Apologies in advance for this 1NC

## 1

#### Interpretation: The affirmative debater must defend all forms of appropriation as being unjust.

#### “The appropriation of outer space” suggests the topic is about appropriation as a singular concept, not one instance of appropriation among many

Wylie **Breckenridge** (lecturer in philosophy at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia; PhD, Oxford). “On Russell's Theory of Definite Descriptions.” 9 December **2009**  <http://wylieb.com/Philosophy/DipArts/Russell.pdf>

Second, he appeals to the similarity of definite descriptions with indefinite descriptions - phrases like 'a man', 'some man', 'all men', etc. **It is intuitively acceptable to say that in 'Some man is my father'** the indefinite description '**Some** man' **does not purport to refer to any particular thing**, and that the statement can be interpreted as 'There is least one man that is my father'. Russell claims that **'The man is my father'** is just like 'Some man is my father', except that it also **asserts uniqueness. So it should be interpreted** in a similar vein as 'There is at least one man that is my father, and there is at most one man that is my father', or **as 'There is exactly one** man that is my father'. In general, he claims that it is natural to move from interpreting 'Some Φ is Ψ' as 'At least one Φ is Ψ' to interpreting 'The Φ is Ψ' as 'At least one thing is Φ, at most one thing is Φ, and whatever is Φ is Ψ'. Third, he shows how his theory can solve three 'puzzles' about definite descriptions. The first is the problem about 'The evening star' and 'The morning star'. (The example that Russell uses is actually about 'Scott' and 'The author of Waverley', but I'll stick to the morning and evening stars.) The problem is that the truth of 'The evening star is the morning star' is interesting, and yet when we replace 'the morning star' by 'the evening star' (which denotes the same thing) we get the uninterestingly true statement 'The evening star is the evening star'. Russell's solution is that the apparently co-referring definite descriptions do not refer at all. The original statement is not about a thing called 'the morning star'; it just includes a claim about the unique existence of a thing with certain properties. So we cannot make the substitution in the way suggested. The second puzzle is that some statements involving definite descriptions seem to defy the law of the excluded middle. According to it, the King of England is either bald or not bald and so at least one of 'The King of England is bald' and 'The King of England is not bald' must be true. But if we listed all of the things which are bald and all of the things which are not bald we would not find the King of England on either list (because there is no King of England). So it seems that neither is true. Russell's solution is to point out that the law of the excluded middle says that the King of England is either on the first list or not on the first list. But not being on the first list is not the same as being on the second list - this is the important distinction between the two interpretations of 'The King of England is not bald' that we noted above. For the law of the excluded middle to hold, it only has to be the case that the King of England is either on the first list or not on the first list (and that is the case). It does not have to be the case that the King of England is either on the first list or on the second list (just as well - because this is not the case). The third puzzle came up in part I as well - how can we talk about things that do not exist in order to (truthfully) deny their existence? If we can talk about them then mustn't they, in some sense, exist? (Meinong thought yes.) Russell thinks no. His solution we have already seen - to deny that in the statement 'The greatest prime number does not exist' the word 'exists' is used as a predicate. Rather, the statement should be interpreted as saying 'It is not the case that there is exactly one greatest prime number'.

#### Violation: they only defend AAC asteroid mining

#### Standards:

#### [1] precision – the counter-interp justifies them arbitrarily doing away with random words in the resolution which decks negative ground and preparation because the aff is no longer bounded by the resolution. Independent voter for jurisdiction – the judge doesn’t have the jurisdiction to vote aff if there wasn’t a legitimate aff.

#### [2] Limits and ground – there’s infinite potential activity in space that the 1AC could defend like asteroid mining of one planet, exploration of one planet, and appropriation of any part of sapce– I have to prep against thousands of affs individually which massively skews engagement as you have infinite prep time to frontline your one aff whereas I won’t be prepared for yours – it wrecks neg prep since there’s marginal differences in the advantage but it takes out ground like [satellites, asteroids, solar power, and resources] which are some of the few neg generics when affs spec entities.

#### [3] tva – just read your aff as an advantage under a whole adv – still get spec education

#### Fairness – debate is a competitive activity that requires fairness for objective evaluation. o/w because it’s the only intrinsic part of debate – all other rules can be debated over but rely on some conception of fairness to be justified.

#### Drop the debater – a] deter future abuse and b] set better norms for debate.

#### Competing Interps:

#### [1] reasonability on t is incoherent: you’re either topical or you’re not – it’s impossible to be 77% topical, links to all limits offense

#### [2] functionally the same as reasonability – we debate over a specified briteline which is a counter interp

#### [3] judge intervention – judge has to intervene on what’s reasonable, creates a race to the bottom where debaters exploit judge tolerance for questionable argumentation.

#### No RVIs

#### [1] illogical for you to get offense just for being fair – it’s the 1ac’s burden

#### [2] baiting - rvi’s incentivize debaters to read abusive positions to win off theory

#### [3] discourages checking abuse since debaters will be afraid to lose on theory

## 2

#### Interpretation: The affirmative debater must have an advocate grounded in the topic literature that advocates for the entirety of the plan text.

