

# **Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement Study Guide**

**Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement by Peter Singer**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

|                                                                                                   |                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <a href="#">Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement Study Guide.....</a> | <a href="#">1</a>  |
| <a href="#">Contents.....</a>                                                                     | <a href="#">2</a>  |
| <a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>                                                                 | <a href="#">3</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 1: All Animals Are Equal.....</a>                                             | <a href="#">5</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 2: Tools for Research.....</a>                                                | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 3: Down on the Factory Farm.....</a>                                          | <a href="#">13</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 4: Becoming a Vegetarian.....</a>                                             | <a href="#">18</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 5: Man's Dominion. . .</a>                                                    | <a href="#">20</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 6: Speciesism Today. . .</a>                                                  | <a href="#">23</a> |
| <a href="#">Characters.....</a>                                                                   | <a href="#">26</a> |
| <a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>                                                               | <a href="#">29</a> |
| <a href="#">Themes.....</a>                                                                       | <a href="#">30</a> |
| <a href="#">Style.....</a>                                                                        | <a href="#">33</a> |
| <a href="#">Quotes.....</a>                                                                       | <a href="#">35</a> |
| <a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>                                                        | <a href="#">37</a> |



# Plot Summary

"Animal Liberation" by Peter Singer was first published in 1975 and this volume is the second update of the book, published in 2002. Singer has shed bright light on the abuse that animals endure at the hands of man. Prior to the book's first edition, the wholesale mistreatment of animals was largely in the shadows.

Singer puts the blame for animal abuse at the feet of "speciesism." The term, "speciesism" was coined by Singer and is defined as a focused concern for the welfare and rights of one's own species. Humans are, generally speaking, speciesists and this enables them to abuse animals. This attitude is in the fabric of human thought. It had its roots in Greek antiquity and ancient Hebrew laws. Aristotle believed that animals existed for man's use. The ancient Hebrews looked to the Old Testament of the Holy Bible for guidance about man's treatment of animals. It was written that man was created in God's image and that man had dominion over all other creatures.

The fundamental beliefs of Aristotle and the ancient Hebrews were melded and solidified when Christianity was established under the Holy Roman Empire. Since that day, man has been taught that he is superior to animals. Any rights that might be attached to animals, are subjugated to man's needs and desires. Speciesism is the main obstacle in the elimination of cruelty to animals.

There are two blatant and widespread abuses of animals that has come to be accepted by people of the civilized world. The first is the use of animals for lab experimentation. The animals are subjected to pain and misery and the process often leads to death. There are government regulations covering the treatment of lab animals. However, the laws are weak and unenforced. Powerful corporations and their lobbyists fight against them. Most of the enforcement against cruelty inflicted on lab animals is on behalf of dogs and cats - the animals that people care about. However, the mistreatment of rodents, monkeys, and other animals that do not impact the average person's life largely goes unchecked.

Animals that are raised in farm factories are mistreated and live a miserable life from birth to their usually early deaths. Cows, pigs, and chickens are jammed into indoor facilities that are uncomfortable, filthy, stressful, and endanger their lives. The top priority for the producers is their bottom line. The process is strictly driven by profits with little or no concern for the welfare of the animals. Most of these animals live in a crowded cage and never see the light of day or breathe fresh air during their entire existence.

Once an individual faces the inequality that exists in man's treatment of animals and sets aside his speciesism, the only result that can occur is a vow to not eat animals. Vegetarianism provides a healthier diet than does one that contains meat. By refusing to eat animals or buy leather items and other products made from animals, the need for animals will be reduced, resulting in less animal abuse. Many animal rights group have been established and are making progress in decreasing the mistreatment of animals.

However, for the abuse to be ultimately eliminated, each person must abandon the speciesism that our society has instilled within him.



# Chapter 1: All Animals Are Equal

## Chapter 1: All Animals Are Equal Summary and Analysis

When it comes to basic "rights," there are natural differences. The rightful case had been made that women knew enough to make a decision about the future and therefore should have the right to vote. Animals, of course, could not make decisions about the future and therefore had no right to vote. There are differences in the rights of women compared to men. A woman may campaign about a right to have an abortion, a right that does not apply to men. The basic premise of equality does not mean that the treatment of two groups should be the same; rather, it means that consideration should be given to each group on how an issue impacts it. A society concerned with equality for women, blacks, and other minorities would be remiss if it did not consider the rights of non-humans.

Those who wish to defend such societies, would argue that all humans are not equal. Humans are different in size, shape, abilities, sensitivities, and in many other ways. Racism and sexism is wrong because one cannot determine anything about a person's abilities from his or her exterior. A higher intellect does not make a person better than another person with a lower IQ; it just may make him more capable of performing certain functions. As far as races and sexes, when taken in the aggregate there are certain differences that emerge. These differences may be due more to considerations of opportunity, environment and economic status including education and poverty than it has to do with any genetic superiority. However, despite the differences in the sexes or races, humans must all be considered as equals.

Jeremy Bentham was the founder of the reforming utilitarian school of moral philosophy. He held the belief that consideration should be given to the impact that an action of one being has on another being. Many contemporary moral philosophers agree in the fundamental belief that everyone's interest should be given equal consideration. That fundamental belief led Thomas Jefferson to oppose slavery even though he was a slave owner himself. In the 1850s, a black feminist named Sojourner Truth made the a strong case for women's rights.

Racism and sexism can sometimes collide with "speciesism," which is a natural bias toward one's own species. If a person suffers, there can be no justification for ignoring it. Racists violate the fundamental concept of equality by assigning more weight to the needs of their own race than that of others. Most people are speciesists. Many feel that non-humans don't really suffer. The belief that a calf doesn't know that it will be butchered in six months is true. However, cows do suffer from physical pain and mistreatment. It is the intention of this work to refute the claim that animals do not suffer - that they do not have thoughts are feelings.



The concept that animals were in "automata" or a state of not having the ability to think or feel was first proposed by 17th century French philosopher Rene Descartes. One can make the assumption that another person thinks and feels because he himself does. It is not a leap of logic to believe that a being that has a nervous system feels physical pain. It can easily be observed that species most closely related to humans - mammals and birds - react in pain by writhing and moaning or squawking. Humans have a more developed cerebral cortex which is the area that controls thinking functions. Impulses and emotions are located in the diencephalon area of the brain which is highly developed in animals, proof that animals experience pain. The ability to feel pain is a fundamental element of survival in that man and animals learn through their experiences to avoid what may harm them.

In Britain, several government committees found compelling evidence that animals feel pain. Members of the Committee on Cruelty to Wild Animals established in 1951 declared that based on the physiological and anatomical make-up of animals that they must feel pain. The committee also found that animals can experience fear and terror. Scientific studies have also advanced the notion that conscious awareness in non-human animals should be considered. Animals cannot anticipate and do not have the capacity for detailed memorization. Animals may suffer more because they do not have an understanding of events and circumstances that are occurring. When a wild animal is captured, it is terrified. The animal has no capacity to grasp the possibility that it might be tamed and treated well.

Humans maintain a belief in the sanctity of life which prevents wholesale murder. However, there is support for one person murdering another in some cases: abortion, self-defense, execution. However, a physician cannot end the life of a malformed baby even if the parents ask him to do so. It is pure speciesism to apply the sanctity of life to humans only and not apply it to non-humans. To avoid speciesism, there must be agreement that non-humans have a "right to life." A malformed human may not have the mental capacity to have as much self-awareness as a healthy animal with a high degree of intelligence such as a pig or chimp. It is speciesism that assigns value to living beings.

The arguments laid out in this book support the minimization of the suffering of all living beings. There are many debates about man's relationship with animals. Should the same respect be given to the lives of animals as is given to the lives of humans? Should animals be killed because they may cause harm to humans? Should efforts be made to stop animals from killing each other? What are the moral implications of raising animals strictly for human consumption and for using them for research and experimentation?



