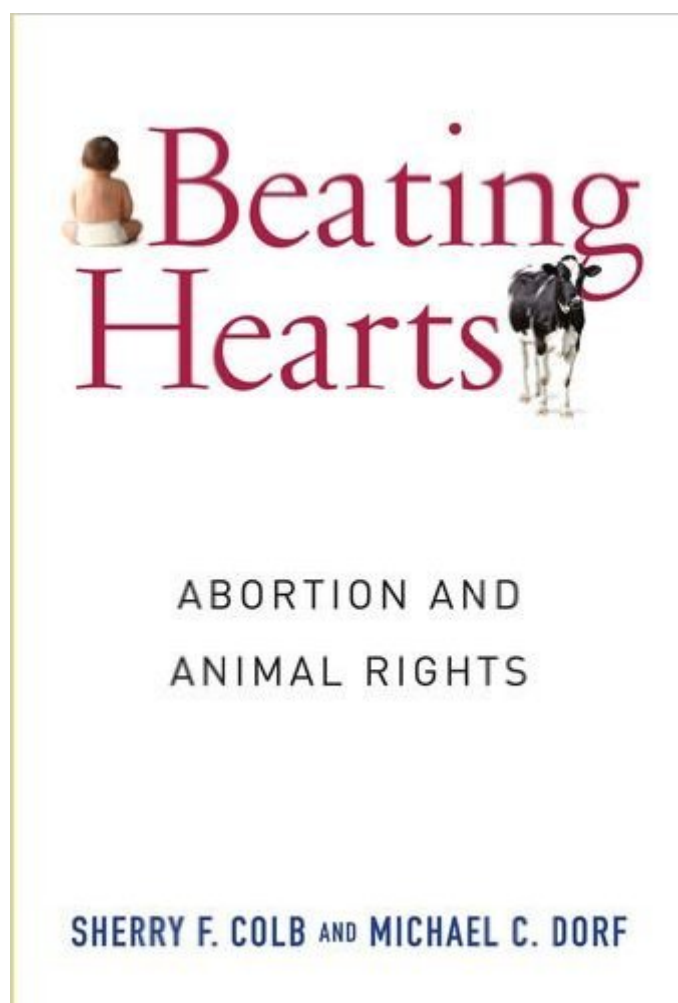


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Beating Hearts: Abortion And Animal Rights (Critical Perspectives On Animals: Theory, Culture, Science, And Law)



Synopsis

How can someone who condemns hunting, animal farming, and animal experimentation also favor legal abortion, which is the deliberate destruction of a human fetus? The authors of *Beating Hearts* aim to reconcile this apparent conflict and examine the surprisingly similar strategic and tactical questions faced by activists in the pro-life and animal rights movements. *Beating Hearts* maintains that sentience, or the ability to have subjective experiences, grounds a being's entitlement to moral concern. The authors argue that nearly all human exploitation of animals is unjustified. Early abortions do not contradict the sentience principle because they precede fetal sentience, and *Beating Hearts* explains why the mere potential for sentience does not create moral entitlements. Late abortions do raise serious moral questions, but forcing a woman to carry a child to term is problematic as a form of gender-based exploitation. These ethical explorations lead to a wider discussion of the strategies deployed by the pro-life and animal rights movements. Should legal reforms precede or follow attitudinal changes? Do gory images win over or alienate supporters? Is violence ever principled? By probing the connections between debates about abortion and animal rights, *Beating Hearts* uses each highly contested set of questions to shed light on the other.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I don't know why anyone tries to write about either of these subjects, abortion or animal rights. To attempt to write about both of them is madness. This book does not do a good job on either subject. One of the great evolution scientists once said that the history of biological life was the history

of one organism eating another. I always quote that to vegans. I eat little meat or fish and I believe most people should eat little or no meat or fish and that animals should be treated humanely. However, I do not think you can make a case for saying that humans should not eat other animals at all for moral reasons. It simply does not make sense. On abortion, few people on either side make very good arguments either way about what to do about abortion. In my opinion, there are three issues, moral, legal, practical. There have been about 50 million legal abortions in this country since 1973; there are now over 1 million per year, the rate has been falling. There are about 45 million abortions every year worldwide. Millions of women become pregnant who do not want to have a baby or can't afford to. The moral question -- is abortion the taking of a human life. Yes, it is preventing human life, that is what makes the issue difficult. The legal question is should it be illegal. Given how many women want to have abortions, making it illegal is simply not an option unless there are realistic alternatives. It doesn't make sense to make millions of women criminals because of their personal moral choices or to risk their health getting illegal abortions. The practical question is -- what is the alternative. Our best bet would be a massive program providing contraception and education and well organized adoption. Is there any reason to believe that can happen or that it would work?

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