing suggests is that if an animal is sentient, even minimally sentient, it has intrinsic value (Rolston 1999). What happens to another being matters to that being, regardless of what anyone or anything else thinks. In comparison, rocks and hammers are said to have instrumental value because what happens to these things does not matter to them. They are not taken into the moral community because they have no interests and therefore cannot suffer. Plants are also not extended consideration because they, too, are incapable of suffering. Using Rollin's (2011) metrics, there are two types of 'mattering' that apply to sentient animals. Positive mattering includes all those states that are beneficial to the being in question, including the ability to move at will, proper shelter, food and water, and so on. Negative mattering includes all of those states that have negative implications for the animals, such as grief, loneliness, pain, fear, anxiety, and so on. Physical pain, Rollin contends, is the stock case of negative mattering.

Singer's (2009) theory has yielded many issues of practical importance. For example, pains that are equal in intensity and duration are equally bad, no matter the species under consideration. If we slap a horse to get it to move this may not have the effect that a slap with the same force would have on a baby. One is wrong and not necessarily the other. It would be wrong to slap the horse with so much force that it would generate the same level of pain that would cause the baby severe discomfort. In addition, it is important to recognize that Singer's views on equality are not anti-exploitation. If the consequences of an act justify exploitation of animals, the act would be sanctioned. For example, if a single experiment on an animal or group of animals were to

lead to the cure of a horrible human disease, Singer would support such use. The ends justify the means.

Opposing Viewpoints

A criticism that applies to all theories of animal ethics that use sentience as a key feature, and this includes rights theory as well as utilitarianism, is that sentience is not a sufficient condition for moral considerability (Methany 2006). There are other more important criteria including language, rationality, intelligence, and the ability to reciprocate on a moral level, which we ought to use in extending moral concern to a being or species. The response to this criticism is hard to ignore. Methany (2006) asks us how we can be justified in ignoring the pain of another being – that is likely very similar to the type and intensity of pain that we would feel under similar circumstances – especially when we are patently unsure about the inner workings of these animal others (see Nagel 1974).

More to utilitarianism specifically, R.G. Frey (1983) identifies a number of other practical considerations in an attempt to refute Singer's preference utilitarianism, especially Singer's views on agriculture and vegetarianism. One of Frey's key arguments concerns the pain caused to animals as being unfounded based on his belief that the eater of meat bears no responsibility for how animals are killed.

> *Suppose my neighbour shoots and kills a turkey: even if it was wrong of him to kill it, is it wrong for me to eat it? It is not obvious how the argument from killing…can show that it is, when the person who does the eating is different from the person who does the killing, which is the case, of course, with meat we buy in the supermarket. After all, where killing or violating rights or inflicting suffering is concerned, it is normally the person who does these things who is morally suspect. And even if we allow that most abattoirs would not exist if most people did not eat meat, it does not follow that the wrongness of the slaughterer's act of killing, if it is wrong, somehow mystically transfers to the consumer's act of eating. It is true that animals are killed in order to be eaten; but it is killing, not eating, which carries the moral force in the argument from killing and which is being condemned (Frey 1983: 28-29; see also Frey 1980 in reference to animals not in the possession of rights).*

Regardless of the strength of the argument from a utilitarian standpoint, there is the feeling that we should, as individuals, acknowledge responsibility for supporting an industry that kills and inflicts suffering on the consumer's behalf. Frey, however, is more concerned about the many individuals who would lose their jobs if the practice of large-scale slaughter were somehow suddenly ended.

Van Bogaert (2004) argues that Singer's (1975) position on animals as experiencers of pain is misguided because he makes inferences on animal behaviour (pain and suffering), based on pseudo-scientific assumptions. Van Bogaert argues that utilitarians have found convenience in reducing sentience to simply feeling pain, while in the process confusing the difference between pain and suffering: on one hand, sentience implies a broad phenomenological sense including being conscious of oneself as well as one's place and set of relationships in the natural world; while on the other hand some non-human animals posses a type of primitive sentience in their ability to only experience sensations of pleasure and pain in a stimulus-response manner (Van Bogaert 2004; see also Fennell 2012a; Sumner 1997). There is a significant gap between the primitive and advanced in terms of sentience, and not knowing the extent to which these beings experience pain and suffering is problematic.