# Chapter 2: Tools for Research

## Chapter 2: Tools for Research Summary and Analysis

### Your Taxes at Work

Experiments on the impact of radiation on chimpanzees were conducted for many years at Brooks Air Force Base in Texas. The testing involved a flight simulator that could be made to pitch and roll. The chimps learned that they could right the simulator to a horizontal position by guiding the control stick. They were subjected to heavy doses of radiation and other chemical warfare agents to see how it impacted their ability to "fly." In the first phase of the experiment, the monkeys were trained to sit quietly in the simulator. In the next phases, the apes were trained to handle the control stick. When the apes were not cooperative at any point in their training, they would be given electric shocks to coax them into the desired behavior. It was typical for a chimp to receive thousands of shocks during this training.

After satisfactorily trained, the apes would receive lethal and near-lethal doses of radiation or other powerful chemicals. After this dosing, the chimps were still required to display their trained behaviors. If they failed, more electric shocks were inflicted. Soman, another name for nerve gas, was administered to the animals and the dosage each animal received was referred to as an "acute exposure to soman." Some were exposed to this chemical for years. The animals were brought to a state of incapacity in order to understand the breaking point for a pilot exposed to chemical warfare. Some one-thousand chimps were subjected to this experiment. The principal investigator of the experimentation was Dr. Donald Barnes. Eventually, he resigned from the program because he found it to be cruel and ineffective. He ultimately became a strong opponent of animal experimentation.

In 1973, Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin exposed a plan by the Air Force to use beagle puppies with vocal chords restrained to prevent them from barking in an experiment. Bad publicity and public outrage led to the abandonment of the program. In another experiment, dogs were fed TNT capsules to understand their impact and saturation point. People are generally more outraged about the use of dogs for research and experimentation than about the use rats and monkeys, both intelligent animals. Taxpayer money supports all experiments carried out by the US military.

Animals did not fare any better in research conducted in the private sector. In one experiment, monkeys were isolated from birth to death in a cage, totally deprived of maternal care or contact with other members of its species. The researchers were attempting to produce psychopathy and depression in the subjects. Female monkeys raised in these circumstances were impregnated and were found to have no maternal skills, ignored their young and in some cases abused and even killed them. The confinement devices the researchers used to produce these results can only be described as torture chambers.



Martin Reite of the University of Colorado also conducted deprivation experimentation. He found that the monkeys used in the testing developed profound behavioral problems and were sad and depressed. New born apes were separated at birth and displayed emotional and psychological problems. Some seven thousand animals have been subjected to deprivation experiments. This practice is a prime example of speciesism. In Britain alone, 3.5 million such experiments were conducted on animals in 1988 alone. Most reports on the use of animals for research and experimentation does not include rats, mice, frogs and other animals. In the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment estimated that upwards of 17 million animals were used for research each year. An estimate made in 1966 by the Laboratory Animal Breeders Associated estimated that the total number of all animals used in testing and research was in the range of 60 million.

Some animals are bred to be sold. One breeding company produced a hairless guinea pig and advertised it as a speedy stripped down model. Another company boasted about the "surgically altered research animals" (38) it had for sale. Other companies make money off of animal experimentation by developing devices and equipment for the labs. Of all the millions of experiments performed on animals, only a relatively small number actually contribute something significant to medical research. These small successes are far outweighed by the abuse inflicted on the animals. Experiments that are not important to mankind's survival should be replaced with other testing.

Electric shock is a standard testing methodology used in lab experiments, particularly in psychological and behavioral testing. Lab rats have to choose between electric shock and eating. Electric shocks are used to teach animals to do tricks or learn behaviors. Many animals go into convulsions and die on day one of a research project. The researchers are not evil or cruel people. They are doing a job that is the result of decades of speciesism.

A report on using electric shock at the University of Wisconsin, prepared by the school itself, found that in over fifteen years of animal experimentation using electric shock that it was impossible to draw any solid conclusions in the vast majority of cases. None the less, it did not stop the practice and electric shock continued to be used in the school's research and testing programs. Dogs were literally tortured at Harvard University. Conducting research on "learned helplessness," electric shocks were set up on the floor. The dogs used in the testing wound up injured and terrorized. In another learned helplessness experiment conducted at Temple University in Philadelphia, rats were shocked until they were able to have cognizance of the connection between a warning light and a subsequent electric shock. Steven Maier who co-authored material on learned helplessness concluded after thirty years of research that the model did not produce its goal of depression but rather produced stress and coping which had not been the intention of the experimentation. Electric shock has also been widely used in producing aggressive behavior in animals. Shetland ponies were deprived of water at a University of Kansas, Bureau of Child Research, experiment. When finally given water, the water was electrified to force certain behaviors. It is not clear how this experiment benefited children. The thousands and thousands of experiments conducted in the psychological field that bring pain and death to animals show dismal results. Jargon has





been developed to disguise the torturous nature of this work: negative stimulus, avoidance, partial reinforcement are a few of the terms that help assuage any guilt that researchers may have. Some psychologists admit that shocking a rat's brain into submission has nothing to do with understanding the human mind.

Animals are used around the world to test drugs and are literally poisoned in the process. Since the medical field has made a wholesale turn toward drug therapy, the demand for new drugs has hit a zenith. The FDA requires that all new drugs and products such as lotions and lipsticks be tested and approved before released for public consumption. Of course, the influx of millions of new products and drugs each year has increased the need for testing. Cosmetics and other substances are typically tested on the eyes of animals. These test animals are forced into restrictive devices that prevent their heads from moving. Animals suffer great pain and often vision loss during these tests. At the Huntingdon Research Institute in England, all forty monkeys that were poisoned with weed-killer died slow deaths. The US Army tested "T-2" on animals. T-2 is a substance used in chemical warfare and is designed to bring death in a gruesome manner. The animals in this program suffered greatly with rotting skin and intestines before death occurred.

Some researchers began to voice their skepticism over the testing of lab animals. Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, scientist and director of the American council on Science and Health, declared that giving a rat the equivalent of the saccharin found in 1,800 bottles of soda pop has no connection to actual human consumption. The American Medical Association has also admitted the dubious value of many of the experiments conducted on animals. Many researchers have been forced to take a second look at their practices. Public outrage has also contributed to a trend to rein in the number and cruelty of these tests. Large corporations are exploring alternative testing methods. The increase in the number of animal advocacy organizations have helped to apply pressure in decreasing animal experimentation.

As far back as 1880, animals have been used in medical research experimentation in heat and exposure testing. Heat has been used to produce heatstroke in animals by the US Navy. In 1954, Yale University School of Medicine placed 32 kittens in a radiant-heating chamber. Some died during the experiment. Those who survived the test, were killed so that autopsies could be performed on them. Dogs and rabbits were exposed to microwave heating and all died or were killed afterward. In 1984, experimenters working for the Federal Aviation Administration admitted that animals shipped for lab work sometimes died from heat stress during shipment. Some rats used in military experimentation in 1982 were injected with the drug atropine which restricted the production of saliva so that they could not cool themselves in a natural manner when exposed to heat reaching 107 degrees F in experiments.

The United Action for Animals organization has thick files on a variety of experimentation genres in which animals are abused and killed. These include but are not limited to acceleration, aggressiveness, burning, blinding, freezing, radiation, stress, thirst. In some cases, hemorrhage has been induced often without anesthesia. Hundreds of experiments are performed each year that addict animals to drugs. In one



case, after becoming addicted to cocaine, monkeys were able to self-administer as much cocaine as they desired by pushing on a certain lever. One of the researchers involved admitted that few people could afford the proportional amount of cocaine that was available to the animals. At the University of Kentucky, dogs were addicted to Valium then were denied the drug so the researchers could observe withdrawal symptoms. Many of the dogs went into convulsion and died. In other research elephants were hit with massive doses of LSD. Another experiment addicted cats to barbiturates then withdrew the drugs. The researchers then observed their painful struggles until death occurred.