#### Violation: They don’t

#### Standards

#### [1] Topic Lit – solvency advocates ensure the aff is in the topic lit and can be prepped for. Anything else incentivizes debaters to find fringe affs and turn them into policies – key to pre-round prep since I can’t prep affs that don’t exist, key to advocacy skills and testing the aff. Kills predictability since it makes neg burden impossible since one article could be blown up to an aff – justifies them being completely not grounded in the topic lit so you get affs like semi-autonomous or extra-T affs.

## 3

### Framing

**First, Practical Reason exists—**

**[A] An agent’s will acts on a law that it gives to itself. If pleasure were a law, then you would straightaway do the pleasurable act, but since you’re autonomous, you can reason about taking the action. Thus a condition of action is that the will is self-determined. Without practical reason, moral reason and action could not exist**

**Korsgaard**

“Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant” by Christine M. Korsgaard

“Now I’m going to argue that that sort of willing is impossible. The first step is this: : **to conceive** of **yourself as the cause of your actions is to identify with** **the principle of choice on which you act.** A rational will is a self-conscious causality, and a self-conscious causality is aware of itself as a cause. To be aware of yourself as a cause is to identify yourself with something in the scenario that gives rise to the action, and this must be the principle of choice. For instance**, suppose you experience a conflict** of desire: you have a desire to do both A and B, and they are incompatible. You have **some principle** that **favors** **A over B,** so you exercise this principle, and **you choose** to do **A. In this** kind of **case**, you do not regard yourself as a mere passive spectator to the battle between A and B. **You regard the choice as yours**, as the product of your own activity, **because you regard the principle** of choice **as expressive**, or representative, **of yourself.** You must do so, for **the** only **alternative** to identifying with the principle of choice **is regarding the principle** of choice **as some third** **thing in you**, another force on a par with the incentives to do A and to do B, which happened to throw in its weight in favor of A, in a battle at which you were, after all, a mere passive spectator. **But then you are not the cause** **of the action.** Self-conscious or rational agency, then, requires identification with the principle of choice on which you act.” (123)

**[B] Reason’s inescapable – Questioning if one can reason or why to reason requires reason, conceding authority to practical reason—outweighs because any other ethic begs the question of why, meaning it’s arbitrary and nonbinding**

**[C] Performativity – debating in this round forces reason in terms of evaluating arguments and having the authority to decide what to read**

**Second, a rational will must set ends with reciprocal constraints—**

**[A] Anything else justifies that someone could impede your ability to achieve your end in the first place and would restrict self-sufficiency, the root cause of action, which also means reason contains end-based framework.**

**Engstrom**, Stephen [“Universal Legislation As the Form of Practical Knowledge. University of Pittsburgh, ND]

I’ll begin with the case of natural justice. **Since this obligation is founded on the practical knowledge of self-sufficiency as an end, and since self-sufficiency, according to its very idea, can never be augmented, but only restricted, by the actions of others, the maxim we have to consider is one prescribing action that restricts others’ self-sufficiency**. This restriction can be more precisely characterized, however, as the **limitation of what Kant calls outer freedom**. For as I’ll now try to explain, outer freedom is just what self-sufficiency requires, as a negative condition, in relation to others. Kant describes outer freedom as an “**independence from the necessitating power of choice of another**” (MS237). In other words, **outer freedom lies in the independence of one’s capacity to pursue one’s ends from hindrance to its exercise stemming from the power of choice of 19another.** That one’s capacity to pursue one’s ends can be subject to such hindrance from another is, of course, clear. Where diverse persons share a practical world, where in other words they are present together in the world in such a way that it’s possible for any one of them both to know what action another of them intends and also to act in ways that prevent or hinder that action (or, as we might also say, where mutual recognition and mutual influence are possible), **the outer freedom of one such person is limited to the extent that another chooses to prevent or to hinder the former’s action and succeeds in the attempt.** Where a person’s actions constitute such hindrances they can accordingly be described—to borrow a phrase from Kant—as “assaults on the freedom... of others” (G430).**19 Now since the material ends a person pursues in acting are all united in the fundamental end of happiness, generically conceived, outer freedom amounts to independence from hindrances by others to one’s pursuit of that basic end. Thus any assault on this freedom, to the extent that it’s successful, is a limitation of a person’s capacity to realize this end. And since this capacity is just what self-sufficiency consists in, this freedom is nothing other than the independence from other persons requisite for self-sufficiency, and it can therefore be regarded,** in a negative sense**, as self-sufficiency itself in relation to others.** Given the preceding considerations, it’s a straightforward matter to see how a maxim of action that assaults the freedom of others with a view to furthering one’s own ends results in a contradiction when we attempt to will it as a universal law in accordance with the foregoing account of the formula of universal law. **Such a maxim would lie in a practical judgment that deems it good on the whole to act to limit others’ outer freedom, and hence their self-sufficiency, their capacity to realize their ends, where doing so** augments, or **extends, one’s own outer freedom and so also one’s own self-sufficiency.** 20Now on the interpretation we’ve been entertaining, applying the formula of universal law involves considering whether it’s possible for every person—every subject capable of practical judgment—to share the practical judgment asserting the goodness of every person’s acting according to the maxim in question. **Thus in the present case the application of the formula involves considering whether it’s possible for every person to deem good every person’s acting to limit others’ freedom, where practicable, with a view to augmenting their own freedom. Since here all persons are on the one hand deeming good both the limitation of others’ freedom and the extension of their own freedom, while on the other hand, insofar as they agree with the similar judgments of others, also deeming good the limitation of their own freedom and the extension of others’ freedom, they are all deeming good both the extension and the limitation of both their own and others’ freedom. These judgments are inconsistent insofar as the extension of a person’s outer freedom is incompatible with the limitation of that same freedom**.

