

A vertical light streak on a black background, transitioning from a bright yellow center to a deep red outer edge, with a soft, blurred appearance.

# The Jungle





**Animal Agriculture:  
Important Concepts**

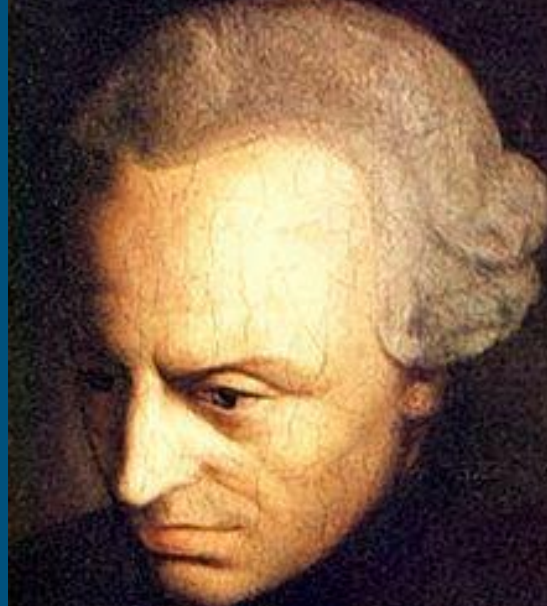
**Various ethicists argue for animal agriculture reform, although their reasons vary widely...**

**Reason #1:  
Animals have rights.**

Regan ([1986](#)) argues for...

- ❖ Complete dissolution of animal agriculture
- ❖ Abolition of use of animals in science
- ❖ Elimination of commercial and sport hunting

An indirect duty view is a view that entails that one should abstain from doing certain acts to a victim, not because of the effect on the victim, but because you would be violating the rights of a third party related to the victim.





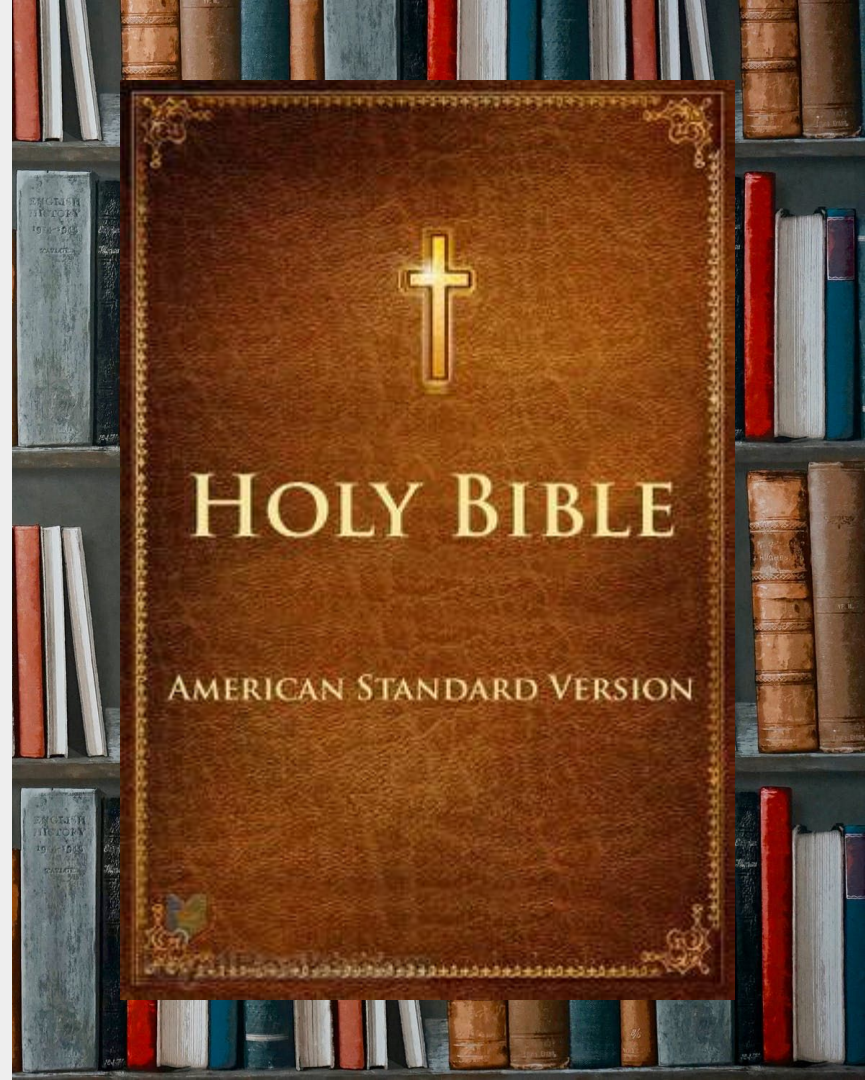
Aristotle in his [\*Politics\* \(Book I, Part VIII\)](#) wrote that plants are created for the sake of animals and the animals for the sake of man both for food and clothing.



In his *Summa Theologiae* ([Part 2, Question 64, Article 1](#)) Aquinas wrote that animals are intended for man's use. He argued, hence, that it is not wrong for man to make use of them either by killing or in any other way whatsoever.



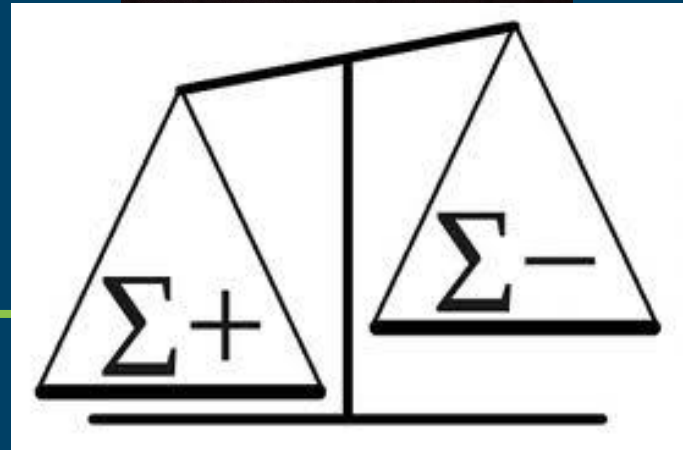
**“The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything” (Genesis 9: 2-3).**





Even Descartes believed that animals were just automata, so they could not feel pain (see [Harrison 1992](#) for analysis).

A **direct duty view** is a view that entails that one should abstain from doing certain acts strictly because you would be violating the rights of the victim.

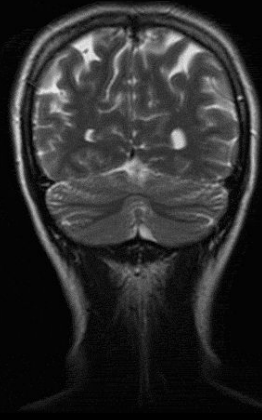


# Regan on Personhood:

Inherent value, i.e. rights, belongs equally to all those who are the subjects of a life.

A **subject of a life** is a *conscious creature* having an *individual welfare* that has importance to it, regardless of its usefulness to others.

Regan has a rather **bold** way of arguing:  
He argues against every other major ethical theory,  
thereby only leaving his in the final analysis.



# Regan Against

## Social Contract Theory

Technically a society can “agree” to follow certain rules, but sometimes these rules are clearly immoral, e.g., segregation laws. This shows that morality and our “social contracts” are independent of each other.

---





**Law**

**vs**

**Ethics**

# Regan Against

## Virtue Theory

There are no guarantees that developing one particular virtue will lead to morally upright behavior. Consider the generous racist.

---



**E.g., The Genius Misanthrope**

As another example consider this **moral compartmentalization...**

Despite their abhorrent genocidal policies towards various groups, the Nazis had extensive animal protections laws that prohibited, for example, the boiling alive of lobsters ([Arluke and Sax 1992](#)).



# Regan Against

## Utilitarianism

Notice that the Utilitarians value one thing above all else— happiness/pleasure. In other words, humans and animals don't have any real value; only their feelings do. Consider the cup analogy.

---



For Utilitarians, it's not the humans that matter, it's their feelings. But it's obvious that humans (and animals) have *inherent* value. Any theory that does not recognize this is flawed.

---



# Objections to Regan



Mary Anne Warren (1987) argues that...

---

The subject-of-a-life criterion cannot provide us with moral guidance in our interactions with the vast majority of animals.

It's too vague.

This view of rights cannot resolve moral debates; hence it is flawed.



Subjects of a life?


Warren: A better criterion for rights is sentience.

— It is easier to discover, in principle, since it has a physiological basis.

Moreover, if you have other qualities, such as moral agency and reason, you get “weightier” rights.


E.g., the rights of a full-fledged human *outweigh* the rights of a fetus.

(Stay tuned; see also Lovering 2004).



**“Their pain, their suffering, their loneliness, their innocence, their death. Anger. Rage. Pity. Sorrow. Disgust. The whole creation groans under the weight of the evil we humans visit upon these mute, powerless creatures.**

**It *is* our hearts, not just our heads, that call for an end to it all, that demand of us that we overcome, for them, the habits and forces behind their systematic oppression. All great movements, it is written, go through three stages: ridicule, discussion, adoption. It is the realization of this third stage, adoption, that requires both our passion and our discipline, our hearts and our heads.**



**The fate of animals is in our hands. God grant we are equal to the task”  
(Regan 1986: 189).**

**Reason #2:**

**Raising livestock is fueling global climate change.**



By some estimates, animal agriculture accounts for 9% of total carbon dioxide emissions, 40% of total methane emissions, and 65% of total nitrous oxide emissions.



Moreover:

1. The price of meat will soar by 2050, due to population growth.
2. The ongoing droughts in parts of the world will make raising livestock unsustainable.
3. Rising temperatures will also hurt production of staple crops like maize and wheat.

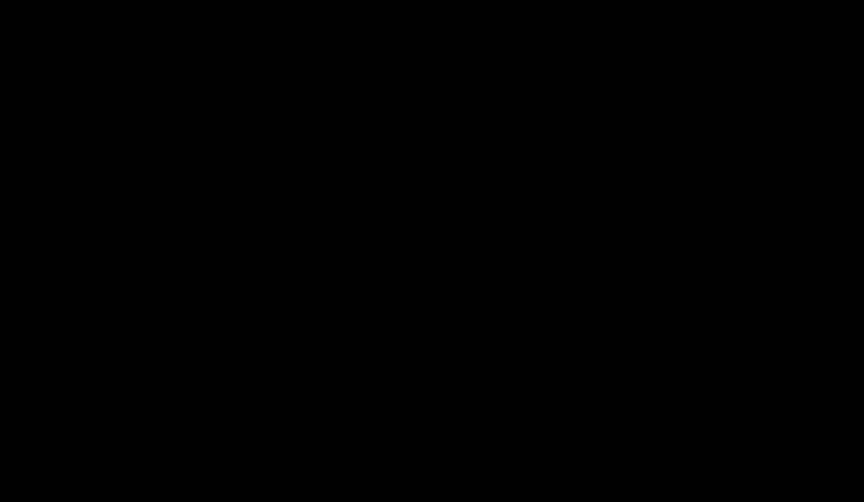


These problems have been sufficiently alarming that the UN has urged people to [eat more insects](#) to ease world hunger.



# Six-Course Insect-Based Meal









FIREBOX



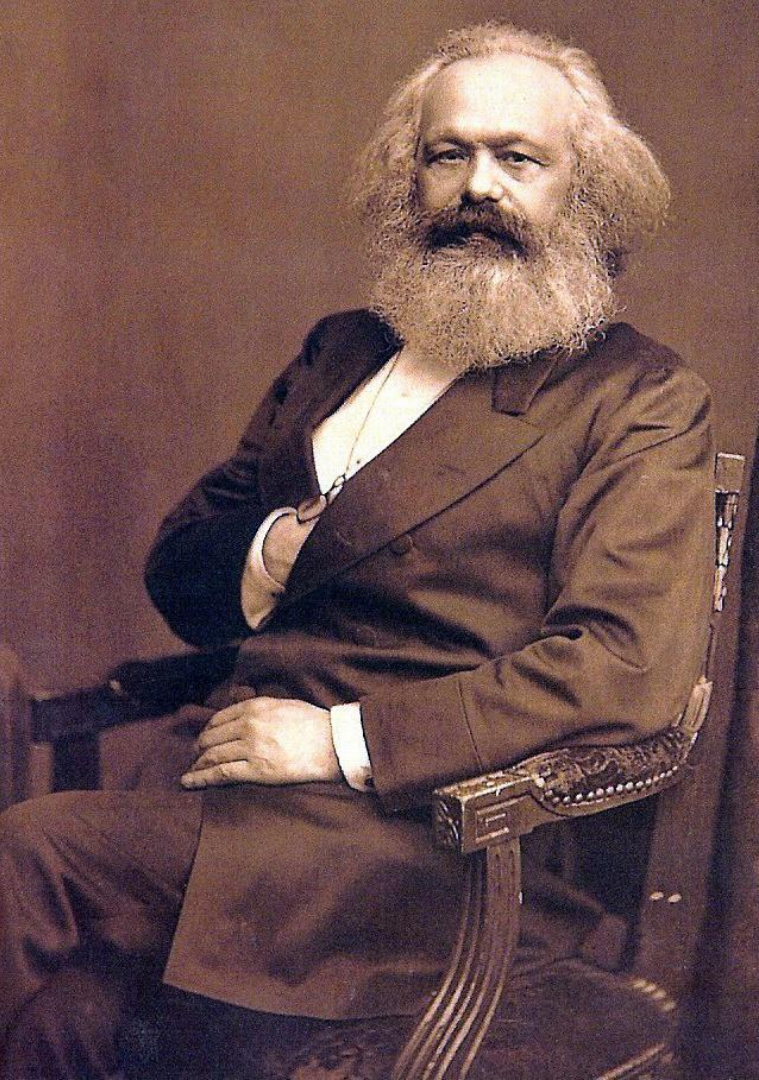




**Reason #3:**

**Animal agriculture has negative effects on its workers.**





Denied breaks, US poultry workers wear diapers on the job.

Factory farming often has very questionable working conditions, which some argue lead to higher incidence of crime, although this is disputed.



*Food for thought...*

**The entry into the discussion of global climate change and workers' rights complicates the issue significantly...**



According to the EPA, about 75% of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from our transportation sector, our production of electricity, and our industrial sector.

As such, a **consumerist lifestyle** contributes to GHG emissions, since the products we buy have to be manufactured (using natural resources and electricity) and then delivered to us or our local retail establishment.

S | D E B A R

It is also the case that materialistic values are associated with:

1. decrease in prosocial behaviors,
2. increase in apathy towards environmental issues, and
3. increase in feelings of depression and lack of fulfilment

(Kasser 2002; see also [this video](#) based on Kasser's work).



# Literature on Materialism/Consumer Culture

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. ([2000](#)). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.

Dittmar, H. (2008). *Consumer culture, identity, and well-being: The search for the 'good life' and the 'body perfect'*. Hove & New York: Psychology Press.

Kasser, T. (2002). *The high price of materialism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kasser, T., Cohn, S., Kanner, A. D., & Ryan, R. M. ([2007](#)). Some costs of American corporate capitalism: A psychological exploration of value and goal conflicts. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18, 1-22.



Context...

[According to the EPA](#), about 75% of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from our transportation sector, our production of electricity, and our industrial sector.

As such, a **consumerist lifestyle** contributes to GHG emissions, since the products we buy have to be manufactured (using natural resources and electricity) and then delivered to us or our local retail establishment.





Baylor Johnson ([2003](#)) argues that under current circumstances, individuals do not have obligations to reduce their **personal** contributions to GHG emissions, only to fight for policy that mandates **collective action**.

This is because only the coercive apparatus of the state is powerful enough to actually bring about effective change.

On the other hand, Hourdequin ([2010:444](#)) argues that...

“[W]e have moral obligations to work toward collective agreements that will slow global climate change and mitigate its impacts, [but] it is **also** true that individuals have obligations to reduce their personal contributions to the problem”



**“Confucian philosophy does not understand the individual as an isolated, rational actor. Instead, the Confucian self is defined relationally. Persons are constituted by and through their relations with others...**

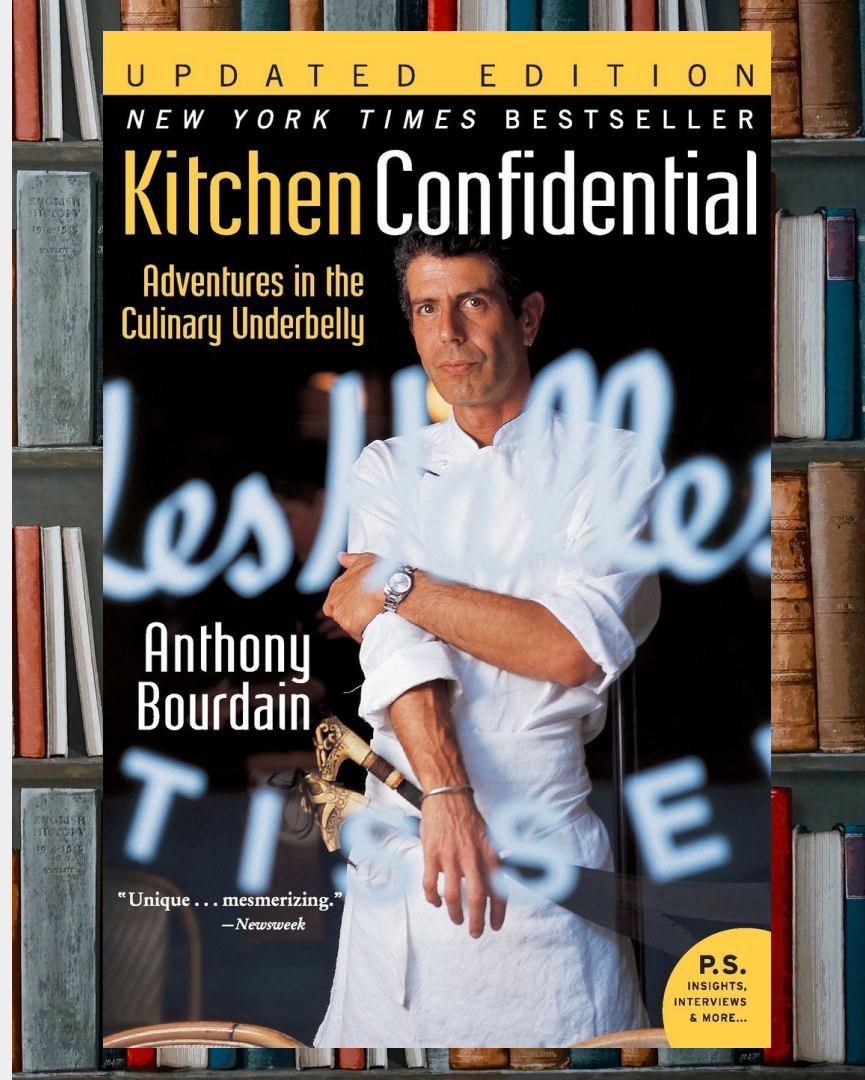
**The Confucian model is, further, one in which individuals look to one another as examples, learning from one another what constitutes virtuous behaviour. Confucius believes that moral models have magnetic power, and virtuous individuals can effect moral reform through their actions by inspiring others to change themselves” (Hourdequin 2010: 452-3).**

**On the issue of workers' rights...**



Even if you're a vegan, and hence are not directly exploiting animals for sustenance, unless you grow your own foods, you are still using the exploited labor of farm workers ([Linder 1992, ch 1](#)).

In *Kitchen Confidential*, Anthony Bourdain (2000: 55-63) reminds his readers that that overwhelming majority of line cooks at fine dining restaurants are non-European immigrants, whether you're eating French, Italian or Japanese cuisine.



**Taking stock...**

**Regan awards animals rights based on some cognitive capacity that they have, i.e., being the subject-of-a-life.**

**This is a neo-Kantian perspective.**

**Warren responds with a version of Utilitarianism.**

Taking stock...

Johnson argues that we need not concern ourselves with individual actions to curb climate change, instead only fighting for a policy of collective action, via a type of social contract theory.

And Hourdequin responds to Johnson with a Confucian-inspired virtue ethics, arguing that both individual **and** collective actions should be taken to reduce our GHG emissions.



Round

1

2

3

4