What allowed this abuse to evolve and be sustained was speciesism. Cruelties were tolerated because pain and abuse were performed upon other species - non-human animals. Another factor that has allowed these practices to exist is the enormous respect that the general public has for science and scientists. Although the lay person may not see the value of experiments that result in the abuse and death of animals, he defers to the scientist who surely has a superior reason for such experimentation that is beyond ordinary comprehension. People are indoctrinated in high school when they are forced to dissect a frog. Their teacher and school are giving them the green light to destroy non-human life. When students go on to college and pursue degrees in some fields of science, they are already accustomed to the belief that animal experimentation is a natural part of the process.

Sensitive to a growing cry from the public, some research institutions try to temper fears about animal abuse by employing veterinarians to look out for the well being of lab animals. But in the vast majority of cases, these positions were token and ineffective. The American Veterinary Medical Association testified in congressional hearings that they favored experimentation on animals because they considered them a lower form of life than humans. Once the pattern of animal experimentation had been established and had become part of the fabric of respected medical research, it was difficult to broach the subject of the abuse that the animals were undergoing.

The largest backers of medical research involving animal experimentation are the governments of the United States, Britain and other nations. Public funds gained through taxation has supported the vast majority of this work. Since the experiments are backed by the tax dollar, there is only perfunctory laws against what the scientists do to animals in the course of their research. Robert J. White of the Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital specialized in decapitating monkeys and keeping their "brains" alive in fluid as a living laboratory for the study of the human brain. Many researchers like David Baltimore, a professor at MIT and a Nobel laureate spent much time and energy fighting against any government regulation in medical research. Researchers like White and Baltimore felt there were no moral implications in killing animals during research. Regulations that do exist under the Animal Welfare Care Act are weak and easily circumvented. America has lagged behind many other developed nations in the protection of lab animals. This comparison in no way intends to indicate that the other nations do not abuse animals during lab experimentation, it merely points out how abysmal standards are in America.



Although the Animal Welfare Act under the US Department of Agriculture was established decades ago, there is little enforcement and not enough inspectors to confirm compliance. Additionally, animals like birds, rodents and farm animals have been broadly excluded from the act. The law protect animals such as dogs and cats, animals that the public would have the most sympathy for but it excludes lab rats and mice that the public has little affinity for. This regulation is mainly a farce. In 1984, an animal activist group stole tapes of experiments conducted to learn the impact of head injuries on the brain. The monkeys involved received severe head injuries but endured them without anesthesia which had been part of the proposed process. After a year-long battle by animal advocates, federal funding was finally pulled from the project. Public outrage is always met with warnings that people will die if research on animals ceases.

The author suggests that human babies and demented people in institutions have less self-awareness than do intelligent animals. Using adults to test products on would have a better result than testing them on different species. To answer the researchers who warn the public that they must test animals to save human life, a response could be that demented people who no longer even know they're alive could be used to save healthy human beings. The author does not really endorse such a practice; however, not being open to it illustrates how much speciesism has played in justifying the use of animals in medical and other research. Speciesism and racism intersect in that they both attribute superiority to their own kind and consider the mistreatment of the "other" as acceptable. One only has to consider the treatment by the Nazis of the Jews and the KKK of black people to parallel the damage of racism with speciesism.

There are debates about when experimentation on animals is justifiable. There are debates as well about whether enemies of the state should be tortured in order to learn information - hidden bombs, for example - that could save people. To the author, the only justifiable experiment that should be used on an animal is one that researchers would also perform on a brain-damaged human. Most the the useful research on lung cancer has come from the testing of humans not from the over-dousing of small animals with huge amounts of tobacco smoke.

How can the abusive treatment of animals be stopped or at least decreased? One step would be the establishment of an ethics committee that is required to give approval to any testing procedure. Such systems as this exist in Australia and Sweden and have been successful. In some cases, using lab animals has hindered the advancement of medical research. One example is the testing of chemicals that cause cancer in people that do not necessarily have the same result in animals. The animals are subjected to overdoses of chemicals that make them suffer and kill them but do not cause cancers to develop. Cures for HIV, the AIDS virus, has seen more progress when antibodies are developed in humans as opposed to in animals. Claims by some advocates of animal experimentation falsely claim that their work has increased human life expectancy. To be fair, there have been medical breakthroughs by the testing of animals. Great progress on diabetes and the use of insulin has been realized through the use of lab animals. Work in heart surgery and coronary artery bypass graft surgery has also benefited from animal research. But these successes are no proof that alternative research methods would not have been just as successful.



Corporations that are involved in the animal experimentation industry support huge lobbying efforts to make sure that restrictive legislation and regulations are not passed into law. However, legislators are also deluged with complaints and requests from their constituents and animal advocacy groups who are fighting for the protection of the animals. The issue has become a hot political one and one that places elected officials right in the middle of a huge conflict that pits money against animal welfare. There is hope that in the generations to come, people will be appalled by the exploitation of animals and the entire industry, like the Gladiators of old Rome, will disappear from the face of the earth.



# Chapter 3: Down on the Factory Farm

## Chapter 3: Down on the Factory Farm Summary and Analysis

Or what happened to your dinner when it was still an animal.

The closest contact that most modern suburbanites have with non-human animals is at dinner time when they eat them. As much as animals are abused in other ways including during research, the mistreatment of animals raised for food far exceeds them all. In America over 100 million cows, pigs and sheep are raised each year only to be slaughtered for human consumption. Buying meat in a grocery store or at a butcher shop reveals little about the process. The packaged meat seems like something other than a hunk of dead animal. There's hardly any blood and the hunk of meat is cut into a shape that is familiar and pleasing to our eyes. Our idyllic images of farms are child-like and depict happy and content animals grazing in the green fields and romping in the barnyard. Of course, it is a distorted picture. Firstly, most farms are run like corporations and have turned agriculture into big business. A relatively small number of corporations control all poultry production in the country. Farming is competitive and the practices used to raise animals are designed to cut costs and increase production. The treatment of animals is hardly a blip on the radar screen. Animals raised for food live in misery from birth until death.

Ruth Harrison, author of "Animal Machine" an expose of abusive animal rearing practices on farms, contends that cruelty is acknowledged only where profitability ends. In other words, the well-being of animals is not an issue when profits are high. There are very low standards for raising chickens and harvesting their eggs. Chickens are raised in factory-like plants and are confined indoors. They are raised in optimum conditions as far as adequate food, water and proper lighting. Broiler chickens are killed at seven weeks of age - their natural life span is seven years. They live their entire life on a space no bigger than a piece of typing paper and in a building with no windows. They had never seen the outdoor world during their entire existence. The stress of this crowding causes outbreaks of fighting among the chickens. They peck and de-feather each other and sometimes kill one another and even eat each other. Cannibalism is not a natural behavior for chickens and is brought about by the conditions they are forced to live in. A group of about 90 chickens can form a social order or pecking order which brings normalcy and calm to the birds. However, when 80,000 chickens are jammed into one shed, the disorganization creates chaos among them. Using dim and unnatural lighting is one way to reduce the in-fighting.

In order to stop the chickens from pecking and eating each other, baby birds are routinely debeaked. They are forced into a guillotine-like devices where their top beaks are sliced off by a hot blade that causes blisters and burning in addition to the pain of amputation. Some farmers who take part in this process, assert that the process is painless but they are kidding themselves. This procedure causes pain, suffering and



stress. Since one person typically oversees upwards of 60,000 chickens, it is impossible that sick or injured birds are spotted in time for effective treatment. They just die and are trampled and perhaps eaten.

There are no windows in chicken sheds. Artificial ventilation systems are used to circulate air. However, when the system malfunctions, birds can suffocate from lack of fresh air. The animals are typically edgy and jittery and panic easily sometimes smothering each other by a piling on behavior that occurs when they're frightened. Two percent of chickens raised under these conditions die of ADS or acute death syndrome. The actual cause of death is unknown but it is undoubtedly connected to their "living" conditions. During the seven weeks of life that a broiler chicken has, no effort is made to clean up their droppings which causes the air to become contaminated. These chickens wind up on millions of dinner tables and are eaten by humans who have no clue about what their brief lives were like. Everyone loves a turkey dinner at Thanksgiving but they have no idea that the birds lived in the same crowded and stressful conditions as chickens but for as long as 24 weeks.

