

ARTICLES

Interests and Animals, Needs and Language

In *Interests and Rights, The Case Against Animals*,¹ R. G. Frey believes he has animal rights advocates firmly skewered on the horns of a dilemma:

(1) Animal rights advocates agree that "all and only beings which (can) have interests (can) have moral rights." Frey labels this "the interest requirement."²

(2) Interests must be divided into needs and desires.³

(3) If "interests" in (1) refers to needs, then plants, tractors, cave drawings, and other mere things (can) have interests and, consequently, (can) have moral rights (at least as far as the interest requirement is concerned). But this is so counter-intuitive as to be unacceptable even to animal rights advocates.⁴

(4) If "interests" in (1) refers to desires, animals cannot have them and, consequently, cannot have moral rights. Animals cannot have desires because (a) having desires requires beliefs or self-consciousness, (b) both of these require linguistic ability, but (c) animals lack linguistic ability.⁵

Thus, Frey claims that a careful analysis of "interests" shows that the claim that animals (can) have moral rights either leads to absurdity or is false.

Frey is wrong on both counts. If the interest requirement refers to needs, it does not follow that plants, artifacts, and other mere things (can) have moral rights, for plants, artifacts, etc., do not have the kinds of needs which generate interests. If

the interest requirement refers to desires, it does not follow that animals cannot have interests, for having desires does not require linguistic ability, since neither believing nor self-consciousness requires this ability.

I. Needs

Frey distinguishes having an interest from taking an interest, generally using "need" for the former and "desire" for the latter. According to Frey, one has an interest in or needs X if X contributes (will contribute, would contribute) to his good or well-being. One need not care about this relation or even be aware of it for this need to exist. For example, one needs vitamin C for good health whether or not one cares about or is even aware of this. Frey then goes on to remind us that plants, artifacts, and other mere things can be intelligibly said to need things ("tractors need oil"), to be harmed or benefited ("the Rembrandt painting would be harmed by exposure to the sun"), to be good of their kind ("that's a good example of a night blooming jasmine"), and to have things that are good for them ("a sunny corner protected from the wind is a good place to plant this kind of shrub"). He concludes from this that if we interpret the interest requirement as referring to having needs, then plants, artifacts, and other mere things (can) have moral rights.⁶

But would we ordinarily say, as Frey does, that "it is in a tractor's interests to be well-oiled"?⁷ I think not. While "need," "want," "lack," "good," "harm," and "benefit" are all commonly applied to plants, artifacts,

etc., "interest" is not. "Interest" is ordinarily reserved for the people and other animals who will benefit or be harmed by the needs of the plants, artifacts, etc., being met or unmet. For example, the tractor "needs oil," but it is "in the farmer's interest," not the tractor's, that his tractor be well-oiled. Again, wheat "needs water" to survive and flourish, but it is "in the farmer's interest," not the wheat's, that his wheat be properly watered. Thus, the ordinary use of "interest" tells us that *plants, artifacts, and other mere things not only take no interest in what benefits or harms them; they also have no interest in these things.* So, "having a good of one's own," "being capable of being benefited or harmed," or, simply, "having a need" does not provide an adequate analysis of having an interest. Consequently, by basing the *reductio* in his dilemma on interpreting having an interest as having a need, Frey has refuted a strawman.

Setting aside special legal and economic meanings of "having an interest," I would offer the following as a more adequate interpretation of that concept: P has an interest in X if and only if X affects (will affect, would affect) P's feelings of well-being. I understand "feelings of well-being" to refer to such feelings as pleasure and pain, feeling well and feeling ill, elation and depression, feelings of fulfillment and of frustration, and the many other feelings which contribute to or detract from the enjoyment of or satisfaction with life.⁸

This interpretation can readily explain why people can unknowingly have an interest in vitamin C, tractors being well-oiled, and wheat being properly watered, while plants, artifacts, and other *non-feeling things* cannot have an interest in anything. Furthermore, distinguishing affective needs, which generate interests, from non-affective needs, which do not

generate interests, can explain why some people do not even have an interest (and, consequently, justifiably take no interest) in some things they can properly be said to need. For example, suppose that I am definitely overweight and would need to exercise regularly and watch my diet in order to slim down but that I do not mind being fat and that my overall enjoyment of life will not be diminished by my being fat. Perhaps my being fat prevents me from engaging in certain activities I would have enjoyed and will shorten my life somewhat, but it is also an important contributor to my happiness, since my fine tenor voice, which I love and from which I profit handsomely, could not be as fine without the fat and since the crowd I go with and whose company I greatly enjoy feels more at ease and jolly with fat people. Furthermore, exercising and dieting might be highly unpleasant for me and would certainly deprive me of one of my dearest pleasures, eating with abandon. In this way, being fat might give me a somewhat shorter but over-all happier life than would being slim. In this case, although it might be good for me to lose weight (i.e., be "good for my health" or "necessary for good health"), I could properly claim that it is not in my interest to spend my time exercising and watching my diet. It is in my interest to spend my time fulfilling those needs which will enhance my enjoyment of life and to neglect those needs which will not. Pursuing good health is usually in one's interest, since good health is important for one's feelings of well-being, but when that pursuit undermines those feelings, it ceases to be in one's interest. Thus, not merely whether one needs X but whether X will affect one's feelings of well-being seems to be the crucial factor in having an interest in X.⁹

Applying this more adequate interpretation of having an interest to the

interest requirement, it follows that all and only those beings which (can) have *affective needs* (can) have moral rights. This certainly excludes plants, artifacts, and other non-feeling things from having moral rights. So, Frey's *reductio* fails. Furthermore, since Frey acknowledges that some animals can at least "suffer unpleasant sensations,"¹⁰ it would seem to follow that he must agree that some animals have affective needs and, consequently, have interests and meet the interest requirement for having moral rights.

II. Desires

Frey draws a distinction between desires which require beliefs such as "I don't have X," "I would be better off if I had X," and "in order to get X, I have to do Y" and "simple desires," such as wanting food, which are reflexive and cannot, therefore, involve the mediation of beliefs, although having any such simple desires, he insists, requires that at least some of one's simple desires involve self-consciousness. Frey then argues that animals cannot have desires of either sort, for both believing and self-consciousness require language, and animals are incapable of using language.¹¹

Frey offers the following argument to show that only language users can believe:

Now what is it that I believe?
I believe that my collection lacks a Gutenberg Bible; that is, I believe that the sentence 'My collection lacks a Gutenberg Bible' is true. In expressions of the form 'I believe that . . .', what follows the 'that' is a sentence, and what I believe is that the sentence is true. . . . The essence of this argument is . . . about what is believed. If what is believed is that a

certain sentence is true, then no creature which lacks language can have beliefs. . . . I do not see how the cat can be correctly described as believing the laces are tied unless it can, as I do, distinguish between the beliefs that the laces are tied and that the laces are untied and regards one but not the other as true. But what is true or false are not states of affairs which reflect or pertain to these beliefs; states of affairs are not true or false (though sentences describing them are) but either are or are not the case.¹²

Thus, Frey contends that when someone believes something, what he believes is that a certain sentence is true. Frey believes this because (1) in belief statements sentences are used to express what is believed and (2) what one believes is that something is true (or false), and sentences are the sorts of things that are true (or false). Both of these arguments are seriously faulty.

(1) Which grammatical forms are employed in expressing the objects of intentional verbs is one issue; what those intentional objects are is another issue, and an answer for the first issue is no more an answer for the second issue than linguistics is a substitute for psychology. The proper conclusion of Frey's analysis of belief *statements* is that in order to understand such statements, one must be able to understand sentences. This conclusion is neither controversial nor relevant to the issue of whether animals can believe: it is relevant only to whether animals can formulate or respond to belief statements.

Furthermore, using intentional verbs whose objects are sentences in referring to and describing animals is a common practice. We commonly say

such things as "the dog thinks the cat is in the tree," "the bird realized that one of its chicks is missing," "the cat recognizes that the ice is slippery," "the monkey sees that strangers are invading his territory," "the deer senses that we are closing in on it," "the zebra smells that a leopard is near," and "the horse hears that it is being called." In saying such things we do not presume that the dog, for example, thinks of the sentence "the cat is in the tree" or that it could assent to that sentence, if asked whether it is true. Nonetheless, we understand the above sentences, know when they do and do not apply, and, in general, use them without problem. Thus, ordinary language does not support Frey's contention that if an intentional verb takes a sentence for its object, then it properly applies only to those capable of understanding sentences.¹³