**[B] If we are under that authority of reason, we act since we reason action is good. Actions can only be good because we have rationally chosen them. Respecting someone as a rational being means respecting their right to make decisions on their actions. That forbids infringing on other’s freedoms because it undermines value to action in the first place because every agent must be able to attribute value to an end. Anything else fails to attribute value to an action – making it impossible to determine moral action.**

**Thus, the standard is respecting a system of inner and outer freedom**

**Prefer:**

1. **Action Theory: Only reason can explain why we take transitional action to an overall end. For example, setting the end of tea provides me a reason to unify the necessary actions to produce tea, like getting a pot, filling it with water, etc. Any other explanation fails since it can’t give meaning to why we take transitioning action – freezing action. 2 Impacts—**
   1. **That’s a side constraint on the AC—ethics is a guide to action so it must appeal to a structure of action.**
   2. **Bindingness—reason is intrinsic to actions since only it can provide value to transitioning action, which justifies universality**
2. **Presume freedom since it allows each of us to pursue our individual search for ethics so the NC co-opts every reason your framework is good, but adds an additional side constraint. This also serves as a tiebreaker**

### Offense

#### Deontology’s theorization of humans being valuable as ends in themselves not just means necessitates privatization because each individuals ownership over themselves is converted into ownership of objects over space

Blodger 16 [Ian Blodger The Minnesota Journal of Law, Science & Technology 2016 Reclassifying Geostationar Reclassifying Geostationary Earth Orbit as Priv th Orbit as Private Property: Why ty: Why Natural Law and Utilitarian Theories of Property Demand Privatization <https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=mjlst> ]//aaditg

--Works w any NC that defends natural rights

--Geo = geostationary earth orbit

Analyzing the situation first from a Lockean perspective, GEO should be open to private ownership when individuals have invested their labor in the space.93 Companies that currently have satellites in orbit have invested time and resources sufficient to attain a property right in the orbital zone.94 Looking to the theories of Lockes work, which argue that an increase in value is a necessary condition for labor, satellites in GEO clearly meet the standard.95 Since space is essentially void,96 a satellites presence will increase the value of the space by generating industry and allowing for communications and other activities, which were not possible because that space was empty to begin with.97 One argument against this theory is that the space is at its highest value as void, since the voided area itself allows for travel through that point on future space missions.98 However, this argument would overstate the need for a spacecraft to cross the very narrow belt of satellites in GEO.99 It is also possible to argue that the satellite would produce higher values elsewhere, suggesting an opportunity cost and thus a net loss compared to the current location.100 However, this argument relies on the fluctuating value of the satellite and not the value of the GEO. Since the party launching the satellite already owns it, the question of its value has no bearing on whether they have improved the GEO area for purposes of Lockes theory.101 Thus, under this interpretation of Lockes labor requirement, the space is sufficiently increased in value so that it can be considered property. The same conclusion results under different interpretations of Lockes theory of property. The more general interpretation of Lockes theory is that any time someone interacts with something with the purpose of bringing about a better result, then that interaction constitutes labor and confers a property right in the object.102 The satellites themselves currently occupy a physical location, which does not change relative to Earths position.103 This position prevents other satellites from entering a wide area around the existing satellite, and prevents other satellites from transmitting on frequencies, which are already in use.104 These qualities denote at least a transitive interaction between the person and the GEO area through the satellite, since it was the individuals purpose to place the satellite in that location. Lockes example of tilling the land suggests that transitive relationships between a person and the object of his action are sufficient to confer a property interest.105 Thus, tilling and planting do not necessarily require the actor to physically touch the soil with his body, but rather allow him to do so through the use of tools.106 In the context of a satellite as well, the person who sends the satellite into orbit has a connection with his property and that of the orbital zone.107 This makes sense on the metaphysical level. For Locke, the reason a persons labor converts common areas into private zones is because each person owns his body.108 Here, ownership over the body is converted into ownership over a satellite, and that satellite is used in an exertion of great labor to settle a voided location in space.109 Since a person owns the fruits of his labor, a satellite owner gains a property interest in the GEO occupied by his satellite.110 Therefore under this reading of Lockes theory, anyone who places a satellite in geostationary orbit should be conferred a property right in that space. The labor need not alter the orbit itself, since the orbit is simply a scientific property of a location in space allowing the satellite to remain in a fixed point relative to the earth.111 In this way, the satellite is no different from a house built on Earth since both are bound to a fixed point, and improve the area generally.112 It could be argued that the house inherently alters the ground beneath it by laying foundations and is therefore distinct from a satellite that simply occupies a position. However, pouring concrete in an Earth bound location is the same kind of action taken by placing a satellite in a location bound to Earth, just farther away. Placing a satellite in orbit is similar to transporting materials from one area and erecting them in another location which does confer a property right under Lockes theory (just as a farmer might harvest trees and transport them to his plot to build a house, so the scientist combines electronic components and shoots them off to GEO to make a functioning satellite).113 Spaces lack of matter makes little difference to the question of whether the actor invested labor in a specific location.114