Laying chickens go through many of the same stressful conditions as broiler chickens. Layers are debeaked, often going through the torture twice because they live longer. Chicks hatched for layers are sorted out by sex. The male chicks have no value and are either suffocated or gassed. Pullets, immature female layers who have not developed enough to lay eggs, are kept in cages until they are moved to different cages in the egg laying facility. They get virtually no attention from the farmers. Alan Hainsworth, owner of a poultry farm, told a reporter that all he needed was four hours a day to oversee his more than 36,000 hens. One of the most blatant examples of crowded chicken communities was at Egg City near Los Angeles. The facility had two million hens which were divided into houses in groups of 90,000 each. In these egg factories, the chickens live in cages all their lives. The floors are slanted so the eggs roll out but the footing is very difficult for the chickens. Sometimes the chickens feet get enmeshed in the wire floor and actually "grow" to it permanently. Droppings accumulate for months before they are removed.

There is a British law that says a caged bird must have a cage large enough to allow it to spread its wings. However, there is one caveat: the section does not apply to poultry! Standards in America allow for crowding in these cages, known as battery cages, with no allowance for the hens to be able to spread their wings. There have been attempts in some countries including Switzerland and Sweden to provide improved conditions. The United States lags behind in standards compared to Europe. However, all countries continue to allow conditions that prevent the birds from enjoying their natural instinctual behaviors including walking, scratching, to bathe in dust, building nests and, of course, stretching their wings. They hens are very stressed when it comes to laying eggs. It is a natural nesting instinct for them to "hide" while laying eggs but no such possibility exists in the modern egg laying factory. Some hens are so stressed - a condition known as confinement stress - in the crowded conditions that they simply give up and are trampled by other chickens. When hens become less productive, they are basically marked for death and are either starved or slaughtered.





The pig is the most intelligent animal that is eaten in the Western world. But their intellect does them little good because like the chicken, pigs raised for food are denied adequate living space. Pigs allowed to live freely, develop stable social groups and make nests. Pigs in modern farm factories are confined and only eat, sleep, stand and lie down. This allows the pig to gain weight quickly over a short period of time. Pigs kept in these confined conditions are frustrated because they are unable to pursue one of their favorite and natural behaviors - rooting. To limit the impact of fighting, tail docking has become a common practice. It prevents battling pigs from biting each other's tails. Not surprisingly, the pigs hate the process which, without anesthesia, is excruciatingly painful.

The pigs suffer from confinement stress, known as porcine stress syndrome, to such a degree that it causes death in some cases. The pig farmer has to give more attention to each animal than the chicken farmer does because each animal, due to its size, is a bigger investment for him. Although not all pigs are raised indoors their entire lives, it is trending that way. As far back as 1979, the University of Missouri found that 57 percent of medium producers and 63 percent of large pig farmers kept their pigs totally confined indoors. Money is the driver in pig farming just as it is in other farming. By keeping the pigs confined, labor costs are reduced. The confinement produces unclean conditions and a dangerous build-up of feces. Ammonia from the unclean conditions builds up in the air and cause unhealthy conditions which breed disease and additional stress. The pig houses have concrete floors for ease of clean-up. However, the floors cause damage to the pigs feet and legs. Some become deformed and lame but as one farmer said, "We don't get paid for producing animals with good posture around here. We get paid by the pound" (p. 124).

Sows normally produce sixteen piglets per year. But with an artificial super-ovulation process developed to increase production and with mechanical nursing devices, some pig farmers have increased the number of piglets per year per sow to forty-five. The process is stressful on the piglets who are taken from their mother at birth and forced to suckle on a mechanical device. The sow is stressed as well since she is turned into a virtual living production machine. The sows are confined to small areas while giving birth and nursing their young if they are allowed to do so. When sows are first confined, they go into violent fits and thrash which can last for hours. The only time in a sow's life that she has any freedom is when she is placed in a pen with a boar to breed. The stress of confining sows and boars leads to a constant hunger and overeating. But the overriding factor in the methods used in pig production is the farmer's bottom line.

The most morally repugnant farming process is that of the veal industry. It is a small industry in comparison to the beef, pig and poultry industries. Veal is the meat of a young calf and is a source of great profit for their producers. The appeal of veal is its tenderness. When calves begin eating grass, their meat becomes tougher. Veal farmers have devised ways of raising calves indoors away from grass. They are kept in narrow indoor stalls and are fed a liquid diet consisting of nonfat milk powder with added vitamins and minerals as well as growth-inducing drugs. This method of producing veal was introduced into the US in 1962. The goal of raising calves in this manner is to



produce the optimum weight gain in the shortest time and to keep the meat light in color something that the consumer expects.

The narrow stalls and wood floors are both sources of discomfort to the animals. As they grow, it is difficult and awkward for the animals to stand up or lie down or to turn around. Another source of stress is that these young animals were taken from their mothers too soon and they miss them. The animals are restricted from ruminating and chewing the cud or roughage which is a natural behavior for them. Chewing cud creates iron in the system which causes the veal to be a darker, undesirable color. Because anemia can result from lack of iron, the farmers strike a balance by giving the calves some iron but not as much as they would get in normal development. The lack of iron serves another purpose. It makes the calves hungry and eat more which makes them put on weight in a short time period - a plus for the veal producers. So that calves aren't "bored," some are kept in the dark during most of their lives which is another source of stress. In recent times, England has established regulations that called for stalls large enough for calves to turn around in. They also required that the young animals be fed fiber so that they can develop naturally.

Dairy cows are also under great stress. Producers see that their cows are pregnant every year in order to maintain a robust milk supply. But their calves are taken from the as soon as they're born which places both mother and calf in great stress. The young calves are often sold to veal producers. The cows are milked two to three times per day. After delivering a calf, a cow is made pregnant a few months later. The cycle of frequent pregnancy and milk producing causes many cows to be spent as early as five years of age. These cows are sent to slaughter to become hamburger or dog food. Processes using the bovine growth hormone and embryo transplantation have been developed to increase the production of dairy cows. The next steps could be genetic engineering and cloning.

Cattle raised for beef have traditionally been able to graze. However, in recent times the period of time they are allowed to graze has been shortened. Many cows raised for beef graze only six months and then are taken to feedlots where they eat corn and other cereal for another six months and then are sent to slaughter. The vast majority of cattle are raised in this fashion. In the feedlots, the cattle are not as confined as other animals but boredom from the same unchanging environment is a problem for them. Some European countries raise cattle indoors for their entire existence. But in the US and Britain, that process is not considered profitable. Most cattle farmers castrate, dehorn and brand their animals - all very painful experiences for the animals.

There has been very little improvement over the years and animals raised for human consumption are at risk all over the world. The overriding factor that drives this issue is monetary profit. A committee appointed by the British minister of agriculture in 1965 concluded that an animal raised for human consumption should have the following: freedom of movement to be able to turn around, groom himself, get up, lie down and be able to stretch. These findings were referred to as the five basic freedoms which were not granted to caged hens, shows and veal calves. The Australian Bureau of Animal Health declared that just because animals can function, i.e. a hen can lay eggs, doesn't





mean that its welfare is not at risk. Despite robust efforts to provide more protection for animals around the world, there are strong lobbying and interest groups that fight just as hard against stiffer regulations.

The transportation of animals to slaughter houses or auctions is another stressful and painful experience for farm animals. Animals actually lose weight during transportation due to both dehydration and the emptying of their intestinal tracts. "Shipping fever" is a form of pneumonia that develops in animals after having been transported. Stress is behind most of the physical manifestations that develop during and after transportation in crowded conditions. Some animals die during shipment. They freeze to death in winter and die from heat exhaustion in hot weather.