The animal rights advocate Tom Regan (1980; 2004) argues that Singer (1975) fails to take into account the intrinsic value of individual rights—the failure to protect individual bearers of moral status (Pluhar 1995). Regan also contends that Singer does not use utilitarian calculus in furthering his equality of interests principle. He does not tell us what we should to do after we have taken into consideration the interests of all affected parties and 'counted equal interests equally' (Regan 2004: 312). What are the consequences of our decision? How do they compare to the consequences of other options? We know we must do something, but what exactly is unknown.

The failure to use utilitarian calculus in the past has been addressed in part through critical-level utilitarianism as described by Clarke and Ng (2006; see also Blackorby and Donaldson 1984). Critical-level utilitarianism 'maximizes the sum of individual (or affective sentient, when generalized to cover animals) utilities in excess of a certain positive critical level' (p. 408). Clarke and Ng used this type of utilitarianism to determine the proper number of kangaroos to cull in generating the optimum population size in a 44,000 ha fenced site. Too many kangaroos led to over-harvesting of vegetation, which in turn led to poor welfare, suffering and death for hundreds of kangaroos in the absence of predators.

Another persistent issue that hampers utilitarianism is that it is too demanding (Hills 2010). We must foster the happiness of others even if this means that there are certain costs to us. There are millions of people who are poor and hungry in the world, which means that we should act to minimize their pain and promote, or at least attempt to promote, their happiness – regardless of whose happiness it is. Hills contends that since utilitarians generally believe that animals are sentient and experience pain and pleasure, the equal interests argument means that animal interests count equally with ours, and we should act to ease their

pain too. This, Hills argues, has implications for farmers, scientists and all others who inflict pain on animals, because, 'we are under a moral obligation to assist, provided that the benefit to them outweighs the cost to us' (Hills 2010: 228). It is virtually impossible to sum the utility and disutility of any given action for all except in trivial cases.

The reductionist nature of utilitarianism has been criticized by environmentalists because it does not take into consideration populations, ecosystems and non-sentient beings, like plants, which are part of the whole ecological system (Ito 2008; see also Callicott 1984). As such, utilitarianism does not distinguish between the value of wild and domestic, over-abundant and rare, or native and exotic animals (Callicott 1980). More specifically, Hills (2010) argues that because predators cause prey species to suffer, it may be better to let predator species die off if the weighing of costs and benefits were in the favour of prey species – even if the loss of a predator species reduced biological diversity. In addition, environmentalists argue that utilitarianism demands a significant degree of intervention in the natural world to increase the welfare of animals that experience suffering and pain. Human intervention would decrease the value of nature, and human endeavours may potentially make matters worse if our interventions have implications beyond the animal itself, i.e., at broader systems scales (Hills 2010).

Still other scholars feel that utilitarianism amounts to a levelling down of human beings parallel with animals. Continental philosophy, especially in the French tradition, has been built according to a type of antagonism between humans and animals according to power, authority, divinity, and natural rights. (see Dardenne 2010, for a summary of the comments of these French philosophers). In contrast, Dardenne (2010) suggests that Singer's (2009) work is more like a levelling up of animals who have their own set of unique traits that make them more than what we have made them in the past. This rings true for Lestel (2004), who wrote that 'The true scientific revolution of animal sciences in the last twenty years is that human beings are not the only subjects in the universe' (p. 59). (See also Pierce's (1979) work explaining how Singer (1975) has not gone far enough in differentiating equal consideration with equal treatment in reference to parallels drawn between women's liberation and animal liberation. Equal consideration, Pierce argues, has nothing to do with liberation. It involves 'the ability to construct one's own sense of oneself and one's own purpose, not simply a capacity to feel pain' (p. 72)).

Utilitarianism and Tourism

Central to the utilitarian is the way in which we use animals, with emphasis placed on the minimization or elimination of pain and suffering, such that benefits to some (e.g., humans) do not outweigh costs to others (e.g., animals) for all concerned. An understanding of what to measure is important in arriving at good ends. Are we measuring strictly pleasure and pain units in the sense of the classical utilitarianist, or are we measuring preferences, such as the preference to live in captivity or the wild, or to live or die? In a tourism context, this would mean an assessment of the costs and benefits to tourists, operators and the broader community from the use of animals, but also the interests of animals. What to measure might also entail a look at the welfare or impacts of animals living under the conditions, including levels of stress or psychological disorders (Green and Giese 2004; Fennell 2012a). The simple fact of the matter, as articulated by Gruen (2010), is that the moral significance of an animal depends directly on the importance of other competing interests. Some pains are acceptable if competing interests (happy tourists) are given higher value.

Increasingly, news sources are reporting on a range of different moral issues that are specific to tourism and animals, all of which may be scrutinized on the basis of utilitarian thinking. Many of these have deep cultural roots that are at odds with contemporary views on the use of animals for entertainment. For example, BBC News (2010) reports on Catalonia's vote and subsequent ban of bullfighting. Supporters of the ban – 180,000 who signed a petition against bullfighting – argue that the practice is barbaric and out-dated. Proponents of bullfighting argue that a ban will threaten the livelihoods of many thousands of people who rely on the income from these events. Benn (2010) examines how politics weigh heavily on the potential return of fox hunting in the UK as a sport in the face of public outcry. Kingston (2011) examines why locals are attempting to stop the Siena Palio (a local Italian horse race with a rich history) because of animal welfare concerns. Kingston writes that in one case, a horse 'slipped on rain-slicked cobbles and crashed into metal barriers, collapsing to the ground in spasms of agony inches from shocked spectators' (p.1). The killing, by police, of 48 wild animals released from an Ohio game preserve represents the dangers of keeping wild animals captive against the benefit of entertainment (Associated Press 2011). As an ethical decision-making tool, utilitarianism holds value in weighing the interests that animals have in not suffering, against their use for human benefit, i.e., human interests.

This paper focuses more exclusively on zoos from a utilitarian standpoint, because there is a history of moral concern over the keeping of animals as captives, which must be weighed according to priorities of commerce, pleasure, education, and conservation (Tribe 2004; see Fennell, in press, on the moral justification of zoos as a form of ecotourism

from rights and welfare perspectives). Some theorists believe that the pain and suffering animals experience while kept in captivity offset (i) any conservation benefits to these animals and their kind, and (ii) benefits that humans derive in the form of fun, enjoyment, commerce and education (Shackley 1996; Acampora 1998, 2005). Table 1 identifies some of the costs that animals are said to endure as captives. On balance, the pleasures (benefits) that animals experience in zoos might correspond to basic needs like the availability of food and water, shelter, being with one's own kind, protection from predators and, in some cases, the freedom to express some normal behaviors (Farm Animal Welfare Council 2009).

Table 1. Effects of Captivity on the Welfare of Animals in Zoos

Type of Effect	Explanation
Stereotypies	Behaviours that are fixed, apparently purposeless and repeated, such as weaving, rocking and pacing.
Increased aggression	To both social partners and other animals. Altered time budgets, where the distribution of time between behaviours is very different from the wild.
Increased frustration or conflict behaviour	Including displacement behaviours or behaviours that seem out of context such as head-shaking, scratching, chewing or licking.
Increased fear	Including avoidance, shivering, sweating or over-reaction to slight environmental changes.
Ontogenic behavioural changes	Where an animal no longer performs the normal behaviour for its species at that age or stage of development.

Source: Adapted from Tribe 2011

Utilitarianism and Zoos

Hedonistic utilitarianism provides an avenue by which to consider the consequences of our actions in zoos. If: (i) most of the 700 million people who visit a zoo on an annual basis (WAZA 2012) have a pleasurable and not painful experience, (ii) zoo management is happy because revenues far exceed costs, and (iii) the community is happy because tourists are supporting many other tourism enterprises, it can be argued that zoos are morally defensible on utilitarian grounds. There is the maximization of pleasure over pain for all connected to the zoo – the greatest good for the greatest number – which is seen to be the best ethical choice.