#### Private entities utilize their own property and resources to fund and conduct space exploration which means – Prohibition of it is a violation of a) Their ability to use their own property (like their rocketships or fuel) to set their ends in space and b). Their freedom to explore unknown horizons such as space.

## Case

### Framing

1. **Problem of induction—I predict based on past experiences, but there’s no justification for why those past experiences are true besides they worked in the past, which is based on experiences and is circular**
2. **Infinite consequences—each action has a consequence which leads to another consequence—if I drop a pen, that could lead to a hurricane so there is no consequence that can be predicted**
3. **What if we are in a simulation or dream or our experiences are controlled by monsters? Experience may not be valid**
4. **Pain and pleasure arbitrary and not a stasis point—people have different interps on whether 3 headaches or a migraine is worse**
5. **Util relies on internalism, which has no bindingness since I could say I did an action because I didn’t know that the result would be bad since no one knows my experiences**
6. **Util triggers skep—if our bodies naturally know pain is bad and pleasure is good, we automatically act off pain and pleasure ie I automatically remove my hand from a hot stove bc receptors unconsciously trigger my hand to move—means we don’t have control over action and there can’t be moral prescription**
7. **Infinite regress—calculating consequences begs the question of how long I should calculate to have a precise prediction. Triggers infinite regress since I can think how long to calculate calculation and so forth—freezes action**
8. **Culpability—it stretches agents too much and makes us responsible for mistakes—util would say it is bad for me to give a peanut butter sandwich to a homeless guy if he dies bc he has a peanut allergy, even if I didn’t know that and was trying to help—also a side constraint on calc bc we don’t know the outcome and are afraid to act**
9. **Can’t aggregate—we can’t assume the same prescription of pain and pleasure to everyone when aggregating, for example, masochists like pain**

**LBL**

**Off Parfit**

1. **Flows neg – we may change, but we still have conceptions of the self that do not change with time – If I say I want to eat ice cream, its with the understanding that I am the one eating it, not someone alien to me – we use practical identity to unify ourselves – I know I will be a college student – that’s who I am for four years – even if I become an adult – that fact we use such identities to unify action concedes the authority of principles which are constitutive of that identity – as a college student studying is of moral value to me and I know it better than partying even though it would be pleasurable to party.**
2. **Takes out util –** 
   1. **if there is no psychological continuity – then there is no agent under Util that could be ethical because there are infinitely many.**
   2. **No continual basis for experiences – if I gained the memories and experiences of another person, I still would not be that person.**
3. **Destroys moral culpability – you can’t hold people accountable if they’re constantly in flux**

### oh yeah yeah

#### Humans create infinite universes now

Brian Tomasik, 6-16-2017, Researcher, Cofounder and Advisor at the Foundational Research Institute, BS in Computer Science from Swarthmore College, Former Research Assistant at the University of Pennsylvania, Former Software Development Engineer II at Microsoft "Lab Universes: Creating Infinite Suffering," Reducing Suffering, <https://reducing-suffering.org/lab-universes-creating-infinite-suffering/> Accessed – 2/17/2022, WWIS