The slaughtering of animals is normally required to be, according to most regulations, painless and swift. But that is not always the way it happens. Federal compliance is not efficient due to lack of personnel. A poleax, or sledgehammer, is used to knock an animal unconscious. But the animal is a moving object and one blow rarely does the job. Such a process is archaic but as with other aspects of raising animals, money is the driving force. It is far more economical for cows to be killed with a sledgehammer than to adapt more costly humane methods. So the producers get away with the cheaper method unless they are forced to abandon them. Religious laws also present obstacles. Orthodox Jewish and Muslim laws demand that an animal be healthy and moving when it is killed for human consumption which rules out stunning animals before killing them.

Man has used animals for his own purposes for centuries. In modern times, scientific techniques such as genetic engineering to produce animals with certain desired characteristics have been developed. The only way that animals can be truly liberated is for people to change attitudes and practices relative to the treatment of non-human species.



# Chapter 4: Becoming a Vegetarian

## Chapter 4: Becoming a Vegetarian Summary and Analysis

Or how to produce less suffering and more food at a reduced cost to the environment

Those who are compelled to make changes in man's relationship with animals can contact their elected officials, educate their friends and family and stay aware. The first step everyone can take is to make sure he responsible and considers the rights of non-humans. There is a contradiction between caring about the safety and rights of animals and continuing to eat them. But old habits are difficult to break. It is impossible to raise animals as food for large populations without causing them to suffer. Becoming a vegetarian is a practical and effective step in ending the suffering of animals. As long as people will buy meat, animal farms will continue to raise them. Animal advocates will fight for animal welfare but they cannot do enough to bring the industry down. Money and the law of supply and demand will rule.

Vegetarianism is the most effective form of boycott. People who are truly concerned about animal welfare need to stop being passive, just hoping that the government and advocacy groups will do the heavy lifting. But those who are truly concerned need to take an active role to stop the suffering of non-humans. And the best way to start is to make a pledge to stop eating them. By taking this stand, a person opens up the opportunity to inform other people who are curious about their non-meat diet. For each person who refuses to eat meat, the number of animals raised and abused and slaughtered will be reduced in kind.

Raising high-protein plants like peas or beans is a more efficient use of farmland than using it to raise animals because it has been shown that plant foods yield ten times the amount of protein per acre as does meat. Using land to raise plants versus animals will help meet the need for food on a worldwide basis and help combat global starvation and suffering. Raising animals is a much more costly venture than raising crops. The huge number of animals raised for human consumption contaminates water and air while plants have little or no negative impact on the environment. Raising animals has also caused a reduction in the woodlands due to the forests that have been cleared in order to make room for animal production.

Each person who considers becoming a vegetarian must give serious thought on where he will draw the line. Is avoiding meat enough or should the consumption of eggs and dairy products be stopped or limited as well? If an individual is not willing to give up meat, he should at least be responsible enough to learn what conditions the animal he is eating was raised in. Some animals raised for human consumption are purported to be free roaming or organic. However, digging deeper into the actual circumstances may reveal that the labels are just window dressing and the animals are actually raised in

abusive conditions. Should the choice to be a vegetarian also include avoid eating fish and seafood?

The guiding principal in such a decision is whether an animal suffers in order to become one's dinner. Fish have developed nervous systems and do experience pain. Factory farming of some fish like salmon has resulted in crowded conditions for the fish that causes pain, suffering and stress. Some fish are caught and brought up into the air and die from suffocation. Trawling for fish involves dragging a huge net along the bottom of the ocean which damages its ecology. Nets set out for tuna captures thousands of dolphins each year. The air-breathing dolphins are trapped underwater and drown. Seafood like shrimp and oysters have less developed nervous systems and probably do not experience pain as man understands it.

People who are considering vegetarianism worry that their diet will not be tasty and enjoyable. Beyond that, many are concerned that they will not be adequately nourished if their diets do not include high proteins like meat. However, vegetarianism is not a new movement. It has been part of the cultural fabric of many societies for centuries. Leonardo da Vinci, Leo Tolstoy and George Bernard Shaw were all vegetarians. People who exclude meat from their diets have proven to be healthier and live longer lives on the average than meat-eaters. Some cultures like the Chinese and Japanese make vegetables the main course of their dinners. Nutritionists no longer claim that a balanced meal must include meat protein. Plants like soybeans and nuts are packed with nutrients. Vegans who eat no meat or animal products must be careful to get enough vitamin B12 from supplements because the major source of it is from eggs.

Vegetarians are sometimes the subject of jokes or ridicule. But once a person has vowed not to be a speciesist and is committed to helping to stop the suffering of non-humans, he should not care what others think. He should take pride in the fact that he has taken responsibility for the standards he has set for his own life.



# Chapter 5: Man's Dominion. . .

## Chapter 5: Man's Dominion. . . Summary and Analysis

A short history of speciesism

The attitudes of our predecessors are no longer relevant in today's world. Many of these attitudes were self-serving. Even St. Thomas Aquinas disguised his exploitation of animals in the veil of religious and moral ideation. Western attitudes toward animals have their roots in Judaism and Greek antiquity which ultimately merged into one ideology within Christianity. There are three historical divisions in Western attitude and treatment of animals.

### Pre-Christian Thought

Since the Bible proclaimed that God created man in his own image, man was instantly elevated to a superior position compared to all other creatures. God also gave man "dominion over every other living thing" (p. 187). Adam and Eve ate herbs and fruits but after the fall - which was the joint fault of woman and animal - killing animals was permissible. After the Great Flood, Noah sent the humans off with the belief that "every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you" (p. 187). These passages established the fundamental attitude of the ancient Hebrews toward non-humans.

Pythagoras was a vegetarian in Ancient Greek. His diet was not a result of any love for animals; rather, it was because of his belief that souls of dead men inhabited the bodies of animals. Aristotle believed that animals existed to serve the purposes and needs of man. The views of Aristotle were those that emerged from antiquity and became part of Western thought.

Christianity united Jewish and Greek attitudes toward animals. Christianity was founded and expanded under the Holy Roman Empire. Rome had leagues of soldiers and was involved in innumerable wars and slaughters. Animals and men alike were sacrificed at the Colosseum for the amusement of the spectators. Legend has it that 400 bears were killed under the Emperor Caligula and Nero enjoyed watching tigers battle with elephants. During a celebration during the reign of the Emperor Titus, five thousand animals perished in a single day. "Killing" was part of life. Romans had respect for one another and exhibited kindness. The concept of the sanctity of life spawned from the Christian belief that man's soul lived on after his death. However, criminal humans, enemies of the Empire and all animals fell outside the definition of the sanctity of life in the days of old Rome.

The New Testament of the Bible provides no strong message against cruelty to animals. Rather, it adopted Aristotle's view that animals existed for man. Paul said that God's law was intended, "altogether for our sakes." (191). St. Augustine wrote that Jesus thought it superstitious to refrain from killing animals. Jesus was, according to St. Augustine,



illustrating that man's behavior toward animals was not governed by the same morality that applied to man's treatment of other men. There were some Romans in those early days - Ovid, Seneca and Plutarch included - who advocated the humane treatment of animals. But they had little influence and it was at least 1,600 years before other leading Christians began to voice their opposition to the abuse of animals. But these individuals had little or no impact on the general attitude of people toward animals. The influential and respected Thomas Aquinas thwarted the efforts of advocates. He wrote that it was humans, the more perfect beings, who were entitled to kill for food or other good reason. And that God had subjugated all animals to man's power. He quoted the Old Testament to support his beliefs. In Proverbs, any man who pitied an animal was shamed for not pitying man instead.

The Renaissance brought no relief for animals. While the focus of the era was "humanism," the word itself tells it all and excluded non-humans. In this period, the gentle treatment of men to one another was stressed; however, there was no expressed interest in kindness toward animals. However, during this period some high-profile individuals began to voice dissent about the abuse of animals. Leonardo da Vinci was ridiculed by his peers for his concern over the suffering of animals. He became a life-long vegetarian. Michel de Montaigne quoted Plutarch who alluded to man's vanity in believing that he was above the "crowd of other creatures." (199) Still attitudes did not change and in some cases worsened. As discussed earlier Descartes thought animals were devoid of thought or emotion. They were like machines, automata. Man was distinct and superior to all other beings according to Descartes because he had a soul. Descartes saw nothing wrong with his attitude. The point was that people weren't being cruel to people; rather, they were being indulgent to man. This attitude came in handy since he was a huge advocate of the new practice of animal experimentation that was becoming widespread in Europe. The animals were abused and suffered great pain in an age when there was no anesthesia.

