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"Animal Suffering: An Evolutionary Approach"

Aitken, Gill

Aitken, Gill. "Animal Suffering: An Evolutionary Approach." *Environmental Values* 17, no. 2 (2008): 165–80. doi:10.3197/096327108X303837 .

Though much is written about animal suffering, little is said about the nature of suffering itself. Without any clarity about its conceptual nature, discussions concerning detection, prevention and reduction of suffering are seriously hampered. This paper considers—and rejects—some of the more usual understandings of suffering (such as that suffering is synonymous with either pain or negative emotions). Instead, an alternative understanding of suffering is proposed, namely that suffering is the experiencing of one's life as going badly. This notion is tied to the loss of individuals' central life projects. It is suggested that non-human animals' central projects are their evolved survival skills. This alternative view of suffering has major implications for animal welfare. — Text from The White Horse Press website

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