Some physical theories predict that it may be possible to create new, "baby" universes out of a small amount of matter. Technical reviews of the topic can be found in Stefano Ansoldi and Eduardo I. Guendelman, "Child Universes in the Laboratory," and Gordon McCabe, "How to Create a Universe." Popular-level introductions include the following: Jim Holt, "The Big Lab Experiment," Slate, 2004 Zeeya Merali, "Create Your Own Universe," New Scientist, 2006 Robert Krulwich, "Build Your Own Universe," NPR, 2006. McCabe explained the concept clearly (p. 6): Now, one of the most intriguing possibilities opened up by inflation, is the possible creation of a universe 'in a laboratory'. Creation in a laboratory is taken to mean the creation of a physical universe, by design, using the 'artificial' means available to an intelligent species. It is the ability of inflation to maintain a constant energy density, in combination with a period of exponential expansion, which is the key to these laboratory creation scenarios. The idea is to use a small amount of matter in the laboratory, and induce it to undergo inflation until its volume is comparable to that of our own observable universe. The energy density of the inflating region remains constant, and because it becomes the energy density of a huge region, the inflating region acquires a huge total (non-gravitational) energy. Andrei Linde, one of the founders of inflationary cosmology, put it this way (p. 8): Indeed, one may need to have only a milligram of matter in a vacuum-like exponentially expanding state, and then the process of self-reproduction will create from this matter not one universe but infinitely many! Another pioneer of inflation is Alan Guth, the subject of a 1987 New York Times article: PHYSICISTS often probe the workings of nature on a cosmic scale, but Prof. Alan H. Guth and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology may have set themselves the ultimate research goal. They are seeking a mechanism by which humans might create a new universe from scratch. Outrageous though such a notion may be, Dr. Guth and his collaborators are perfectly serious about their investigation. "Ten years ago, we couldn't even have posed the question of whether a man-made universe would be possible," he said. "But physics has progressed a long way since then, and today we can ask this and related questions in the real hope of finding scientifically testable answers. We are working in a new and exciting environment." In his 1997 book, The Inflationary Universe (pp. 268-69), Guth wrote: To put the story in perspective, one should remember that the process of eternal inflation [postulated by the theory of the self-reproducing inflationary universe ...] leads to an exponential increase in the number of pocket universes on time scales as short as 10-37 seconds. Since the time needed for the development of a super-advanced civilization is measured in billions of years or more, there appears to be no chance that laboratory production of universes could compete with the "natural" process of eternal inflation. On the other hand, a child universe created in a laboratory by a super-advanced civilization would set into motion its own progression of eternal inflation. Could the super-advanced civilization find a way to enhance its efficiency? We may have to wait a few billion years to find out.

#### Causes endless torture

Brian Tomasik, 6-16-2017, Researcher, Cofounder and Advisor at the Foundational Research Institute, BS in Computer Science from Swarthmore College, Former Research Assistant at the University of Pennsylvania, Former Software Development Engineer II at Microsoft "Lab Universes: Creating Infinite Suffering," Reducing Suffering, <https://reducing-suffering.org/lab-universes-creating-infinite-suffering/> Accessed – 2/17/2022, WWIS

Starting a chain of eternal inflation in the laboratory would produce infinitely many new universes. But what types of universes would emerge? Suppose we assume—as do Jaume Garriga and Alex Vilenkin in their 2001 article "Many worlds in one"—that there are only finitely many possible universe histories of a particular duration (say, 13.7 billion years, the age of our universe); call these "histories" for short. The existence of infinitely many universes needn't, in general, imply the existence of all possible histories. As Alex Vilenkin notes in his 2006 book Many Worlds in One, the sequence 1, 3, 5, 7, ... contains infinitely many integers but doesn't contain all possible integers, and one might imagine an analogous situation for universe histories (p. 114). However, because "the initial conditions at the big bang are set by random quantum processes during inflation" (p. 114), the theory of inflation does imply that lab universes would instantiate all possible histories infinitely many times (with probability one—see the second Borel-Cantelli lemma). This would, of course, include infinitely many replications of the Holocaust, infinitely many acts of torture, and so on. Indeed, there would be infinitely many universes in which Hitler won World War II, as well as infinitely many universes that would be as close as physically possible to "hell on earth" (or on any other planet). The assumption of finitely many possible histories is not really important. As long as we assume that the probability is greater than zero that suffering will emerge in a random universe, creating infinitely many universes would create infinite amounts of suffering. Cosmic evil There are many moral principles suggesting that creating lab universes would be wrong: "Never again": Lab universes would, among other things, contain infinitely many repetitions of the Holocaust. Would your conscience be okay with carrying out the Holocaust infinitely many times? Problem of evil: What kind of a good god would create a world like ours with so much suffering? And yet, if we created lab universes, we would be doing just that—as well as creating worlds much worse than our own. Think about a person in one of the universes that future humans might create whose skin is being burned off as part of her torture prior to death. In between screams, she asks: "Why God? Why?" What would be our answer to her? Ends don't justify means: Even if future humans want to create lab universes because of the happiness and beauty they would contain, this doesn't justify the necessary co-creation of infinitely many people being tortured. Asymmetric population ethics: It's more wrong to create a life that suffers than fail to create one that's happy.