During the period of the Enlightenment, the he suffering of animals during experimentation began to come to light. Voltaire was appalled by the abuse of animals - they were so much like humans in so many ways. Rousseau felt a kindred spirit with animals. Alexander Pope opposed the abusive nature of animal experimentation. Although change was slow, more and more influential people spoke out against animal abuse. The era was only enlightened to a degree. Immanuel Kant at his lectures reminded his audience that animals were there for man. Jeremy Bentham in his "Principles of Morals and Legislation" was the first to underscore animals' ability to feel pain and suffering and spoke of their rights. Richard Martin, Irish landowner, proposed laws to prevent cruelty to horses. Facing heavy opposition, Martin finally pushed through a version of his law through the legislature.

In the late 1850s, Charles Darwin ventured where no man had gone before. He lightly broached the possibility that man had come from animal in his "Origin of the Species." By 1871, many scientists came on board with the concept of evolution compelling Darwin to publish his even more explosive, "Descent of Man." Darwin declared that man was not a special creation and in many ways was similar to animals. He even paralleled human behaviors to the learned instincts of animals. A storm of resistance ensued over



Darwin's theory of evolution. In modern times, most people accept evolution although some of the devout faithful refuse to consider it.

Once an individual accepts evolution as a reality, he is confronted with the awkward notion that he is perhaps eating a distant relative. Some found it all too confounding! Dr. Thomas Arnold wrote that "creation was a painful mystery that I dare not approach" (p. 209). French historian Michelet held the belief that "killing" was a natural trait of man. T. H. Huxley admitted that man was just a brute and therefore not responsible for his abuse. Those who did consider the pain of killing animals completely avoided the suffering that animals being raised for human consumption endured. Even Darwin himself was not convinced to be a vegetarian.

Despite the knowledge and the advancement of man, the attitude toward animals as they related to him was too deeply imbedded in our history to cast it aside.



## Chapter 6: Speciesism Today. . .

### Chapter 6: Speciesism Today. . . Summary and Analysis

Defenses, rationalizations, and objections to Animal Liberation and the progress made in overcoming them

People begin eating meat at a young age. Interestingly, children often have to be encouraged to eat meat because it is initially not appealing to them. Maybe there's a message there! Children usually love animals and are encouraged to do so. An inevitable conflict exists for children who love animals and later make the connection that they are eating them. Fairy tales sometime send the message that animals are bad: The Big Bad Wolf and the Three Blind Mice are two examples. The children learn to distinguish between the animals they love, i.e. dogs and cats, and those they eat. Stuffed animals are generally not chickens and cows. The toys are usually lions and bears - animals that do not really impact the lives of most children at all. Animal activists are making some strides in removing some of the fantasies and biases that children have about the animals they eat. When the connection is made in a child that he is eating part of a cow, an animal he may have seen on a trip to the country, sometimes the child rebels. But it is a short-lived rebellion because parents will "explain" things and urge him to eat his hamburger.

The speciesist's first line of defense is ignorance. The first edition of "Animal Liberation" was the first time that many people heard of the suffering that farm animals endure. Research facilities usually are not open to the public and are obscured behind non-threatening names. But animal welfare societies have stubbornly stayed on the scene and been a thorn in the side of speciesism. Most developed countries have animal welfare organizations and other watch-dog foundations that keep an eye out for animal abuse. These organizations have been increasingly effective because of the public interest in animal welfare. The foundations are set up as charities and accept huge donations each year.

The first barrier for a person to surmount in order to fully support animal welfare is to overcome the meme that human beings come first - that the suffering of a human is worse than the suffering of an animal. To fully embrace animal rights, one must recognize that pain is pain no matter what species the living being is. Those who have emerged as animal activists were often crusaders for the rights in other causes - women's, blacks and other minorities. American feminists including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton joined Horace Greeley, an anti-slavery advocate, in supporting "Women's Rights and Vegetarianism."

One defense for killing animals is that animals kill other animals. But that behavior is part of nature. Men kill animals to eat, for hunting, to obtain body parts they can adorn themselves and their homes with. Animals that are hunted and killed by man are





sometimes portrayed as dumb animals with no purpose. But the wolf who has been denigrated has a highly developed social structure which indicates his intelligence and a familial trait similar to humans. People ignore the importance of animal instinct when making excuses for horrid conditions on farm factories. They claim that the animals never knew anything other than the awful existence they have in the factory. But their instincts tell the animals that they are not living out the life that their ancestors did.

Once an individual abandons speciesism the next step is to leave the animals alone as much as possible. The less controls and regulations that man has on animals the better. Man's interference with the animal world can put the ecological system into serious imbalance, a consequence that would not be good for man or beast. The elimination of factory farms, if it could ever be accomplished, would not be done over night. The animals used in these processes would not be physically or psychologically fit to be set free. Generations of animals would have to be cared for until they lived their lives. Vegetarianism will remove the sense that animals are "there" for man. Some producers defend themselves by saying that at least the animals had a life. But that's a poor argument when thinking in terms of quality of life. Grain that is normally fed to animals that we eat, would be plentiful enough to feed the starving world if we didn't have so many animals to feed.

To adhere to the interests of all living beings, humans must be vegetarians. But it doesn't stop there. People should not use products such as leather belts and shoes or furs that come from animals. Some cosmetics and perfumes use musk from deer and other animals. Boycotting these products will reduce profits to the companies that manufacture and sell them.

There are circumstances in which man and animal have natural conflicts. Crops grown for food can be infested by mice and rabbits and other animals. Instead of poisoning these "pests," science can find non-lethal solutions to deal with the problem. Hunters often say they are taking care of over-population by killing animals but there are humane ways to deal with over-population that do not include killing animals. Some speciesists argue that perhaps plants feel pain and they shouldn't be used for human consumption either. It's not a serious point and is a very weak argument for the slaying of animals.

Equality must be based on the needs and interests of all living beings. Arguments against that basic premise are either narrow-minded or dishonest. While philosophers have written about the dignity of man, the concept does not exclude other beings from having that same dignity. In "A Theory of Justice," Harvard philosopher John Rawls wrote that man is owed justice but that same justice is not owed to animals.

Modern-day philosophers are moving toward the belief that animals have rights and are challenging their students to rethink historic attitudes. There is an increase in the amount of material available to educate people on animal rights. More high-profile animal rights groups have been established and have impacted the issue.





Anyone who is concerned with morality, should recognize that speciesism is wrong and its practices should be removed from his life. A vegetarian diet is healthier than one that includes meat. Overthrowing old attitudes about animals is not easy to do. The progress of the Animal Liberation movement has seen progress over the last decade. Most of the success has been seen in the area of animal experimentation. However, less progress has been made with animal factories. Momentum is growing to stop the practice of dissecting animals in high school biology classes. Animals are unable to speak up for themselves. Therefore, it is incumbent upon caring humans who value life of all descriptions to be their voice.



# Characters

## Chickens

Chickens raised on modern farm factories have a miserable existence from their births to their premature deaths. Those that are raised for consumption are jammed with dozens of other chickens in wire cages that are filthy and uncomfortable and dangerous. The chickens are unable to spread their wings in the cramped conditions. Their feet can get so tangled up in the wire that they actually grow to the wire making it impossible for them to move.

The crowded and stressful conditions to which the chickens are subjected create frustration and fighting among the birds. So that chickens cannot peck and injure other chickens, their top beaks are removed in a device referred to as a guillotine. There are no enforced standards that require the producers to clean up chicken droppings. The ammonia from the droppings creates unsafe air in the chicken factories, which usually have no windows, and results in the development of disease. Most roasting chickens are slaughtered at seven weeks of age so that their meat is tender. The natural life span of a chicken is seven years.