Frey might counter that this just shows how pervasive is the pro-animal prejudice. However, such a claim reminds one of the band member who claims that he's okay; it's the rest of the band that's out of step. If ordinary language philosophy has taught us anything, it has taught us which to choose when we have to choose between ordinary language being nonsensical and a philosophical analysis being mistaken.¹⁴

Another problem with Frey's argument is that if we were to apply his pattern of analysis to other intentional verbs, we would arrive at the following *reductio* of his position: just as animals are incapable of belief, they are incapable of hearing, for when I hear that someone is coming, what I hear is that the sentence "someone is coming" is true, but animals are not capable of doing this. Again, animals cannot smell, for when I smell that something is burning, what I smell is that the sentence "something is burning" is true, and animals cannot

formulate or understand sentences. Such conclusions seem either to be preposterous or to indicate that stipulative definitions of "hear," "smell," and "believe" are being used. Such abnormal definitions could be based on what Malcolm has described as "the prejudice of philosophers that only propositional thoughts belong to consciousness."¹⁵

It might be thought that Frey is not really faced with the preceding dilemma, for he does not claim that his analysis applies to all intentional verbs. However, nothing in what Frey says indicates that his analysis is restricted to believing. Since perceptions, like beliefs, can be true or false and since "hear that," "see that," etc., can be parsed like "believe that" to take sentences as their objects, it would be arbitrary to try to escape the problems of the previous paragraph by insisting that Frey's analysis applies only to believing.

Finally, it may be thought that Frey can escape all the preceding objections, since he claims that though it may be thought that my analysis of belief requires persons to entertain the concept of a sentence in order to have beliefs, this in fact is not the case. . . . The sentence 'John believes that the window is open' . . . can be plausibly interpreted as 'John would, if asked, assent to some sentence that has for him the meaning that "the window is open" has for us'.¹⁶

One obvious objection to Frey's contention that being able to formulate sentences is essential for believing is that we often believe things without formulating any sentences about them. For example, if I reach into my pocket for a pencil while listening to a lecture, I believe that I have a pencil in my pocket, but I do not formulate the

sentence "I have a pencil in my pocket." Frey formulates the above interpretation to meet this objection.

This interpretation is not relevant to the objections raised so far in this paper. Just as we can believe without entertaining sentences, so we can hear, see, recognize, realize, etc., without entertaining sentences. So, since these intentional verbs take sentences as their objects, they, too, presumably, are to be interpreted in terms of what sentences the one who hears, sees, recognizes, realizes, etc., would assent to. Consequently, these verbs would still not be applicable to infants, animals, and other non-language users. As long as Frey holds that these verbs properly apply only to language users, whether he maintains that they apply only when we entertain sentences or can apply as well to situations where we would assent to sentences is unimportant. Either way, Frey's analysis still runs counter to ordinary usage and is vulnerable to the above *reductio*.

As to whether Frey's interpretation provides an answer to the forceful objection that psychology does not reveal an essential relation between believing and sentences, the interpretation does not meet that objection, either. First, the interpretation is arbitrary. "John would assent to the sentence 'the window is open'" is only one among many candidates to be a dispositional interpretation of "John believes that the window is open." Other possible candidates are "John would close the window, if asked," "John would close the window, if he felt there was a draft," "John would throw something out the window without attempting to open it, if he was called upon to throw something out the window," "John would not sit near the window, if he was afraid of sitting near open windows," and so forth.

Frey provides no reason for

selecting what John would assent to as the interpretation of "John believes that the window is open" rather than any or all of these other things he would do if he believed that. But without such an argument, it is not obvious that what someone would assent to is even a necessary part of an interpretation, let alone *the* interpretation, of believing. We do not commonly require that an individual assent to or even be willing to assent to "p" in order that we feel we have satisfactory evidence that he believes p. We often just watch what a person does to find out what he believes, and we hold that "actions speak louder than words" in expressing beliefs. Even if a subjunctive reference to action is a necessary part of an adequate understanding of belief, that reference must be vague, for there are many alternative sets of actions which would commonly be considered sufficient to confirm belief. Common experience with beliefs does not indicate that there is any particular form of action, including assenting to sentences, which one must be ready to perform in order to believe something. I would guess that it is Frey's belief that language is necessary for believing that leads him to interpret believing in terms of assenting, but, of course, that belief begs the question.