#### Humans will create evil AI – causes infinite torture

**Turchin and Denkenberger 18** {Turchin is a researcher at the Science for Life Extension Foundation; Denkenberger is with the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute (GCRI) @ Tennessee State University, Alliance to Feed the Earth in Disasters (ALLFED). 5-3-2018. “Classification of Global Catastrophic Risks Connected with Artificial Intelligence.”}//JM

6.4. AI that is programmed to be evil We could imagine a perfectly aligned AI, which was deliberately programmed to be bad by its creators. For example, a hacker could create an AI with a goal of killing all humans or torturing them. The Foundational Research Institute suggested the notion of s-risks, that is, the risks of extreme future suffering, probably by wrongly aligned AI (Daniel 2017). AI may even upgrade humans to make them feel more suffering, like in the short story “I have no mouth but I must scream” (Ellison 1967). The controversial idea of “Roko’s Basilisk” is that a future AI may torture people who did not do enough to create this malevolent AI. This idea has attracted attention in the media and is an illustration of “acausal” (not connected by causal links) blackmail by future AI (Auerbach 2014). However, this cannot happen unless many people take the proposition seriously.

#### Mass animal suffering in the status quo – magnified by the infinite universes

Thomas M. Sittler-Adamczewski, December 2016, A researcher at the University of Oxford, OXFORD UEHIRO PRIZE IN PRACTICAL ETHICS "Consistent Vegetarianism and the Suffering of Wild Animals (Oxford Uehiro Prize in Practical Ethics: Undergraduate)," Journal of Practical Ethics, University of Oxford, <http://www.jpe.ox.ac.uk/papers/consistent-vegetarianism-and-the-suffering-of-wild-animals/> Accessed – 2/14/2022, WWIS

Ethical consequentialist vegetarians believe that farmed animals have lives that are worse than non-existence. In this paper, I sketch out an argument that wild animals have worse lives than farmed animals, and that consistent vegetarians should therefore reduce the number of wild animals as a top priority. I consider objections to the argument, and discuss which courses of action are open to those who accept the argument. Many consequentialists are vegetarian because they care about the harm done to farmed animals. Some consequentialists may be vegetarian because of environmental concerns, and others for non-consequentialist reasons, but these are not my main focus here. More precisely then, ethical consequentialist vegetarians believe that farmed animals have lives so bad they are not worth living, so that it is better for them not to come into existence. Vegetarians reduce the demand for meat, so that farmers will breed fewer animals, preventing the existence of additional animals. If ethical consequentialist vegetarians1 believed that animals have lives that are unpleasant but still better than non-existence, they would focus on reducing harm to these animals without reducing their numbers, for instance by supporting humane slaughter or buying meat from free-range cows. I will argue that if vegetarians were to apply this principle consistently, the suffering of wild animals would dominate their concerns, and would plausibly lead them to support reducing the number of wild animals, for instance through habitat destruction or sterilisation. SUFFERING IN NATURE, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS If animals like free-range cows have lives that are not worth living, almost all wild animals could plausibly be thought to also have lives that are worse than non-existence. Nature is often romanticised as a well-balanced idyll, so this may seem counter-intuitive. But extreme forms of suffering like starvation, dehydration, or being eaten alive by a predator are much more common in wild animals than farm animals. Crocodiles and hyenas disembowel their prey before killing them (Tomasik 2009). In birds, diseases like avian salmonellosis produce excruciating symptoms in the final days of life, such as depression, shivering, loss of appetite, and just before death, blindness, incoordination, staggering, tremor and convulsions (Michigan Department of Natural Resources). While a farmed animal like a free-range cow has to endure some confinement and a premature and potentially painful death (stunning sometimes fails), a wild animal may suffer comparable experiences, such as surviving a cold winter or having to fear predators, while additionally undergoing the aforementioned extreme suffering (Tomasik 2013). Wild animals do experience significant pleasure, for instance when they eat, play, have sex, or engage in other normal physical activity. One reason to suspect that on average this pleasure is outweighed by suffering is that most species use the reproductive strategy of r-selection, which means that the overwhelming majority of their offspring starve or are eaten shortly after birth and only very few reach reproductive age (Horta 2010; Ng 1995). For instance, ‘in her lifetime a lioness might have 20 cubs; a pigeon, 150 chicks; a mouse, 1000 kits’ (Hapgood 1979), the vast majority of which will die before they could have had many pleasurable experiences. Overall, it seems plausible that wild animals have worse lives than, say, free-range cows. If vegetarians think it’s better for the latter not to exist, they must believe the same thing about wild animals. A second important empirical fact is that wild animals far outnumber farmed animals. Using figures from the FAO, Tomasik estimates that the global livestock population is 24 billion (including 17 billion chicken) (Tomasik 2014). I restrict my count of wild animals to those at least as complex as chicken or small fish, which vegetarians clearly believe do have moral weight. Using studies of animal density in different biomes, Tomasik estimates conservatively that there are at least 6\*10^10 land birds, 10^11 land mammals, and 10^13 fish. Animals in each of these categories alone are several times more numerous than livestock. If wild animals’ well-being is indeed below the threshold for a life worth living, and the above numbers are remotely correct, the scale of wild animal suffering is vast. As Richard Dawkins writes, ‘During the minute it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive; others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear; others are being slowly devoured from within by rasping parasites; thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst and disease.’ (Dawkins 1996) If they accept the premises so far, consistent vegetarians should focus on preventing the existence of as many wild animals as possible, since even a small reduction in the global number of wild animals would outweigh the impact of ending all livestock production. For example, they could reduce animal populations by sterilising them, or by destroying highly dense animal habitats such as rainforests. It may even be the case that vegetarians should react to this argument by eating more meat, since feeding livestock requires more surface area for agriculture, and fields contain far fewer wild animals per square kilometre than other biomes such as forests (Matheny and Chan 2005, 585). Of course, to the extent that it is more difficult to reduce wild animal populations than farm animal populations, vegetarians should focus more resources on the latter. But it seems implausible that it would be over a hundred times more difficult to achieve the same proportional reduction, which is what would be needed to reverse my conclusion that wild animal suffering dominates. There could be some simple ways, for instance, for vegetarians to reduce habitat sizes: supporting the construction of large parking lots, or donating to a pro-deforestation lobby. In the final paragraph, I touch upon the issue of how most effectively to reduce wild animal suffering.

