The Model

1. An Interest-Based Model of Moral Status

THESES I: Being human is neither necessary nor sufficient for moral status.
We are all acquainted with consciousness. How to define it another matter. I suspect that the concept of consciousness (not to be confused with the nature of moral status) is too basic to be analyzed in the manner of a classical definition. I will content myself by saying that consciousness—what some philosophers call phenomenal consciousness—is subjective experience. You can never experience anything in a positive or negative way and can never experience anything in a passive or active way. Only conscious beings can have such experiences, and conscious beings—the only conscious beings—have experiences in consciousness. The biological needs of unconscious living things are not better candidates for consciousness than the Moon's need for interstellar space.

Recall that moral status is possible only when there are interests or a concern about living things. So, in my judgment, the challenge is unsuccessful. The possession of values or aims fulfills the function of which one does not care about (emotionally) and therefore have moral status. If correct, this reasoning suggests that the possession of aims based on values is like emotion—sufficient for having interests. If we think about this, we realize that a being could be sentient even if it does not have moral status because it could feel good upon achieving its aims, just as we feel good upon achieving our aims. The capacity for consciousness is the capacity to have pleasant or unpleasant experiences. This is sufficient for having interests because pleasant or unpleasant experiences can also be good or bad.

Sentence 3: Sentence is necessary and sufficient for moral status. It adds hedonic valence to consciousness. This is sufficient for having interests because pleasant or unpleasant experiences can be good or bad. If the aims are thwarted, the being will feel bad. If the aims are achieved, the being will feel good. This being would be sentient even if it did not have moral status, as long as it felt the same way we do. A system of ethics such as those who are conscious are not sentient, and who have the aims of performing certain actions and achieving certain goals. Being sentient is necessary for moral status. If something is or is not, it is, and if it is, it is not. This claim would lack moral status. Consciousness is necessary but not sufficient.
The use of personal, conative, and affective components in the decision-making process is highlighted, particularly in the context of moral judgments and ethical considerations. The interplay between these components is explored, showing how they influence the formation of moral intuitions and the development of ethical reasoning.

The text emphasizes the importance of understanding the underlying cognitive mechanisms that give rise to moral intuitions and their role in guiding moral decision-making. It argues that a comprehensive account of moral reasoning must take into account the interrelated processes of motivation, emotion, and cognition.

The discussion is underpinned by empirical evidence from various fields, including psychology, neuroscience, and cognitive science, which provide insights into the processes by which moral intuitions develop and are influenced by personal and social factors.

The text concludes with a call for further research to deepen our understanding of moral reasoning and to develop more effective strategies for promoting ethical decision-making.
What might such equal consideration look like? Presumptively, I suggest, it takes a consequentialist form—not necessarily utilitarianism but some approach that focuses on producing the best, or sufficiently good, results. If so, this means that tradeoffs among individuals’ interests to promote the overall good are prima facie permissible, so long as they are compatible with equal consideration—that is, with ascribing equal moral weight to prudentially comparable interests. The justification of equal consequentialist consideration rests on the claim that its overall implications are more plausible on reflection than those of a more radical approach that would attribute utility-trumping rights to all sentient beings. I should acknowledge, however, that I lack any knock-down argument against the latter approach and simply submit my approach for consideration.

THESIS 7:sentient beings with narrative self-awareness have special interests that ground the added protection of moral rights.

This is where I claim that a fairly specific conception of personhood is useful. Persons—defined here as beings with the type of self-awareness that makes narrative identities possible—have particular long-term interests that include projects, enduring relationships, and sometimes fairly detailed life plans. For this reason, consequentialist tradeoffs of their most important general interests (e.g., life, various liberties, bodily security) for the common good can easily spoil the long-term interests. Rights, by blocking those tradeoffs, protect both kinds of interests. So equal consequentialist consideration is consistent with, and arguably justifies, the attribution of rights to persons—beings with narrative identities. By a narrative identity, I mean a temporally structured self-conception in which one understands one’s life as having a detailed past and a future with various possibilities for growth and change. Someone with a narrative identity has relatively rich episodic memories and intentions; continuing the metaphor, she understands her life as a sort of story with different chapters. Ordinarily, human children seem to acquire a narrative identity, in rudimentary form, around age 3 or 4. I contend that the attribution of rights is justified not only along consequentialist lines, as just discussed, but also on the basis of deontological respect for individuals with such self-awareness. (The ethical theory I favor features both well-being and respect as fundamental values.)

Many animals, although lacking narrative identities, have nontrivial temporal self-awareness. To the extent that they do, they have longer-term interests such as maintaining certain relationships (as many mammals have) or a distant goal such as ascending a social hierarchy (as a chimpanzee might).

I suggest that animals who have nontrivial temporal self-awareness that falls short of a narrative identity should be ascribed rights of partial strength that afford some protection against consequentialist tradeoffs of their important interests. The strength of these rights plausibly varies with the extent of their temporal self-awareness. I believe scientific evidence supports the thesis that such animals include dogs, wolves, pigs, monkeys, elephants, great apes, and cetaceans. Animals with only trivial or no temporal self-awareness, on the present account, would enjoy the default moral protection of equal consequentialist consideration but not that of rights.

