

Justice for Hedgehogs: A Philosophical Journey into Animal Rights and Human Obligations



In his thought-provoking and wide-ranging book, "Justice for Hedgehogs," the renowned philosopher Ronald Dworkin delves into the ethical and legal

complexities surrounding animal rights and human obligations. Through a series of engaging and meticulously crafted chapters, Dworkin challenges prevailing notions of justice and equality, arguing that animals are not merely property or resources for human exploitation but rather beings with inherent moral value.



Justice for Hedgehogs by Ronald Dworkin

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 4.4 out of 5

- Language : English
- File size : 855 KB
- Text-to-Speech : Enabled
- Screen Reader : Supported
- Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
- Word Wise : Enabled
- Print length : 521 pages



The Foundations of Animal Rights

Dworkin begins by exploring the philosophical foundations of animal rights, drawing insights from both traditional and contemporary thinkers. He argues that animals, like humans, are capable of experiencing pain and suffering, and that their interests should therefore be taken into account when making moral decisions. He rejects the traditional view that animals are mere property, arguing that their intrinsic value derives from their capacity for awareness, feeling, and agency.

The Legal Framework for Animal Protection

While acknowledging the progress made in animal protection laws, Dworkin argues that the legal framework is still inadequate in safeguarding animal

welfare. He examines the various legal mechanisms that currently exist to protect animals, such as anti-cruelty statutes and laws governing animal experimentation and factory farming. However, he finds that these laws often fail to provide sufficient protection for animals, prioritizing human interests over animal well-being.

The Case for Animal Equality

Dworkin makes a compelling case for extending the concept of equality to animals. He argues that just as humans have fundamental rights that cannot be infringed upon, so too do animals have a right to live free from unnecessary pain and suffering. He challenges the idea that animals are inherently inferior to humans and that their interests are therefore somehow less important.

The Future of Animal Justice

Dworkin concludes with a vision for the future of animal justice, urging for a fundamental shift in our attitudes and practices towards animals. He calls for a legal system that truly protects animal interests, for an end to animal exploitation in all its forms, and for a society that recognizes the inherent value of all living beings.

Key Themes

Throughout the book, Dworkin explores several key themes that are central to the debate surrounding animal rights and human obligations:

- **Sentience and Moral Considerability:** Dworkin argues that sentience, the capacity to experience pain and suffering, is the primary basis for moral considerability. Animals, like humans, possess

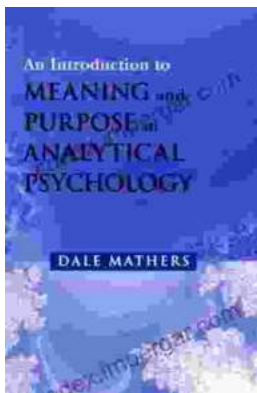
sentience and therefore have a moral right to be treated with respect and compassion.

- **The Limits of Human Domination:** Dworkin challenges the idea that humans have an absolute right to dominate animals for their own purposes. He argues that the dominance of humans over animals is not morally justified and should be limited to cases where it is absolutely necessary for human survival or well-being.
- **The Paradox of Pets:** Dworkin explores the paradoxical nature of our relationship with animals as pets. While pets are often treated as members of the family and given affection and care, they are still ultimately owned and dominated by humans. Dworkin argues that this paradox highlights the need for a more consistent and ethical approach to animal relationships.
- **The Role of Law and Morality:** Dworkin argues that the law has a vital role to play in protecting animal interests and promoting animal justice. However, he also emphasizes the importance of morality and individual responsibility, urging for a change in our attitudes and behaviors towards animals.

"Justice for Hedgehogs" is a powerful and provocative work that challenges our moral and legal obligations towards animals. Dworkin's rigorous philosophical arguments and passionate advocacy for animal rights make this book a must-read for anyone interested in ethical issues, animal welfare, and the future of justice. By extending the concept of equality to animals, Dworkin envisions a more just and compassionate society that respects and values the inherent worth of all living beings.



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