#### Animals can experience suffering – O/Ws every other form of suffering on scope AND you should be species neutral in risk calculus

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Although solipsism at the species level might make sense within religious contexts where humans are taken to have originated separately from all other animals, it coheres well with neither neuroscience nor evolution. Comparing ourselves to sparrows, rabbits, and bears, we may observe that we have the same kind of neurons, the same main brain parts, and the same pain pathways (C and A delta fibers) that they have. Sparrows, rabbits, and bears, moreover, react to noxious stimuli the same way we do, and they stop doing so when anesthetized (see Griffin & Speck 2004; Dawkins 2015). Since we and other animals are genetically, neurologically, and functionally very close, we would need weighty evidence to conclude that, despite these similarities, humans work in fundamentally different ways from other animals: humans consciously, animals non-consciously. Increased understanding of animal consciousness helped spur the animal ethics movement. Keeping animals in small cages, castrating them without anesthetics, and branding them with glowing irons—practices that, if performed on humans, would land the perpetrator in prison for decades—are common farming practices around the world. Millions of farm animals live and die under such conditions. Opposing human disregard for animal welfare, Peter Singer (1990) famously argues that just as we have gradually expanded our circle of moral concern to encompass ethnic groups other than our own, and finally humanity as a whole, we should further expand it to include other sentient species. According to Singer, it is suffering as such that is bad, and it is bad whoever experiences it. Though the animal ethics movement is commendable, its circle of moral concern has hitherto expanded almost exclusively to captive animals. With very few exceptions—most notably, David Pearce and Jeff McMahan, whom I shall discuss in detail below—animal ethicists have failed to adequately take into account the suffering of animals living in the wild. Wild animals, however, vastly outnumber captive animals, and arguably, billions of wild animals live lives that are even more painful and distressing than those of their captive counterparts. Though it might well be difficult to alleviate suffering in the wild, and comparatively easier to alleviate suffering caused by humans, disregarding wild animal suffering from the outset involves a form of anthropocentrism that, sadly, enjoys wide acceptance even among those who purport to oppose the doctrine. We might dub this the second anthropocentrism. While traditional anthropocentrics are concerned only with human suffering, anthropocentrics of the second kind are concerned only with human-caused suffering. I will suggest, however, that if we take suffering as such to be bad (roughly along the lines that Singer does), it is unclear why the species membership of those who cause the suffering is morally relevant while the species membership of those who suffer is not. My aim in this paper is not to sway those who are indifferent to animal welfare. Rather, my aim is to make those who are concerned with animal welfare more concerned with the welfare of wild animals. Moreover, I shall exclusively discuss welfarist concerns, so if there are other grounds to care for animals, they lie beyond the scope of this paper. My discussion is limited to mammals and birds, the reason for which is that these are the animals whose ability to suffer is least disputed. If fish, amphibians, reptiles, and/or invertebrates can also suffer, my conclusion is amplified. The empirical side Let me start by defending three empirical claims: (1) that there are vastly more wild than captive animals; (2) that wild animals have the same capacity to suffer as captive animals; and (3) that many, perhaps most, wild animals suffer at least as much as their captive counterparts. These are all empirical claims that say nothing about the value significance of wild animal suffering. As such, we should accept or reject these claims irrespective of our ethical views. How many captive animals are there? According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2014), the total number of livestock in the world is—at any given time—roughly 25 billion, the majority of which are chicken, followed by ducks, cattle, and sheep. Although this figure leaves out pets and laboratory animals, let us take for granted, for the sake of convenience, that the number of livestock is roughly representative of the number of captive animals. How many wild animals are there? According to Brian Tomasik’s (2014a) estimations, which are generated from research data on the typical prevalence of various animals in various environments coupled with data on the global prevalence of these environments, there are—at any given time—between 60 and 200 billion birds and between 100 and 1,000 billion mammals. If we assume the middle estimate for both birds and mammals, there are, at any given time, 700 billion wild birds and wild mammals combined. This is roughly 25 times the number of birds and mammals in captivity. (If we were to include in our estimates fish, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates, which are rare in human captivity but very prevalent in the wild, we would end up with thousands of times more wild than captive animals.) A further empirical premise is that wild animals have the same ability to suffer as captive animals. By this I simply mean that if you tear the skin of both a wild and a captive animal, there is no compelling reason to believe that this would hurt more for the captive animal than for the wild animal. In fact, if we were to conclude that there is a difference between the two, we should probably conclude that while captive animals are more docile (due to drugs and lack of stimulation), wild animals remain sharp and focused. Let us assume, however, that the ability to suffer is the same, or roughly the same, in captive and wild animals. How much do wild animals actually suffer? Very likely, some wild animals suffer very little. Some live long and peaceful lives, have few natural enemies, and have ample supplies of food. When they die, moreover, many animals die quick and painless deaths. The fact that some lives in the wild are pleasant, however, does not contradict the fact for billions of wild animals, life is filled with suffering. One prominent source of suffering is predation. Every day, millions of animals are eaten alive, and though some of them are killed quickly, larger animals will often stay alive for minutes or hours before they die of blood loss, suffocation, drowning, or internal bleeding from poisoning (Tomasik 2014b). While some become paralyzed, and are likely to feel nothing, others feel excruciating pain. Predation is a very visible cause of suffering. In response to this, Tyler Cowen (2003) and Jeff McMahan (2010) have argued that if we can easily prevent a predator attack, we have at least a pro tanto moral reason to do so. In their view, the way predators kill their prey is often so gruesome that if a human were to treat animals similarly, we would have strong reasons to intervene – and for the animal that is eaten alive, the species membership of the attacking predator is likely to matter very little. Though this is an important observation, I think Cowen and McMahan fail to appreciate that suffering caused by predation is likely to account for only a small fraction of the total suffering in nature. Though death from predation might be the most violent and visible cause of suffering, deaths from disease and parasites tend to be more drawn out in time. The same is true of deaths from droughts, floods, and freezing. Life in the wild is also a constant quest for nutrition; at any given time, thousands of animals are in the process of starving to death. Though there is no agent responsible for this suffering, and though it might be hard for us to detect it, the suffering is nonetheless real and prevalent. When a parent animal starves or freezes to death, gets eaten, or dies from disease, its young offspring will often face an equally painful death. This borders on an important point, namely that most suffering in nature is likely to be endured by very young individuals. The reason is not primarily that many parent animals die (although that is also the case), but that most wild animals give birth to many more offspring than are likely to reach adulthood. While humans normally give birth to just one child per year, and provide extensive care to each child (this is called the Kselection strategy), many animals follow a different reproductive strategy: they give birth to dozens or hundreds of offspring every year, and care very little for each individual (the r-selection strategy). These strategies both work to spread the parents’ genes in the population, but the r-selection strategy—which is most common in smaller animals—leads to enormous amounts of suffering because of the very large number of young individuals that are left to starve to death or get eaten, either by their stronger siblings or by other predators (for an elaboration, see Horta 2010). If the average female in a given animal population gives birth to 50 offspring every year—and the population size remains stable