However, if by 'all' we consider that animals experience pains and pleasures, as noted above, any calculation of pleasure and pain should take into consideration their interests (the equal consideration of interests argument put forward by Singer) too. If we take the number of people who visit zoos each year and that all of these individuals have a pleasurable experience, and the number of animals in zoos as 30 million (for argument's sake) have a painful or less pleasurable experience, we could argue on utilitarian grounds that the zoo is still morally acceptable: peoples' pleasure still outweigh animals' pain.

But as noted above, we must decide whether the consequences of an act justify exploitation; an appraisal of the balance of 'harm we do to the affected animals against the benefits we derive for humans and other animals'. (Huntingford et al. 2006: 338). For example, keeping hens in battery cages in cramped conditions, must be weighed against the lower cost of eggs at the supermarket. Quick access to big game like lions at game ranches in Africa or Texas, must be weighed against the reduced welfare of the animals made to live in these places. In justifying the consumption of animals, Methany (2006) argues that we need to 'show that the pleasure gained from consuming them minus the pleasure gained from eating a vegetarian meal is greater than the pain caused by eating animals' (p. 21). Factory-farmed animals like chickens are said to endure the most amount of pain per unit of food. For zoos, this could be configured as the pleasure gained from viewing animals in the zoo, money made, and community benefits, minus the pleasure from seeing these animals in some other manner such as in the wild (calculating personal costs to the individual as well as costs to the environment), should be greater than the pains caused to the animals for having to live in captivity. It may not be morally acceptable for the many to experience pleasure at the expense of the minority who must endure a great deal of moderate to severe suffering.

This argument is carried forward as a challenge to the argument for conservation – perhaps the zoo's strongest defence for keeping animals. Some proponents of zoos might argue, on utilitarian grounds, that it is morally justifiable to inflict misery of a moderate or severe nature on a few in zoos so that the majority may remain happy and free. However, the costs and benefits of conservation can be criticized in the way zoos make captive animals endure psychological, social and physiological suffering so that their counterparts may be saved in the wild. Sacrifice in the name of conservation (see Marino et al. 2009). Furthermore, if reintroduction efforts fail much more often than they are successful (ZooCheck New Zealand n.d.), the keeping of animals under the auspices of conservation must be called into question. Conserving animals like elephants and rhinos in captivity is said to be many times more costly than conserving them in the wild (ZooCheck New Zealand nd; Fennell forthcoming).

In reference to preference utilitarianism, Singer (2009) argues that beings prefer one thing to another. These preferences are held to be morally important unless other preferences are stronger and outweigh these. Proponents of this position might argue that zoos are morally acceptable if

they place the interests of animals over the interests of tourists. However, if animals are held in zoos in such a way that their preferences are not taken into consideration and they must endure pain and suffering as a result, and if the interests of humans take precedence over the interests of animals, zoos may be considered immoral. From this perspective, if zoos are not educating visitors to the extent zoo administrators assert, and if there is not widespread or sustained success in conservation, the utilitarianist, who has concerns with the consequences of action, might argue that zoos are not ethical because entertainment surfaces as the key motivation (human interest) over other objectives that ought to take into consideration the preferences of animals. In this regard, Masson and McCarthy (1995) argue that:

> *It would be comforting to believe that they [animals in zoos] are happy there, delighted to receive medical care and grateful to be sure of their next meal. Unfortunately, in the main, there is no evidence to suppose that they are. Most take every possible opportunity to escape. Most will not breed. Probably they want to go home. Some captive animals die of grief when taken from the wild…Wild animals may refuse to eat, killing themselves in the only way open to them (p. 99).*

What this amounts to is a stripping of personal liberty (Jamieson 1995) that renders the animal emasculated or denatured. So, if animals take pleasure in normal behaviours in the natural world, it is just as likely that they will miss these activities if not allowed to participate in them whilst in captivity (see also Acampora 2005). As such, a major concern with this form of utilitarian reasoning is that it is often the case that the preferences of the more highly rational (humans in general) outweigh the preferences of those less rational (animals). On this basis, it becomes morally acceptable and much more practical to support the interests of those deemed more intelligent over those of lesser intelligence, which serves to sustain the legacy of human domination over animals via the zoo. Of course the opposite is possible too. Examples include the Great Ape Project (Cavalieri and Singer 1993; Bekoff 1998), the choice by some zoo administrators to refuse to keep elephants in zoos because of their higher intelligence and social needs (Lalchandani and Choprahttp 2009), and the refusal to keep dolphins in aquaria in the UK (Hughes 2001). All of these are examples of how the preferences or interests of animals have been taken into account over the interests of people.