Furthermore, it is not obvious that "John would, if asked, assent to the sentence 'the window is open'" is properly described as an interpretation of "John believes that the window is open." If the former were an *interpretation* of the latter, then "John believes that the window is open but would not assent to the sentence 'the window is open'" would be self-contradictory. But it is not. Rather, it is an instance of the common idea "he believes that, but would never admit it." Of course, Frey might try to meet this sort of objection by qualifying his interpretation of "John believes that the window is

open" to read something like "John would assent to a sentence that has for him the meaning 'the window is open' has for us, if asked under conditions where he felt he had nothing to gain through deception, did not feel like playing a practical joke, felt secure in disclosing what he believed, etc." However, the effect of adding such a *ceteris paribus* clause to Frey's interpretation would be to show just how distant is the relation between believing and assenting. Such a *ceteris paribus* clause appropriately qualifies the relation between something and a sign of it, not the relation between something and its interpretation.

Again, if "John would, if asked, assent to the sentence 'the window is open'" were an interpretation of "John believes that the window is open," then the latter would not be a significant answer to a question as to why John would assent to the sentence "the window is open." If Frey's interpretation thesis were correct, then John's believing that the window is open could not *explain* why he would assent to "the window is open," since "John believes that the window is open" would just be another way of saying "John would, if asked, assent to 'the window is open'." If Frey were correct, citing John's belief in response to "Why would John assent to 'the window is open'?" would contain the same category mistake as answering "Why is John a bachelor?" with "John is a bachelor because he is an unmarried male." However, that John believes that the window is open does provide a significant answer to the question "Why would John assent to 'the window is open'?" As an explanation of why John would assent to that sentence, that John believes that the window is open is in the same group as the following: John wants to please you and feels that by assenting to that sentence he will do so; John was told that he will be set

free if he assents to that sentence; John figures that he can fool you by assenting to that sentence; John thinks he can ridicule your research by assenting to that sentence; and many other plausible, common explanations of why people assent to sentences. That John believes that the window is open may be the explanation for his willingness to assent to "the window is open" which we presume to be the correct one in most cases, which is why we presume assenting is ordinarily a reliable sign of belief. However, that priority of place among explanations does not change the relation between believing and willingness to assent into one of interpretation.

The problem with Frey's interpretation of "John believes that p" as "John would assent to 'p' under certain conditions" is that it tries to pass off a subjunctive reference to one thing belief can lead to as an interpretation of what belief is. But since, for the reasons just developed, believing that p cannot be identified with the fact that one would assent to "p" under certain conditions, Frey has no more succeeded in providing us an interpretation of believing here that Euthyphro succeeded in providing Socrates with an interpretation of piety when he told him that pious men are beloved of the gods (and Euthyphro's mistake would not be corrected by substituting "would be" for "are" in his interpretation of piety).

Thus, Frey's proposed interpretation fails, leaving his contention that believing requires linguistic ability vulnerable to the many counter-examples of believing without using language. Both our experience of our own believings and our commonly, significantly applying "believe" and many other intentional verbs to infants, animals, and other non-language users indicate that the fact that these verbs take sentences as their objects does not show that only those

capable of recognizing sentences can have those verbs meaningfully applied to them.

(2) Frey maintains that his analysis is correct because we would have to "credit [animals] with language in order for there to be something true or false in belief," since "sentences are the sorts of things which [are] capable of being true or false, [whereas] states of affairs are not true or false but are or are not the case."¹⁷ Setting aside the issue of whether animals possess sufficient language or something sufficiently language-like to satisfy this argument without dispute, this argument still suffers from the following problems.

First, validly inferring from beliefs involving truth and falsity to beliefs involving sentences requires the additional premise that only sentences can be true or false. This is clearly false. Currency, portraits, friends, signs, omens, impressions, perceptions, examples, tools, and lines are examples which come readily to mind of other things that can be true or false. Thus, Frey's argument rests on a false premise.

It might be countered that this objection equivocates, since the above examples are not all true or false in the same way. But such a counterargument would just complicate the objection a bit: if different kinds of things can be true or false in different ways, then (a) are beliefs true/false in the way sentences are true/false, and (b) are sentences the only things which are true/false in the way sentences are true/false? If the answer to either of these questions is "no," Frey's argument still fails, since his presumption of a very tight relation between sentences and being true/false (in the relevant sense) will be false. Frey does not seem to have recognized there is an issue here, for he provides no argument to answer

these questions.

