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The open society and its animals

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Propositions relating to the dissertation

The Open Society and Its Animals by Janneke Vink

1. Strengthening the political and legal position of sentient non-human animals in liberal democracies would improve the open society.
2. Sentient non-human animals on the territory of liberal democratic states have a principled right to have their interests considered by the political rulers of those states.
3. It is unlikely that a normatively acceptable enfranchisement of sentient non-human animals can be established by merely adjusting the political institutions of liberal democracies.
4. Fundamental legal animal rights can establish a normatively acceptable enfranchisement of sentient non-human animals.
5. Modern works of political and legal philosophy about themes in which the interests of individuals play a central role that fail to reflect on the interests of sentient non-human animals are by definition inconclusive.
6. An uncritical acceptance in political philosophy of the fiction that all humans are perfectly rational political agents and the related failure to distinguish between political agents and political patients and the respective political rights to which they are entitled are harmful, because they lead to an undertheorizing about the political position of political patients in general and non-human animals in particular.
7. Legal objectivity implies having no special regard for species membership whenever this is an irrelevant factor.
8. In contemplating the enfranchisement of non-human animals, political and legal philosophers can learn from ideas put forward in the context of the enfranchisement of future people and from how children's interests are currently institutionally protected in liberal democracies.
9. Human rights are animal rights.
10. The law curriculum of universities should prepare law students for a future in which the unicity of humans, and thus the classical foundation for fundamental human rights, is likely to be increasingly scientifically contested, and the curriculum should thus elaborate on alternative foundations for fundamental rights.