

is overly individualistic, linking the notion too closely to "a rejection of background and tradition." She also suggests that Carrie's life might well be enhanced were both she and others to have a greater respect for her autonomy, and ends by claiming that line drawing is not the appropriate metaphor for sorting out the moral complexities of intraspecific ethics.

Professor Sapontzis, like Comstock, reads Frey as asserting that autonomy is a crucially important determinant of a being's moral standing, but can find no justification for assigning it such an overweening status. As Sapontzis sees it, valorizing autonomy is a result of either logical errors, or of arbitrarily insisting that the preferences of a subclass of human beings ought to be a universally valid standard of moral worth. Furthermore, even were Frey able to show that possessing autonomy did confer on human beings "moral superiority," it would not follow that humans had the right to exploit and kill nonhumans.

Professor Frey* has many reservations about Comstock's analysis—he is not convinced, for instance, that Carrie's life is bereft of autonomy in the same way that the lives of nonhumans are—but his main objection is that his position has been misconstrued. As a utilitarian, he does not assign to autonomy any kind of "trump card" status. Possessing autonomy does not guarantee the inviolability of one's life or other interests against sufficiently important competing interests. Nor does lacking it render a being without moral value.

All these essays inspire reflection on how to refine our understanding of autonomy, and on why it is morally important. Such activity is a genuine contribution to moral discourse about the place of nonhumans in a secular, pluralistic society.

* Professor Frey's commentary, presented at the March, 1990 Society for the Study of Ethics and Animals meeting, was not available for publication.

In Praise of Pigs

Pigs are the breath of the mud,
the bristly warmth of tough skin,
the outcome of ovals and curves.
Pigs are earth movers,
rooting for what is buried—
philosophers' stones, sapphires, gold—
which things pigs know are found
with the worms, the grubs, and the snails.
Pigs love life,
the touching of snouts,
the squealing of throats,
the unimportance of eyes.

Susan J. Armstrong