THESIS 8: beings who are reasonably expected to become sentient should be protected as if they already were sentient (in effect, giving equal consideration to their expected future interests); and those who are reasonably expected to become persons should be protected as if they already had rights.

All and only sentient beings have interests. Beings who will become sentient will later have interests. So, in a derivative sense, they may be said to have interests now—for example, not to incur injuries that will burden them once their mental life comes on board. For this reason, we should treat beings who are expected to become sentient in important respects as if they already had moral status—for example, not injuring them gratuitously. Individuals who will become persons will later have special narrative-identity-related interests such as having certain opportunities, maintaining valued relationships, and achieving their dreams. In a derivative way, they may be said already to have interests in conditions that serve to protect their future interests. For example, if negligently injured in utero, the individual might develop into a person who cannot pursue certain projects due to effects of the injury. Thus, we should in important respects treat individuals who are expected to become persons as if they already had rights that protected their most important interests against consequentialist tradeoffs.

Consider a challenge to Thesis 8. One might argue that it assigns moral status to certain presentent individuals, such as early fetuses that are expected to come to term, on the basis of our intentions (e.g., not to abort) and other extrinsic factors (e.g., access to competent medical care in case complications arise during pregnancy)—factors that affect whether we reasonably expect a presentent individual to become sentient. Yet we have defined moral status as a type of inherent moral value. It is contradictory to assert that moral status is inherent, based only on an individual’s intrinsic properties, yet in certain cases it depends on extrinsic factors.
2.2 Nonpartisan Humans

Until now, for more difficult cases, decision-makers have attempted to resolve disputes by invoking a principle of fairness, but the problem is that this principle may not be applied in a consistent and fair manner. In this model, the decision-maker is expected to consider all factors equally and to arrive at a decision that is fair to all parties involved.

2.1 Ordinary, self-aware human beings

Given the complexities of human behavior and the challenges of determining what is fair, it is essential to develop a model that can accurately reflect the diverse interests and perspectives of individuals. In doing so, the decision-maker must consider the interests of all parties and strive to achieve a fair outcome.

2. Implications

In this model, the interests of individuals are given equal weight, and decisions are made to ensure that all parties are treated equally. This approach can help to reduce conflicts and promote social harmony.

The implications of this model include:

- Increased trust and confidence in the decision-making process
- Reduced conflicts and disputes
- Greater social harmony and cohesion
- Improved decision-making outcomes

These implications suggest that the development of a model that accurately reflects the interests of all parties and considers all factors is crucial for achieving fair and just outcomes.
2.4 Robots and advanced AI systems

2.3 Nonhuman animals

extracted full model names, explained earlier to cover them. For realizable biological reasons, these inferences are to be
considered only in context of the present paper. The core of the model is not intended to be a
model of the real world, but rather a model of how the real world might be understood, given
the constraints of biology and cognition. This is a problem that is best addressed by
techniques such as those described in the paper. However, it is also
important to consider the role of models in explaining human behavior and
cognition, and the potential implications for our understanding of
these phenomena. The models presented in this paper are intended to
highlight the complexity and richness of human cognition, and to
provide a framework for understanding the role of models in
explaining human behavior. It is important to keep in mind that
models are tools for understanding, and that they do not
necessarily reflect reality. The models presented in this paper are
meant to be illustrative, and should not be taken as definitive.
An enhanced homing species

In the case of advanced robots, the principles that underlie the properties that enhance the ability of robots to find their way back to their home base without much guidance from the environment are not fully understood. However, some models of how information is processed in the brain have provided insights into these processes. In particular, the hippocampus plays a crucial role in spatial navigation. The ability of the hippocampus to encode and recall spatial information is believed to be related to its ability to form new connections and to modify existing ones. These modifications are thought to be mediated by synaptic plasticity, which allows the hippocampus to adapt to changes in the environment. This adaptability is thought to be essential for the ability of robots to navigate in novel environments.

2.5 Brain organisation

As we will have in the case of advanced robots, the hippocampus is responsible for spatial navigation. However, the mechanisms by which the hippocampus processes spatial information are not fully understood. Nevertheless, recent advances in computational neuroscience have provided new insights into how the hippocampus encodes spatial information. These insights have been used to develop new algorithms for navigation and to improve the performance of autonomous robots.
AN INTEREST-BASED MODEL OF MORAL STANCE

References

Note

4. The theory of pure reason states that we need to define personal beliefs as knowledge is subjective.

5. For an extended argument, see De Grazia (1996a). For a fuller account, see De Grazia (1996b). For a further extended argument, see De Grazia (1996c).

6. These and other references are included in De Grazia (1996a, chaps. 7).

7. These are the key points of De Grazia (1996a, chaps. 7).
I. Theorizing about Moral Status

Joshua Shepherd

The Moral Status of Conscious Subjects

However, many of these accounts are not. What is striking is that the light comes of healthy and happy humans, and some are not. Of course, some of these are prohibited or unethical outside.