Furthermore, the answer to question (b) seems to be negative; i.e., sentences do not seem to be the only things that are true/false in the way sentences are true/false. If we accept a correspondence theory of truth for sentences, then portraits are true/false in the way sentences are. If we adopt a coherence theory of truth for sentences, then omens, impressions, and perceptions are true/false in the way sentences are. If we adopt a pragmatic theory of truth for sentences, then examples, tools, and signs are true/false in the way sentences are. Thus, there would seem to be sets of things which are true/false in the way sentences are true/false. Beliefs may be just another kind of thing that is true/false in that way. So, even if beliefs are true/false in the way sentences are, one cannot infer from that that beliefs are about sentences.

Second, if we were told that X and Y are both colored or both conduct electricity or are both beautiful or are both complex, it would remain an open question as to just how similar or dissimilar they were and in what sense(s) they were or were not the same kind of thing. In Frey's argument, however, it is presumed that if X and Y can both be true/false, that shows that they are the same sort of thing: he argues that since what is believed is that something is true and since sentences can be true, the something that is believed to be true must be a sentence. But just as one swallow does not make a summer, so having one predicate in common provides only minimal evidence concerning in which way(s) or to what degree those things are or are not the same kind of thing. Frey's argument from having the same kind of predicate to being the same kind of thing runs dangers analogous to those in inferring from similar effects to similar

causes; consequently, that argument requires a great deal of confirmation from other arguments. Frey does not provide such confirmation, nor, as the previous objections to his analysis indicate, is there reason to believe that he could find such confirmation.

Third, in the course of developing his argument, Frey provides counter-examples to that argument. Frey uses such phrases as "the false belief," "true and false beliefs," and "regarding one [belief] but not the other as true."¹⁸ Frey here predicates "true" and "false" of beliefs themselves, rather than predicating these terms of the something that is believed. In making such predications he follows ordinary usage, since we do commonly talk about true and false beliefs, even more commonly than we talk about what is believed being that something is true or false. However, it would seem to follow from Frey's argument that since beliefs can be true/false, they are sentences, since "sentences are the sorts of things which [are] capable of being true or false." This amounts to another *reductio* of Frey's analysis, since saying that beliefs are sentences clearly confuses the psychological with the linguistic.¹⁹

Finally, even if we were to try to decide whether what is believed does or does not concern sentences on the basis of how certain predicates are commonly deployed when discussing beliefs, at least as good and probably even a better case can be made for saying that what is believed is that certain states of affairs are the case than for saying that what is believed is that certain sentences are true. We can equally well say either "what is believed is true" or "what is believed is the case." Again, in response to a question like "Does he really believe that?," we can equally well respond "yes, he believes that that is true" or "yes, he believes that that is the case." Additionally, if we

were to ask "What makes a belief true?," the common answer would not be "a belief is true if what is believed is true" but "a belief is true if what is believed is the case." This suggests that *what is true or false here are beliefs, with what is believed being that something is or is not the case*, and, of course, as Frey himself acknowledges, the sorts of things that are or are not the case are not sentences but states of affairs. The place of truth and falsity in the analysis of beliefs, belief statements, and statements and questions about beliefs is at least not as clear as and probably other than Frey suggests and his argument requires.

Thus, Frey fails to demonstrate that language is required for belief and, consequently, fails to demonstrate that animals cannot have belief-mediated desires.

Turning to simple desires, such as wanting food, Frey presents the following argument to show that the self-consciousness required for having such desires requires linguistic ability:

I adopt the view that 'P-predicates', which include such things as thoughts, feelings, memories, and perceptions, can only be ascribed to oneself if they can be ascribed to others and that one can know one has or experiences a particular P-predicate R only if one can know that other people have or experience R. And following Wittgenstein's private language argument, I adopt the view that P-predicate R, for example 'pain', does not (and cannot) have meaning by standing for or naming a sensation to which each of us has access in his own case but rather has meaning in virtue of certain public rules and conventions which can be adhered to and

transgressed, where adherence and transgression can be publicly checked. In this way, I come with Hacker to the view that the meaningful ascription of P-predicate R to oneself is only possible . . . within the context and confines of a public language.²⁰

The problem with this argument is that it begs the question. Frey infers from Wittgenstein's argument against a private language that self-consciousness requires knowing a public language. However, before Frey's argument that ascribing P-predicates to oneself requires knowing a public language even becomes relevant to whether animals can have simple desires, an argument is needed to show that feeling pain, to use Frey's example, is ascribing the P-predicate "pain" to oneself. That is, *an argument is needed to show that self-consciousness is properly interpreted as the linguistic activity of ascribing certain predicates to oneself.*

Psychology does not support a linguistic interpretation of self-consciousness. When I hit my thumb with the hammer, I am conscious of being in pain, but I do not form the thought "I am in pain" or otherwise ascribe the predicate "pain" to myself. Also, interpreting my consciousness of being in pain as the fact that I would assent to "I am in pain," if asked, would be blatantly arbitrary, since there are many things besides assenting to "I am in pain" which someone in pain would naturally (be ready to) do, e.g., screaming and writhing.