Conclusion

There is the belief on the part of some welfare advocates that getting closer and more intimate with an animal will contribute to stronger feelings of attachment and empathy towards that animal. This attachment makes it more difficult to treat animals with unkindness. Purcell (2011) explores this angle in the context of the suffering of animals in livestock production. The further away we are from these animals, say in urban centres, the easier it is to ignore that these beings are sentient. How should we interpret this perspective in regard to the many animal attractions that are so numerous (and accepted) in our lives? What about zoos that keep animals as captives? What about the suffering that animals experience in the rodeo and greyhound racing? What about fishing, hunting and trapping? How can we reconcile the closeness that we yearn for in tourism against the suffering that these animals must endure?

Research has discovered that the vast majority of people do not question the acceptability of using animals, only that we should try to limit pain and suffering (Rollin 2005). It is also the case that this use comes packaged with inconsistency in terms of the animal uses we support and those we reject. We are speciesist when we criticise the bullfight because of cruelty, yet choose to eat factory-farmed beef. On balance, Singer (2009) writes, those who support the bullfight might argue that the bull gives pleasure to thousands of attendees, while the killing of a steer gives pleasure only to the few that eat it. Although the bull suffers a more horrible death, it is the bull in the end that has had a much more 'pleasurable' life. Those who object to hunting still eat meat, and those who object to trapping still wear leather.

The fact that sentient bodies have been transformed into scientific objects in the laboratory setting (Lynch 1988) says much about our values. Parallel to this reality, Mason and Singer (1980) have written that, 'Animal factories are one more sign of the extent to which our technological capacities have advanced faster than our ethics' (p. 125). It is not such a stretch to argue that our use of animals in tourism is another example of how our hunger for entertainment and financial gain have advanced faster than our ethics. The thought of an animal as something more than an attraction, not unlike the tools of the vivisectionist, is still largely foreign to us. This general statement is supported by virtue of what is not available in our tourism libraries: alternative perspectives that challenge conventional wisdom.

We can follow from the tenets of utilitarian theory, which tell us that we have to do something. It is not simply enough to try to balance pleasure and pains or preferences optimally. If there is a way in which to increase welfare or well-being, the utilitarianist has a duty to do so (Huntingford et al. 2006). Increasing the sizes of cages in zoos, making animal welfare standards in the rodeo more animal-friendly, and so on, are all good ideas. But in the end, those who elevate the interests of animals – suffering to be counted equally with like suffering – would argue that we have simply not done enough.

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Submitted: July 23, 2012
Accepted: October 12, 2012

DECLARATION

FORM IV

1.	Place of Publication	:	A-965/6 Indira Nagar, Lucknow – 226016
2.	Periodicity	:	Thrice in a year
3.	Printer's Name	:	Tej Vir Singh
	Whether Citizen of India	:	Yes
	Address	:	A-965/6 Indira Nagar, Lucknow – 226016
4.	Publisher's Name	:	Tej Vir Singh
	Whether Citizen of India	:	Yes
	Address	:	A-965/6 Indira Nagar, Lucknow – 226016
5.	Editor's Name	:	Tej Vir Singh (Chief-editor)
		:	
	Whether Citizen of India	:	Yes
	Address	:	A-965/6 Indira Nagar, Lucknow – 226016
6.	Name of the Individual(s) who owns the newspaper and Partners / Share holders holding more than one percent of the total capital.	:	Tej Vir Singh

I, Tej Vir Singh, hereby declare that particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd.) TEJ VIR SINGH