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year after year—then the majority of individuals in that population will be individuals dying before reaching adulthood. If we grant that animals become conscious shortly after birth, as we assume to be the case with humans, their deaths will often involve pain, and since their lives are very short, they will have very few good things in life to weigh up for all that is bad. For these reasons, Richard Dawkins is almost certainly correct when he writes: The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are being slowly devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst and disease (Dawkins 1995: 131-32). Wild animal suffering is mostly invisible to us. Humans never see the vast majority of wild animals, and those that are seen by us are predominantly healthy and moving. We do not see the young individuals starving to death or the adult individuals being devoured by parasites, and we must keep in mind that even if we saw them, their suffering would often not be apparent to us. While we have evolved to pick up pain cues from other human beings, we are much worse at picking up pain cues from non-human animals, especially those that are genetically remote from us. Moreover, many animals hide signs of weakness and disease to avoid attracting predators (including humans) looking for easy prey. When Thomas Hobbes wrote that life, in the state of nature, is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” he meant human life (Hobbes 1651/1996: XIII.9). It seems, however, that the description is also fitting for the lives of many non-human animals. Because of the brutality of wildlife, one could even make the provocative case that a typical life in the wild is even more painful and distressing than a typical life in human captivity. Although factory farming is often grotesque, animals in captivity are seldom killed in ways that draw out their deaths over several minutes or hours; they are not exposed to predators until they are slaughtered; they typically have access to sufficient amounts of food and water; and the temperature tends to be comfortable. Concerning larger animals, such as cattle, individuals with serious diseases will often be euthanized. For this reason, it is not clear that the average life in the wild is filled with any less suffering than the average life in captivity. However, even if wild animals do, on average, suffer less than captive animals, the sheer number of wild animals is still so overwhelming that the majority of suffering on Earth almost certainly takes place among animals living in wild nature