CHAPTER – 3
VIOLENCE AGAINST ANIMALS

Animal abuse or animal neglect is the human infliction of suffering or harm upon any non-human animal, for purposes other than self-defense or survival. More narrowly, it can be the causing of harm or suffering for specific gain, such as killing animals for food or for their fur; opinions differ about the extent of cruelty associated with a given method of slaughter. Cruelty to animals sometimes encompasses inflicting harm or suffering for personal amusement, as in zoosadism. Laws concerning animal cruelty are designed to prevent needless cruelty. Divergent approaches to such laws occur in different jurisdictions throughout the world. For example, some laws govern methods of killing animals for food, clothing, or other products, and other laws concern the keeping of animals for entertainment, education, research or pets.

In broad terms, there are three conceptual approaches to the issue of cruelty to animals. The animal welfare position holds that there is nothing inherently wrong with using animals for human purposes, such as food, clothing, entertainment, and research, but that it should be done in a way that minimizes unnecessary pain and suffering, sometimes referred to as "humane" treatment. Utilitarian advocates argue from the position of costs and benefits and vary in their conclusions as to the allowable treatment of animals. Some utilitarians argue for a weaker approach which is closer to the animal welfare position, whereas others argue for a position that is similar to animal rights. Animal rights theorists criticize these positions, arguing that the words "unnecessary" and "humane" are subject to widely differing interpretations, and those animals have basic
rights. They say that the only way to ensure protection for animals is to end their status as property and to ensure that they are never used as commodities (Cruelty to animals - Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia accessed on 28 January 2016)

Before modern biology revealed similarities between humans and animals, some thinkers considered humans completely distinct from animals; the controversy over animal welfare was virtually non-existent. Renaissance thinker Leonardo Da Vinci, however, who is widely considered one of the greatest geniuses in history, may once have written:

"I have from an early age abjured the use of meat, and the time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look upon the murder of men." (The life of Leonardo da Vinci by Giorgio Vasari)

Although this quote is not found in any of his collected works, da Vinci's regard for animal welfare is well-documented. He was particularly troubled by the sight of birds in captivity, and biographer Giorgio Vasari wrote that he once purchased caged birds in order to set them free. Da Vinci also expressed anger within his notebooks with the fact that humans use their strength and power to raise animals for slaughter (Jones, Jonathan- ‘The Guardian’).

René Descartes, argued that non-humans are automata, complex machines with no soul, mind, or reason (Midgley, Mary, "Descartes' Prisoners"). In Descartes dualism, consciousness was unique to human among all other animals and linked to physical matter by divine grace. However, close analysis shows that many human features such as language, tool use, and self-consciousness can be found in some animals. Charles Darwin, by presenting the theory of evolution, revolutionized the
way that humans viewed their relationship with other species. Darwin believed that not only did human beings have a direct kinship with other animals, but the latter had social, mental and moral lives too. Later, in *The Descent of Man* (1871), he wrote: "There is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties (Darwin, p-34).

Some philosophers and intellectuals, such as Peter Singer and Tom Regan, have argued that animals' ability to feel pain as humans does make their well-being worthy of equal consideration. There are many precursors of this train of thought. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, argued in his *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789):

"The question is not, can they reason nor can they talk? but, can they suffer?"

These arguments have prompted to suggest that animals' well-being should enter a social welfare function directly, not just indirectly via its effect only on human well-being.

In the present chapter, we will focus on movement led by Peter Singer, his writings and efforts. It has been a path breaking movement. This movement highlighted the violence done to animals for centuries but nobody had cared to notice it. It was due to this movement that people started thinking in this direction that animals have also life similar to humans and they also suffer when inflicted. Peter Singer has given equal consideration to animals and human beings. In an essay entitled “Animal liberation: A personal view”, Singer describes the personal background that led to his adoption of the views he sets out in Animal liberation. He writes of how he arrived in Oxford in October 1969,
and in 1970 had lunch with a fellow graduate student, Richard kashes, who avoided meat. This led Singer to inquire as to why. Singer then read Ruth Harrison’s book, Animal Machines, as well as a paper by Roslind Godlovitch, which convinced him to become vegetarian and to take animal suffering seriously as a philosophical issue ("Animal liberation: a personal view, writings on ethical life By Peter Singer, p 293").

**All Animals are equal:**

A liberation movement tries to expand of our moral horizons and an extension or reinterpretation of the basic moral principle of equality. Practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable come to be seen as the result of an unjustifiable prejudice. No can say with confidence that all his or her attitudes and practices are beyond criticism. If we wish to avoid being numbered amongst the oppressors, we must be prepared to re-think even our most fundamental attitudes. We need to consider them from the point of view of those most disadvantaged by our attitudes, and the practices that follow from these attitudes. From this unaccustomed mental switch we may discover a pattern in our attitudes and practices that consistently operate so as to benefit one group—usually the one to which we ourselves belong—at the expense of another. In this way we may come to see that there is a case for a new liberation movement. Singer says that his aim is to advocate that we make this mental switch in respect of our attitudes and practices towards a very large group of beings: members of species other than our own—or, as we popularly though misleadingly call them, animals. In other words, he tries to extend it to other species the basic principle of equality that most of us recognize should be extended to all members of our own species.
Many philosophers have proposed the principle of equal consideration of interests, in some form or other, as a basic moral principle; not many of them have recognized that this principle applies to members of other species as well as to our own. Bentham was one of the few who did realize this. In a forward-looking passage, written at a time when black slaves in the British dominions were still being treated much as we now treat nonhuman animals, Bentham wrote:

The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?

Here Bentham points to the capacity for suffering as the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration. The capacity for suffering—or more strictly, for suffering and/or enjoyment or happiness—is not just another characteristic like the capacity for language, or for higher mathematics. Bentham is not saying that those who try to mark "the insuperable line" that determines whether the
interests of a being should be considered happen to have selected the wrong characteristic. The capacity for suffering and enjoying things is a prerequisite for having interests at all, a condition that must be satisfied before we can speak of interests in any meaningful way. It would be nonsense to say that it was not in the interests of a stone to be kicked along the road by a schoolboy. A stone does not have interests because it cannot suffer. Nothing that we can do to it could possibly make any difference to its welfare. A mouse, on the other hand, does have an interest in not being tormented, because it will suffer if it is (Singer, 57).

The racist violates the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of his own race, when there is a clash between their interests and the interests of those of another race. Similarly the speciesist allows the interests of his own species to override the greater interests of members of other species.

For the great majority of human beings, especially in urban, industrialized societies, the most direct form of contact with members of other species is at mealtimes: we eat them. In doing so, we treat them purely as means to our ends. We regard their life and well-being as subordinate to our taste for a particular kind of dish, say "taste" deliberately—this is purely a matter of pleasing our palate. There can be no defense of eating flesh in terms of satisfying nutritional needs, since it has been established beyond doubt that we could satisfy our need for protein and other essential nutrients far more efficiently with a diet that replaced animal flesh by soy beans, or products derived from soy beans, and other high-protein vegetable products (Moore Lappe, 9-10).

It is not merely the act of killing that indicates what we are ready to do to other species in order to gratify our tastes. The suffering we
inflict on the animals while they are alive is perhaps an even clearer indication of our speciesism than the fact that we are prepared to kill them. In order to have meat on the table at a price that people can afford, our society tolerates methods of meat production that confine sentient animals in cramped, unsuitable conditions for the entire durations of their lives. Animals are treated like machines that convert fodder into flesh, and any innovation that results in a higher "conversion ratio" is liable to be adopted. As one authority on the subject has said, "cruelty is acknowledged only when profitability ceases."

It is significant that the problem of equality, in moral and political philosophy, is invariably formulated in terms of human equality. The effect of this is that the question of the equality of other animals does not confront the philosopher, or student, as an issue itself—and this is already an indication of the failure of philosophy to challenge accepted beliefs. Still, philosophers have found it difficult to discuss the issue of human equality without raising, in a paragraph or two, the question of the status of other animals. The reason for this, which should be apparent from what I have said already, is that if humans are to be regarded as equal to one another, we need some sense of "equal" that does not require any actual, descriptive equality of capacities, talents or other qualities. If equality is to be related to any actual characteristics of humans, these characteristics must be some lowest common denominator, pitched so low that no human lacks them—but then the philosopher comes up against the catch that any such set of characteristics which covers all humans will not be possessed only by humans. In other words, it turns out that in the only sense in which we can truly say, as an assertion of fact, that all humans are equal, at least some members of other species are also equal—equal, that is, to
each other and to humans. If, on the other hand, we regard the statement "All humans are equal" in some non-factual way, perhaps as a prescription, then, as I have already argued, it is even more difficult to exclude non-humans from the sphere of equality (www.animal-rights-library.com) accessed on 13-7-13).

The Animal Liberation Movement: Its Philosophy, Its Achievements And Its Future:

"The question is not, can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But, can they suffer? "(Jeremy Bentham)

Influenced by these lines of Jeremy Bentham, Peter Singer wrote an article “Animal liberation”. People became aware of animal suffering. As peter singer said himself, “Most people first heard of the movement through newspaper articles, often of the what on earth will they come up with next variety”? Then there were marches and demonstrations against factory farming, animal experimentation or the Canadian seal slaughter; all brought an audience of millions by the TV cameras.” Then there have been the illegal acts: slogans daubed on fur shops, laboratories broken into and animals rescued. But the questions are: What are the ideas behind the animal liberation movement, and where is it heading? In this above quotes essay he is trying to answer these questions.

He is tracing history, so that he can get some perspective on the animal liberation movement. Concern for animal suffering can be found in Hindu thought, and the Buddhist idea of compassion is a universal one, extending to animals as well as humans; but nothing similar is to be found in Western traditions. There are a few laws indicating some awareness of animal welfare in the Old Testament, but nothing at all in the New, or in mainstream Christianity for its first eighteen hundred years.
Paul scornfully rejected the thought that God might care about the welfare of oxen, and the Incident of the Gadarene swine, in which Jesus is described as sending devils into a herd of pigs and making them drown themselves in the sea, is explained by Augustine as intended to teach us that we have no duties toward animals (“The Animal liberation” 2). Peter Singer tells us that this interpretation was accepted by Thomas Aquinas, who stated that the only possible objection to cruelty to animals was that it might lead to cruelty to humans—according to Aquinas there was nothing wrong in itself with making animals suffer.

This became the official view of the Roman Catholic Church to such good or bad effect that as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, Pope Pius IX refused permission for the founding of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Rome, on the ground that to grant permission would imply that human beings have duties to the lower creatures.

**The Animal Liberation Movement:**

Peter Singer has showed how the idea of animal liberation produced contrary views among the people of England. In England, which has a reputation for being dotty about animals, the first efforts to obtain legal protection for members of other species were made only 180 years ago. They were greeted with derision. The Times was so lacking in appreciation of the idea that the suffering of animals ought to be prevented, that it attacked proposed legislation that would stop the "sport" of bull-baiting. Said that august newspaper: "Whatever meddles with the private personal disposition of man's time or property is tyranny." Animals, clearly, were just property. That
was in 1800, and that bill was defeated. It took another twenty years to get the first anti-cruelty law onto the British statute – books. To give any consideration at all to the interest of animals was a significant step beyond the idea that the boundary of our species is also the boundary of morality. Yet the step was a restricted one, because it did not challenge our right to make whatever use we choose of other species. Only cruelty - causing pain when there was no reason for doing so, merely sheer sadism or callous indifference - was prohibited. The farmers who deprive their pigs of room to move do not feel offended by this concept of cruelty, for they are only doing what they think necessary to producing bacon. Similarly the scientists who poison a hundred rats in order to find the lethal dose of some new flavouring agent for toothpaste are not cruel - only concerned to follow the accepted procedures for testing for the safety of new products.

Peter Singer shows in the essay that the nineteenth century anti-cruelty movement was built on the assumption that the interests of non-human animals deserve protection only when serious human interests are not at stake. Animals remained very clearly" lower creatures"; human beings were quite distinct from, and infinitely far above, all forms of animal life. Should our interests conflict with theirs, there could be no doubt about whose interests must be sacrificed: in all cases, it would be the interests of the animals that had to yield (The Animal Liberation 3). The significance of the new animal liberation movement is its challenge to this assumption. Animal liberationists have dared to question the right of our species to assume that human interests must always prevail. They have sought – absurd as it must sound as first - to extend such notions as equality and rights to non human animals.
The case for animal equality:

How plausible is this extension? Is it really possible to take seriously the slogan of Orwell's Animal Farm: "All Animals are Equal"? asks Peter Singer. The animal liberationists contend that it is; but in order to avoid hopelessly misunderstanding what they mean by this, says Singer, we need to digress for a moment, to discuss the general ideal of equality.

It will be helpful to begin with the more familiar claim that all human beings are equal. When we say that all human beings, whatever their race, creed or sex are equal, what is it that we are asserting? Those who wish to defend a hierarchical, inegalitarian society have often pointed out that by whatever test we choose, it simply is not true that all humans are equal. Like it or not, we must face the fact that humans come in different shapes and sizes; they come with differing moral capacities, differing intellectual abilities, differing amounts of benevolent feeling and sensitivity to the needs of others, differing abilities to communicate effectively, and different capacities to experience pleasure and pain. In short, if the demand for equality were based on the actual equality of all human beings, we would have to stop demanding equality. It would be an unjustifiable demand.

Fortunately the case for upholding the equality of human beings does not depend on equality of intelligence, moral capacity, physical strength, or any other matters of fact of this kind. Equality is a moral ideal, not simple assertion of fact, observes singer (The Animal Liberation 4).
**Equal consideration of interests:**

If the case for animal equality is sound, what follows from it? It does not follow, of course, that animals ought to have all of the rights that we think humans ought to have - including, for instance, the right to vote. It is equality of consideration of interests, not equality of rights that the case for animal equality seeks to establish. But what exactly does this mean, in practical terms? It needs to be spelled out a little. Citing an example, Singer says, if I give a horse a hard slap across its rump with my open hand, the horse may start, but presumably feels little pain. Its skin is thick enough to protect it against a mere slap. If I slap a baby in the same way, however, the baby will cry and presumably does feel pain, for its skin is more sensitive. So it is worse to slap a baby than a horse, if both slaps are administered with equal force. But there must be some kind of blow – I don't know exactly what it would be, but perhaps a blow with a heavy stick - that would cause the horse as much pain as we cause a baby by slapping it with our hand. That is what I mean by the same amount of pain; and if we consider it wrong to inflict that much pain on a baby for no good reason then we must, unless we are Speciesists, consider it equally wrong to inflict the same amount of pain on a horse for no good reason (Singer, practical 59). There are other differences between humans and animals that cause other complications. Normal adult human beings have mental capacities that will, in certain circumstances, lead them to suffer more than animals would in the same circumstances. If, for instance, we decided to perform extremely painful or lethal scientific experiments on normal adult humans, kidnapped at random from public parks for this purpose, every adult who entered a park
would become fearful that he or she would be kidnapped. The resultant terror would be a form of suffering additional to the pain of the experiment.

The same experiments performed on nonhuman animals would cause less suffering since the animals would not have the anticipatory dread of being kidnapped and experimented upon. This does not mean, of course, that it would be right to perform the experiment on animals, but only that there is a reason, which is not speciesist, for preferring to use animals rather than normal adult humans, if the experiment is to be done at all. It should be noted, however that this same argument gives us a reason for preferring to use human infants - orphans perhaps or retarded human beings for experiments, rather than adults, since infants and retarded human beings would also have no idea of what was going to happen to them (The Animal liberation 5).

Peter singer’s this argument is concerned with nonhuman animals and infants and retarded human beings and he puts them in the same category; and if we use this argument to justify experiments on nonhuman animals we have to ask ourselves whether we are also prepared to allow experiments on humans, infants and retarded adults; and he further asks “if we make a distinction between animals and these humans, on what basis can we do it, other than a bare-faced and morally indefensible preference for members of our own species?” (The Animal liberation 5).

There are many areas in which the superior mental powers of normal adult human beings make a difference: anticipation, more detailed memory, greater knowledge of what is happening, and so on. Yet these differences do not show all point to greater suffering on the part
of the normal human being. Sometimes animals may suffer more because of their more limited understanding. If, for instance, we are taking prisoners in wartime, we can explain to them that while they must submit to capture, search and confinement they will not otherwise be harmed and will be set free at the conclusion of hostilities. If we capture a wild animal, however, we cannot explain that we are not threatening its life. A wild animal cannot distinguish an attempt to overpower and confine from an attempt to kill; the one causes as much terror as the other.

Peter Singer observes that though comparison of sufferings of different species is difficult to make, and that for this reason when the interests of animals and human beings clash the principle of equality gives no guidance. It is probably true that comparisons of suffering between members of different species cannot be made precisely, but precision is not essential. He further says, even if we were to prevent the infliction of suffering on animals only when it is quite certain that the interests of human beings will not be affected, we would be forced to make radical changes in our treatment of animals that would involve our diet, the farming methods we use, experimental procedures in many fields of science, our approach to wildlife and to hunting, trapping and the wearing of furs, and areas of entertainment like circuses, rodeos, and zoos. He feels that this would reduce a vast amount of suffering.

**Why Animal killing is wrong?**

After discussing a lot about the infliction of suffering on animals, he now discusses about killing them. Though this omission has been deliberate, he feels that it is easy to understand the relationship between the principle of equality and the infliction of suffering, in theory. Pain
and suffering are bad and should he prevented or minimized, irrespective of the race, sex, or species of the being that suffers. How bad a pain is depends on how intense it is and how long it lasts, but pains of the same magnitude are equally bad regardless of species. While self-awareness, intelligence, the capacity for meaningful relations with others, and so on are not relevant to the question of inflicting pain - since pain is pain, whatever other capacities, beyond the capacity to feel pain, the being may have - these capacities may be relevant to the question of taking life. It is not arbitrary to hold that the life of a self-aware being, capable of abstract thought, of planning for the future, of complex acts of communication, and so on, is more valuable than the life of a being without these capacities.

To make the difference between inflicting pain and taking life, consider how we would choose within our own species. If we had to choose to save the life of the normal human being or a mentally defective human being, we would probably choose to save the life of the normal one; but if we had to choose between preventing pain in the normal human being or in the mentally defective - imagine that both have received painful but superficial injuries, and we only have enough painkiller for one of them - it is not nearly so clear how we ought to choose. The same is true when we consider other species. The evil of pain is, in itself, unaffected by the other characteristics of the being that feels the pain; the value of life is affected by these other characteristics. Normally this will mean that if we have to choose between the life of a human being and the life of another animal we should choose to save the life of the human being; but there may be special cases in which the reverse holds true, because the human
being in question does not have the capacities of a normal human being. So this view is not speciesist, although it may appear to be at first glance. The preference, in normal cases, for saving a human life over the life of an animal when a choice has to be made is a preference based on the characteristics that normal humans being have and not on the mere fact that they are members of our own species. This is why when we consider members of our own species who lack the characteristics of normal human beings we can no longer say that their lives are always to be preferred to those of other animals. In general, though, the question of when it is wrong to kill (painlessly) an animal is one to which we need give no precise answer. As long as we remember that we should give the same respect to the lives of animals as we give to the lives of those human beings at a similar mental level we shall not go far wrong. The concern related to killing of animals also raised some objections, some straightforward and predictable, some more subtle and unexpected. We will go with the more straightforward ones.

The first and most common objection is how do we know that animals can feel pain? We can never directly experience the pain of another being, whether that being is human or an animal. By giving an example, Descartes tries to show that animals do feel pain when they are hurt. He says:

When I see my daughter fall and scrape her knee, I know that she feels pain because of the way she behaves - she cries, she tells me her knee hurts, and she rubs the sore spot, and so on. I know that I behave in a somewhat similar - more inhibited – way when I feel pain, and so I accept that my daughter feels something like what I feel when I scrape
my knee. The basis of the belief that animals can feel pain is similar to the basis of my belief that my daughter can feel pain. Animals in pain behave in much the same way as human do, and their behavior is sufficient justification for the belief that they feel pain. It is true that, with the exception of those apes that have been taught to communicate by sign language, they cannot actually say that they are feeling pain - but then when my daughter was very young she could not talk, either. She found other ways to make her inner states apparent, thereby demonstrating that we can be sure that a being is feeling pain even if the being cannot use language. To back up our inference from animal behavior, we can point to the fact that the nervous system of all vertebrates, and especially of birds and mammals, are fundamentally similar. Those parts of human nervous system that are concerned with feeling pain are relatively old, in evolutionary terms. Unlike the cerebral cortex, which developed fully only after our ancestors diverged from other mammals, the basic nervous system evolved in more distant ancestors common to ourselves and the other ‘higher’ animals. This anatomical parallel makes it likely that the capacity of animals to feel is similar to our own. It is significant that none of the grounds we have for believing that animals feel pain. We cannot observe behaviour suggesting pain - sensational claims to the contrary have not been substantiated - and plants do not have a centrally organized nervous system like ours (Descartes, 551).

Another famous objection is - Animals eat each other, so why shouldn’t we eat them? John Benson argues that most animals that kill for food would not be able to survive if they did not, whereas we have no need to eat animal flesh (Benson, 546-47). We have enough plant
products to eat. Secondly, it is odd that humans, who normally think of the behavior of animals as ‘beastly’ should, when it suits them, use an argument that implies that we ought to look to animals for moral guidance. The most decisive point, however, is that nonhuman animals are not capable of considering the alternatives open to them or of reflecting on the ethics of their diet. Hence it is impossible to hold the animals responsible for what they do, or to judge that because of their killing they ‘deserve’ to be treated in a similar way. Sometimes people point to the fact that animals eat each other in order to make a slightly different point. This fact suggests, they think, not that animals deserve to be eaten, but rather that there is a natural law according to which the stronger prey upon the weaker, a kind of Darwinian ‘survival of the fittest’ in which by eating animals we are merely playing our part. This interpretation of the objection makes two basic mistakes, one a mistake of fact and the other an error of reasoning. The factual mistake lies in the assumption that our own consumption of animals is a part of the natural evolutionary process. This might be true of a few primitive cultures that still hunt for food, but it has nothing to do with the mass production of domestic animals in factory farms. Suppose that we did hunt for our food, though, and this was part of some natural evolutionary process. There would be still be an error of reasoning in the assumption that because if this process is natural it is right. It is, no doubt, ‘natural’ for women to produce an infant every year but this does not mean that it is wrong to interfere with this process. We need to know that natural laws that affect us in order to estimate the consequences of what we do; but we do not have to assume that the natural way of doing something is incapable of improvement (Benson 546-47).
Goals of the movement:

In his essay on animal liberation, Singer is looking at the philosophy behind the animal liberation movement, and turned to the movement’s aims. What is animal liberation trying to achieve?

The aims of the movement can be summed up in one sentence: to end the present speciesist bias against taking seriously the interests of nonhuman animals. But he asks where do we begin? This is so broad a goal that it is necessary to have more specific aims.

The traditional animal welfare organizations concentrate on trying to stop cruelty to animals of those species to which we most easily relate. Dogs, cats and horses are high on their lists, because we keep these animals as pets or companions. Next come those wild animals that we find attractive especially baby seals, with their big brown eyes and soft white coats, the mysterious whales and the playful dolphins. Animal Liberationists are also, of course, opposed to the suffering and killing that is needlessly inflicted on dogs, cats, horses, seals, whales, dolphins and all other animals. They do not, however, think that how appealing an animal is to us has anything to do with the wrongness of making it suffer. Instead they look to the severity of the suffering, and the numbers of animals involved.

This means that the animal liberation movement is more likely to demonstrate on behalf of laboratory rats, or factory-farmed hens, than for dogs or cats that are being mistreated by their owners. After all, there are some 45 million rats and mice used in laboratories each year in the United States alone; and in the same country, every year, over three billion chickens get raised in factory farms, stuffed into crates on the backs of trucks, and then hung upside-down on the conveyor belt that
takes them to slaughter. Singer says that the amount of suffering involved in such Institutionalized speciesism dwarfs the harm done to dogs and cats by thoughtless or even cruel pet owners. So while animal liberation groups oppose all exploitation of animals, they have concentrated on animal experimentation and the use of animals for food. Let us look at these two areas a little more closely (Singer, Animal Liberation Movement, 8).

**Experimental animals - tools for research:**

The next problem that Singer has raised is of using animals for experimental purposes in medical science and in cosmetics industry. Speciesism, says Singer, can be seen in the widespread practice of experimenting on other species in order to see if certain substances are safe for human beings, or to test some psychological theory about the effects of severe punishment on learning, or to try out various new compounds just in case something turns up (Animal liberation). People sometimes think that all this experimentation is for vital medical purposes, and so will reduce suffering overall. This comfortable belief is very wide of the mark.

Here is one common test carried out by cosmetic companies like Revlon, Avon and Bristol-Myers on many substances they plan to put into their products. It is called the Draize Test, after the man who developed it. You start with six albino rabbits. Holding each animal firmly, you pull the lower lid away from one eyeball so that it forms a small cup. Into this cup you drip 100 milliliters of whatever it is you want to test. Into this cup you drip 100 milliliters of whatever it is you want to test. You hold the rabbit's eyelids closed for one second and then let it go. A day later you come back and see if the lids are swollen, the iris inflamed, the cornea ulcerated, the rabbit blinded in that eye.
This is a standard test, performed without an aesthetic on virtually every substance sold that might get into someone's eye. Other commercial tests include the LD 50 - the "LD" stands for "Lethal Dose" and the "50" refers to the percentage of animals for which the dose is to be made Lethal. In other words in an LD 50 test, you take a sample of animals - rats, mice, dogs or whatever - and feed them concentrated amounts of the substance you are testing, until you have managed to poison half of them to death. Then you have found out the dose that is lethal for 50 per cent of your sample. This is known as the "LD50 value" and is supposed to give some indication of how dangerous the substance is for humans. Apart from the misery it causes for the animals, all of which usually get very ill, and half of which of course get so ill that they die, the test is not at all reliable as a guide to human safety. There are too many variations between the species. Thalidomide, to take one notorious example, does not produce deformities in many animal species (The Animal liberation 9).

Singer says that these are standard tests in commercial laboratories. In the universities there are also many experiments which could not be considered justified by anyone who takes seriously the interests of nonhuman animals. In psychology departments experimenters devise endless variations and repetitions of experiments that were of little value in the first place. Animals will be punished with electric shock, or reared in isolation to see how neurotic this makes them (Singer, 65). Animals are used in laboratories for the main three purposes: education, product safety testing, and experimentation- medical research in particular. Experimentation of this kind differs from therapeutic experimentation, where the intention is to benefit the subjects on whom the experiments
are conducted. In harmful, non-therapeutic experimentation, by contrast, subjects are harmed, often seriously, or put at risk of serious harm, in the absence of any intended benefit for them; instead the intention is to obtain information that might ultimately benefit others. Human beings, not only nonhuman animals, have been used in harmful, non-therapeutic experimentation. In fact, the history of medical research contains numerous examples of human vivisection, and it is doubtful whether the ethics of animal vivisection can be fully appreciated apart from the ethics of human vivisection (Cohen 77).

**Animals as food:**

Singer further explains how, for the great majority of human beings, especially in urban, industrialized societies, the most direct form of contact with members of other species is at meal-times; we eat them. In doing so we treat them purely as means to our ends. We regard their life and well-being as subordinate to our taste for a particular kind of dish. He says "taste" is purely a matter of pleasing our palate. There can be no defense of eating flesh in terms of satisfying nutritional needs, since it has been established beyond doubt that we could satisfy our need for protein and other essential nutrients far more efficiently with a diet that replaced animal flesh by high-protein vegetable products. It is not merely the act of killing that indicates what we are ready to do to other species in order to gratify our tastes. The suffering we inflict on the animals while they are alive is perhaps an even clearer indication of our speciesism than the fact that we are prepared to kill them. In order to have meat on the table at a price that people can afford, our society tolerates methods of meat production that confine sentient animals in cramped, unsuitable conditions for the entire durations of their lives. Animals are
treated like machines that convert fodder into flesh, and any innovation that results in a higher "conversion ratio" is liable to be adopted (Thiroux, 393).

As one authority on the subject has said, "cruelty is acknowledged only when profitability ceases". He has tried to show how humans inflict pain and misery on animals for their profit. He describes how hens are crowded three of four to a cage with a floor area of sixteen inches by eighteen inches, or less than the size of a single page of a daily newspaper. The cages have wire floors, since this reduces cleaning costs; though wire is unsuitable for the hens' feet; the floors slope, since this makes the eggs roll down for easy collection, although this makes it difficult for the hens to rest comfortably. In these conditions all the birds' natural instincts are thwarted: they cannot stretch their wings fully, walk freely, dust-bathe, scratch the ground or build a nest. Although they have never known other conditions, observers have noticed that the birds vainly try to perform these actions. