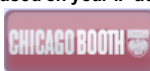


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Primitive Self-Consciousness and Avian Cognition

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May 25, 2012

*The Monist, Volume 95, Issue 3, July 2012.***Abstract:**

This is an uncorrected author's draft of a paper published in The Monist issue on neuroethics, Volume 95, Issue 3 (July 2012). For citation and quoting purposes, please use the published version.

Recent work in moral theory has seen the refinement of theories of moral standing, which increasingly recognize a position of intermediate standing between fully self-conscious entities and those which are merely conscious. Among the most sophisticated concepts now used to denote such intermediate standing is that of primitive self-consciousness, which has been used to more precisely elucidate the moral standing of human newborns. New research into the structure of the avian brain offers a revised view of the cognitive abilities of birds. When this research is approached with a species-specific focus, it appears likely that one familiar species, the chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*), also exhibits primitive self-consciousness. Given the likelihood that they are primitively self-consciousness, chickens warrant a degree of moral standing that falls short of that enjoyed by persons, but which exceeds the minimal standing of merely conscious entities.

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