Laying hens don't have it any better on farm factories than do chickens raised for human consumption. Chicks are selected for laying hens. Male chicks are discarded and either sent off to farm factories that raise chickens to eat or are killed. The hens are placed in windowless houses that are just as crowded as the houses for the roasting chickens. The floor of each cage is very uncomfortable, slanted so that the eggs the hens lay roll down into a receptacle. The cycle of egg laying is sped up by artificial means so that the hen can keep producing eggs. Due to the stressful conditions that the hens have to endure and the accelerated egg production, many hens are spent way before they would be under normal conditions. Those hens are monitored and eventually slaughtered because of their reduced production.

Chickens on modern-day farms are so jammed in small cages in production factories that they cannot spread their wings, cannot scratch in a barnyard and cannot establish social, or pecking orders, which are all a natural part of a chicken's life. Instead they live short lives in crowded darkness so they can provide meat and eggs to humans most of whom have no idea what the animals have endured during their short lives.

## Pigs

Pigs are some of the most intelligent animals on earth. Their intellect rivals that of dogs. They recognize people, have self-awareness, and are cognizant of their environment. Fortunately for people but unfortunately for pigs, humans like the taste of pork - pork chops, bacon and sausage all come from pigs. The natural habitat for pigs is in the dirt barnyard where they are able to root - dig in the dirt and mud with their large snouts.



However, because they taste so good, pig farmers and producers have decided - in their very speciesist attitude toward animals - that the more pig, the more money for him.

Pigs have been taken from the spacious outdoors that they love and where they can run free to large pig factories where they are jammed and crowded with other pigs in stalls barely large enough to turn around, all being prepared to go to slaughter as soon as possible. There is virtually no sunlight in these structures and there are only harsh concrete floors where the pigs' favorite past time, rooting, is not possible.

The conditions are stressful for the animals and fighting often breaks out among the pigs. In order to reduce the damage to their valuable property, farmers have adopted the practice of tail docking - cutting off the pig's curly tail so that another pig can't bite it off and cause excessive bleeding. The concrete floors damage the pigs' feet and legs and many are crippled by the time they have lived out their short lives and are ready to be sent to slaughter.

## **Jeremy Bentham**

Jeremy Bentham was the founder of the reforming utilitarian school of moral philosophy. He stressed that everyone must consider what impact their actions have on others.

## **Henry Sidgwick**

Henry Sidgwick was a utilitarian who held the belief that to the vast Universe, no living being is superior to another.

## **Thomas Jefferson**

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and his fundamental belief that consideration should be given to every person led him to oppose slavery although he was a slave owner himself.

## **Sojourner Truth**

In the 1850s, a black feminist named Sojourner Truth made an early case for women's rights.

## **Rene Descartes**

Rene Descartes, a 17th Century French philosopher, conceptualized "automata," the idea that animals neither think nor feel.



## **St. Thomas Aquinas**

St. Thomas Aquinas felt that animals were created for man's use. He disguised his exploitation of animals in the veil of religious and moral ideation.

## **Aristotle**

Aristotle believed that animals were to created to serve the purposes and needs of man. The views of Aristotle were those that emerged from antiquity and became part of Western thought.

## **Charles Darwin**

Charles Darwin hinted that man and animals were related in "Origin of the Species." Twenty years later, he rolled out his theory of evolution in "The Descent of Man."



# Objects/Places

## Speciesism

Speciesism is the natural bias that one has for his own kind. Man feels justified killing animals because he wants to eat them and he does not give any consideration to the rights of animals to live out their natural lives.

## The Committee on Cruelty to Animals

The British Committee on Cruelty to Wild Animals was established in 1951. It declared that based on extensive research and case study, animals actually do feel pain and experience fear and terror.

## Automata

Automata is a concept that animals have no capacity to think or feel and was first proposed by French philosopher Rene Descartes.

## Animal Factories

To meet man's demands for chicken, veal, beef, pork, and eggs, crowded animal factories have been established that produce more animals but abuse and exploit them for profit.

## Laboratory Animals

To meet the medical needs of huge populations, the medical and research field has turned to the animal world for testing and experimentation. Tens of millions of animals suffer pain, stress and terror during lab experimentation each years.

## Vegetarianism

Vegetarianism is a diet that consists of vegetables and grains and does not include any meat. It has been deemed by many nutritionists to be healthier than a diet with meat.

# Themes

## Abuse of Animals

The abuse and suffering of animals looms throughout the pages of "Animal Liberation" by Peter Singer. By describing the abuse in sometimes graphic detail, Singer makes a compelling case to find a way to end the mistreatment. Those who abuse the animals are driven by several factors. In the animal factories, crowded concentration camps for animals being raised for food, the young calves, cows, pigs and chickens typically live under stressful and unclean conditions for the entirety of their abbreviated lives.

It is heart-wrenching to imagine the pain that a young chick feels when his top beak is sliced off with a guillotine-like device. Chickens are jammed into wire cages with so many other birds that they don't have enough room to spread their wings. Their feet get tangled up in the wire flooring and because they can't move, their feet actually grow into the wire. The roasting chickens are killed at seven weeks of age. The normal life span for a chicken is seven years. Perhaps getting out of the abusive circumstances even though it's through death is preferable to staying there.

Young calves are raised to produce the beef product known as veal. The calves are raised mainly indoors so that they can be closely monitored. Veal brings a great profit for farmers and they have to make sure that the young calves don't eat grass because the iron in the grass can turn their light pink skin to a deeper color which is an undesirable result that the farmers want to prevent. The calves are shoved in narrow enclosures and, as they grow, they often are unable to turn around and can only lie down or stand up. Since they have nothing to do, they overeat the super-nourished feed that the farmer supplies and grow fat which is the desired result of the farmers. Pigs, cows and laying hens have similar crowded, stressful, terrifying and unhealthy conditions in animal factories built for raising them as well.

Animals are used for research and experimentation and are abused and mistreated and often die during the experiments. There are some laws and standards to protect them however they are ineffective and rarely enforced. Powerful medical research corporations are influential and lobby vigorously against safety standards for the welfare of animals because it impacts their bottom line. The strictest standards are those for the welfare of dogs and cats. The public outcry to stop abuse of dogs and cats because people have these animals for pets. Other animals like rats, mice and rabbits have virtually no protection from government regulation and the researchers can basically do what they want with them. Animal experimentation has yielded very few important breakthroughs despite the hundreds of millions of animals that have suffered and died from this practice.



## The Impact of Speciesism

Author Peter Singer defines the major reason for the abuse and exploitation of animals, which is a worldwide problem in the the civilized nations of the world on "speciesism." Oddly, animals are treated with more respect in third world nations where they are considered to have a natural place in the various cultures. But in America and Europe, there exists an attitude toward animals that has become part of the cultural fabric of advanced nations. This attitude is referred to as "speciesism" and is defined as a belief that one's own species is better than all other species and whose rights supersede all others. From the days of yore in ancient Greek and Jerusalem, animals were considered to exist only for man's purposes. The animals were at his disposal and they had no rights - not even a right to live.

This system of beliefs is not a school subject and is not taught to children by their parents, it is just part of life. A parent urges his little child to eat his hamburger. No one stops to think what the cow that supplied that sandwich went through - the short and tortured life that the cow endured in order to supply that meal to that child. Speciesism is a part of life. It's a a belief system that is never talked about. Just like a person who is not questioned when he swats flies or shoos away gnats, man kills animals and eats them without blinking an eye and without repercussion. It is the right thing to do because... man wants to eat the animal. That's all it takes. Man kills animals because he wants to eat them. He has told himself that he needs to eat them and that his needs far exceed the needs or rights of another living being to exist.

As populations grew and the demand for meat and eggs increased rapidly over the years, factory farms where the abuse of animals was part of the process were established. The bottom line profit of the operation is the highest priority for the farmer. The suffering and mistreatment of the animals is not as much as a blip on the radar screen. The large populations that developed coupled with medical advancements, led researchers and scientists to increase the amount of medical experimentation which resulted in literally millions of animals being subjected to cruel testing that often ended in death.