Additionally, we may note that Frey's argument here would lead to the conclusion that animals are not conscious. Notice that in the above citation Frey's analysis of self-consciousness in terms of ascribing P-predicates to oneself is said to

apply not only to simple desires but to "such things as thoughts, feelings, memories, and perceptions." If all such things are beyond the capacities of non-language users, saying, as Frey does,²¹ that, nonetheless, they are still conscious would seem to be devoid of content. How can one be conscious, if one cannot perceive, feel, desire, remember, think, or believe? Furthermore, Frey seems to presume that to be conscious of X involves ascribing predicates to X (or being ready to assent to sentences ascribing predicates to X). Why else would he presume that being self-conscious involves ascribing P-predicates to oneself? Additionally, Frey's argument is based on an analysis of the requirements for the meaningful ascription of any sort of predicate, for it is based on an analysis of what makes language in general meaningful. Frey does not give us any reason to believe that being conscious of oneself is essentially tied to linguistic ability while being conscious of other things is not, and on the surface of it, at least, feeling pain does not seem to be intimately tied to language while seeing colors and hearing noises are not. Consequently, if Frey's argument were sound, only language users could be conscious, which would, since Frey maintains that animals lack linguistic ability, exclude animals from being conscious. Apparently, Frey is strongly opposed to denying that animals are conscious, since he adamantly rejects the suggestion that he is denying consciousness to animals; so, unless Frey can show that being conscious of oneself requires linguistic ability while being conscious of other things does not, we have a *reductio* of Frey's position here which he would have to accept as discrediting his attempt to deny that animals can have simple desires.

Thus, Frey has not provided us any reason to doubt what we ordinarily believe, *viz.*, that animals can

desire food, water, and relief from pain. It follows that Frey has once again failed to show that animals cannot meet the interest requirement for having moral rights. In the cases both of belief-mediated desires and of simple desires, the fundamental flaw in Frey's argument is that he has presumed what he claims to be showing, namely, that believing and self-consciousness require linguistic ability.

III. Conclusion

Since in our ordinary dealings with infants, pets, and other non-language using animals we successfully deal with them as desiring beings who take an interest in what pleases and pains them and as sentient beings with affective needs, some of which they take an interest in and some of which

they merely have an interest in, the burden of proof is surely on Frey and others who would deny that animals can have desires or that the interests of animals cannot be significantly distinguished from the needs of plants and other non-feeling things. Since Frey has failed to shoulder that burden, we may continue to rely on ordinary experience and to hold that animals have affective needs and that they have complex and simple desires concerning the fulfillment or frustration of those needs, as well as desires concerning things that are not really in their best interest, such as playing in the street. It follows that both horns of Frey's dilemma are blunt and harmless, for whether one analyzes "interests" in terms of having an interest or taking an interest, animals meet the interest requirement for having moral rights.²²

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NOTES

¹ Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-82. Since Frey's book appeared, Tom Regan, the animal rightist Frey is primarily addressing at this point in his argument, has embraced the idea that non-sentient beings, such as trees and rivers, (can) have moral rights (see Regan's "The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic," *Environmental Ethics* III/1 (1981)). I do not find this way of disarming Frey's dilemma either necessary or attractive (see my review of Regan's article in *Ethics* &

Animals III/2 (1982)).

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-110.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-83.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸ One of the referees for this paper offered the following as an objection to this interpretation of having an interest:

The following is unlikely but not inconceivable: by performing operation O on P we can cut his intelligence in half but not affect P's feelings of well-being. According to your analysis of having an interest,

performing the operation on P is neither in nor not in P's interest.

