

Some vocabulary

partly good / partly bad:

x is overall good: the goodness of x outweighs the badness

x is overall bad: the badness of x outweighs the goodness

instrumental good (instrumental value):

intrinsic good (intrinsic value):

instrumental / intrinsic bad (instrumental/intrinsic disvalue):

utilitarianism: (not a full definition yet) what makes actions morally wrong or morally permissible is how much moral goodness or badness they cause

Singer's argument

1. If two humans have experiences of the same type, to the same degree, then these experiences have the same intrinsic (dis)value.
2. If there were a difference between humans and animals such that animal experiences of the same type and degree were not as intrinsically valuable as human experiences of that type and degree, then some human experiences of the same type and degree would not be equally intrinsically valuable. [All differences between humans and animals that might explain a difference in the value of their experiences also exist between some humans]
3. Thus, if an animal and human have experiences of the same type and degree, then these have the same intrinsic value.
4. Some animals can have experiences that have intrinsic (dis)value when had by human beings.
5. Thus...

For example:

Some philosophers have claimed that human pain or pleasure is more (dis)valuable than animal pain or pleasure because humans are intelligent or rational:

If being x is more intelligent or rational than being y , then the pain of being x is morally more bad than the pain of being y .

In groups:

- i. Come up with the best counterexample you can either to premise 1 or to premise 2; if you give a counterexample to premise 1, make sure it is relevant to comparing the value of animal and human experiences.

- ii. Using your counterexample, articulate a conditional that states when the experiences of one being are more morally (dis)valuable than the experiences (of the same type and degree) of another being. This should be the most plausible one you can think of, although you might not believe that it is true. It should look something like:

If being x is _____ compared to being y , then the pain of being x is morally more bad than the pain of being y .

- iii. Give a counterexample to your conditional from (ii), or an argument that it is true.