should (morally) be treated as ends in themselves, but he (nor anyone else, to my knowledge) has not demonstrated that only moral agents should (morally) be treated as ends in themselves. Furthermore, since what, from the Kantian perspective, is supposed to be unique about moral agents is our ability to act disinterestedly, impartially, fairly, etc., it hardly seems credible that possessing this capacity can morally justify our pursuing our self-interest and exploiting animals. Citing our ability to act out of a sense of justice as the justification for saying that we need not worry about justice when it comes to our dealings with animals would seem to be a paradigm of a practical contradiction. Hence, even if animals are incapable of being moral agents, it is at least doubtful that this entitles us to exploit them.

Thus, animals' innocence, i.e., their inability to be fully moral agents, can contribute to answering the "But animals eat other animals!" objection to animal rights and can do so without leaving animal rights vulnerable to the Kantian side of the Dilemma of Innocence. That seems to me how it enters seriously into the animal rights debate.

Notes

1. We may also note that the suggestion in F2 that it is morally acceptable to treat criminals as mere means to society's satisfactions would likely not be accepted by morally concerned people today.


3. I discuss these "But animals eat other animals!" complexities to animal rights at greater length in Chapter 6 of my forthcoming Morals, Reason, and Animals.

(continued from p. 11)