If we lived in a Brave New World in which our intelligence could be halved without this reducing our opportunities for pleasure and fulfillment, without leaving us more vulnerable to abuse and unhappiness, without causing anxiety before the operation and frustration and depression afterwards, and so forth, then such an operation would not be either in or against our interests. But we do not live in such a world; in our world, intelligence is something we both enjoy exercising and find a necessary tool for attaining other enjoyments and fulfillments, which is what makes being intelligent in our interest in our world. What is valuable in our world might not be valuable in a vastly different world; that should not surprise anyone, but it should discourage the practice of trying to refute moral philosophies by developing science fiction examples.

⁹ It might be objected that my interpretation of having an interest is still too weak, because "interest" has a prescriptive component which I have not acknowledged. H. J. McCloskey claimed there is such a component to "interest" in "Rights," *Philosophical Quarterly* XV/59 (1965), and Frey defends McCloskey's position (against criticisms by Tom Regan) in Chapter II of his book, although he indicates that he does not want to have McCloskey's position identified with or linked to his own. McCloskey has since repudiated this interpretation of "interest," acknowledging that there is greater flexibility in the use of "interest" than he had earlier recognized (see McCloskey's "Moral Rights and Animals," *Inquiry* XXII/1-2 (1979)). Consequently, it seems unnecessary to defend my interpretation of having an interest against an objection based on McCloskey's earlier analysis of "interest." Let me just

say that where there is a prescriptive component to "X is in P's interest," it can be adequately interpreted as "if he could take an interest in X, P should do so." In cases where that conditional phrase is clearly met, saying that X is in P's interest may have direct prescriptive significance. In cases where that conditional phrase is not met, as in some cases concerning infants, animals, and the infirm, the prescriptive component remains subjunctive.

¹⁰ Frey, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Chapters VII and VIII.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88, 89-90.

¹³ The argument of this paragraph is developed at length by Norman Malcolm in "Thoughtless Brutes," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* XLVI (1972-73). I would like to thank one of the referees of this paper for drawing my attention to this excellent article.

¹⁴ In the previously noted article, Malcolm carefully distinguishes between "thinking that," which does not require linguistic ability, and "having the thought that," which does require linguistic ability. Frey does not draw a similar distinction between "believing that" and "having the belief that," nor could he add such a distinction to his analysis in order to escape some of the objections being raised here. This is because it would follow from deploying such a distinction while continuing to insist that desiring requires linguistic ability that one can desire something only when one has the relevant beliefs about it. But that is clearly false, for I can certainly desire something, e.g., that a long-winded speaker should finish, without having the belief that, for example, "he has not stopped talking" or "I would be happier if he would

stop talking." In order to desire that the speaker cease talking, I need only believe such things (if believing is required at all); I need not actually have (entertain, formulate, express to myself) such beliefs. Consequently, Frey cannot benefit from Malcolm's analysis of ordinary language; he must somehow discredit that analysis.

¹⁵ Malcolm, *ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁶ Frey, *op. cit.*, p. 88. Two of the three referees for this paper raised this objection.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁹ Just in case someone might be tempted to counter that "false belief" is just convenient shorthand for referring to believing that some sentence is false, we may quickly note that that is not the case. We can falsely believe that something is true and truly believe that something is false. The true/false predicate attaching to the belief need not be the

same as that employed in expressing what is believed; so, the former cannot be just a shorthand reference to the latter. It might also be countered that Frey could escape this objection by again referring to his interpreting believing in terms of what one would assent to, if asked. However, that interpretation would leave us predicating truth and falsity of dispositions, readiesses, or what-one-would-do's, which would be very strange, to say the least. So, rather than that interpretation providing an escape from this objection, it would seem that predicating truth and falsity of beliefs provides another *reductio* of that interpretation.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²² I would like to thank all three *Ethics & Animals* referees of my paper for many helpful suggestions and criticisms and the editor of this journal for the opportunity to expand my paper to benefit from those suggestions and criticisms.

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All material submitted for publication in *Ethics & Animals* should be addressed to the Editor. Reviews and articles should be typed, on one side of the paper only. One copy is sufficient for all submissions except articles, of which three copies are requested. Reviews, reports, directory entries, and other such matter are screened only by the E&A staff, but article manuscripts are evaluated by 'blind' referees. To facilitate such 'blind' reviewing of articles the author's name should not appear on the manuscript, but should be on a separate sheet of paper which also bears the title of article. If possible, authors should also remove internal references which would identify them (such as "as I argued in my article on animal liberation in *The Journal of Beasts*"). Such references can be re-inserted before publication.