The blatant disregard for life originated in a fundamental and long-ago established belief that man was superior to all other animals. If speciesism was eradicated and man had respect for other life, would he eat them, cut on them and ply them with poison?

## Why Vegetarianism?

There are two choices that people have relative to animals and animal rights. If a person elects to follow that which has been ingrained in man since antiquity, he will feel superior to animals. If he follows this approach, he will believe that any rights that might be bestowed upon non-humans can quickly be abandoned if a human being decides he needs to use an animal for his own purposes even when it violates a fundamental right to live. People who have this attitude toward animals and animal rights are speciesist. A speciesist is a person who is only concerned with the rights of his own species.



The second and more modern approach to animals and their rights is to abandon speciesism and become a vegetarian. By making a commitment to not eat non-human animals, a person is acknowledging that animals have the same fundamental rights that people have. They have the right to live their lives out to their natural conclusions. They have the right NOT to be tortured or hunted or raised for food in dangerous conditions or used for experimentation. By abandoning speciesism and adapting the tenets of the Animal Liberation movement, which vegetarianism is a part of, people will move hearts and minds toward a world without animal abuse.

Speciesists who defend their abuse of animals as a God-given right, decry the lack of nutrition in a vegetarian diet. But they either haven't done their homework or are purposely denying what they know to be true. A vegetarian diet with a good balance between green vegetables and the robust protein found in beans and peas provides a healthier way to eat than a diet that includes meat. Young children often have to be urged to eat meat because it's not appealing to them. Perhaps it's more of a natural reaction to eating non-humans than is readily recognized by speciesists.

While animal rights groups and stiffer laws have helped to alleviate some animal abuse, it only has scratched the surface of the mistreatment that is widespread on a global basis. The only way animal abuse can be truly eradicated is for the vast majority of people to reject the self-aggrandizing speciesism and adapt vegetarianism, which will be a major step toward a world of liberated animals.





# Style

## Perspective

"Animal Liberation" by Peter Singer is recounted in the first person by the author. It is not a book about Singer's personal life and experiences. However, the subject of animal abuse is a personal one for him. This version, published in 2002, is an update to two other versions of the book which was originally published in 1975 with the first update in 1990. Peter Singer is a dedicated advocate of the rights of animals and he makes a strong and compelling case for the reduction and eventual eradication of animal abuse.

Peter Singer is an Australian philosopher who has been an animal activist for over twenty years. His interest in the protection of animals led him to the position of Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. Singer is considered the founder of the modern animal rights movement and has shined bright light on the cruel and horrific suffering that man has brought upon non-human animals. Singer is actively involved in other ethical issues including those of environment, choice, euthanasia and the ethics of public responsibility.

One could say that Mr. Singer is biased in his view of animals rights. However, he provides chapter and verse on the horrid treatment that man subjects animals to. He has facts and figures and though no doubt passionate about the rights of animals, he backs up that passion with the stark reality of the terrible abuse that man inflicts upon animals.

## Tone

"Animal Liberation" by Peter Singer is written in an informative and educational style. The work contains examples of animal abuse in a thorough and detailed manner. The material is presented in a straight-forward manner and provides a clear picture of what goes on in the cruel animal factories that produce food for human consumption and the abuse that lab animals are forced to undergo.

The author places the blame for animal abuse squarely on the shoulders of speciesists. "Speciesism" is the belief that one's species is superior to all other animals. Singer provides the history of man's relationship with animals and how and where it went wrong; that is, when it became conventional wisdom that man was superior to all other animals and could use them and abuse them.

Singer backs up the case he makes against speciesism with a brief though colorful history of man's attitude toward and relationship with animals. He adds interest and depth to his retelling by including the beliefs of many famous people down through the ages. In Greek antiquity, Aristotle believed that animals existed for men. In the seventeenth century, French philosopher Rene Descartes proffered the concept that animals were "automata," beings without thoughts or emotions. Leonard da Vinci was



mocked by his peers for caring about animals. Charles Darwin dared to go where no man had gone before; that is, putting forth the concept that man was an animal and came from animal ancestors.

Singer is a true and loyal advocate for animal liberation which is evidenced by this work which is his second update of the original version of the book. What stands out about in "Animal Liberation" is the author's sincerity - not a sign of hypocrisy. He is a true believer. Throughout the entire work, there is not even a word or hint of disrespect toward any animal.

## Structure

"Animal Liberation" by Peter Singer is separated into five lengthy chapters: Chapter 1: All Animals Are Equal; Chapter 2: Tools for Research; Chapter 3: Down on the Factory Farm; Chapter 4: Becoming a Vegetarian; Chapter 5: Man's Dominion; and Chapter 6: Speciesism Today.

Chapter 1 makes the case for animal rights and explains speciesism. Chapter 2 tells the brutal tales of the pain and suffering that animals are forced to undergo in research labs across the globe. Chapter 3 relates the misery and death inflicted upon farm animals that are jammed into "factories" in order to produce food for human consumption. Chapter 4 makes the case for vegetarianism. Chapter 5 explains the history of the abuse of animals by man. Chapter 6 provides the most recent progress of the Animal Liberation movement.

Prior to the first chapter, there are prefaces to the three editions of "Animal Liberation." There is a section of actual photos depicting the suffering and abuse of farm and laboratory animals. Following the last chapter are three appendices: Further Reading, Living without Cruelty, and Organizations. In the "Notes" section, the author included three subcategories: Acknowledgments, Acknowledgments to the 1990 Edition, and an Index.

## Quotes

"Men and women are similar beings and should have similar rights, while humans and non-humans are different and should not have equal rights" (Chapter 1, p. 2).

"The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a prescription of how we should treat human beings" (Chapter 1, p. 5).

"The practice of experimenting on non-human animals as it exists today throughout the world reveals the consequences of speciesism" (Chapter 2, p. 36).

"It doesn't take a Ph. D. in the sciences to grasp the fact that rodent exposure to the saccharin equivalent of 1,800 bottles of soda pop a day doesn't relate well to our daily ingestion of a few glasses of the stuff" (Chapter 2, p. 57).

"Would we be prepared to let thousands of humans die if they could be saved by a single experiment on a single animal" (Chapter 2, p. 81).

"For most human beings, especially those in modern urban and suburban communities, the most direct form of contact with non-human animals is at mealtime: we eat them" (Chapter 3, p. 95).

"Once we place nonhuman animals outside our sphere of moral consideration and treat them as things we use to satisfy our own desires, the outcome is predictable" (Chapter 3, p. 97).

"So we must ask ourselves not: Is it ever right to eat meat? But: Is it right to eat this meat? Here I think that those who oppose only the infliction of suffering must join together and give the same, negative answer" (Chapter 4, p. 160).

"To end tyranny we must first understand it" (Chapter 5, p. 185).

"Presumption is our natural and original disease... 'Tis by the same vanity of imagination that [man] equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine qualities, and withdraws and separates himself from the crowd of other creatures" (Chapter 5, p. 199).

"Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work, worthy to consider him created from animals" (Chapter 5, p. 205).

"Our attitudes to animals begin to form when we are very young, and they are dominated by the fact that we begin to eat meat at an early age" (Chapter 6, p. 213).



## Topics for Discussion

What is speciesism? Why is it part of modern thinking?

What is the history of man's attitude toward animals? What concepts about man and his relationship with animals were formed in antiquity? Why?

Describe some of the abuses that farm animals are forced to endure? What is the top priority of owners and operators of animal factories?

What animals are typically excluded from regulations about the safety of animals used for experimentation? List some of the abuses that these animals are subjected to.

What are the pluses of vegetarianism? What myths and fantasies are there about vegetarianism?

What excuses do speciesists have about the abuse of animals? What arguments can be made to counter their claims?

How can speciesism be overcome? Why would its elimination take a very long time? What are signs that society is moving toward anti-speciesism?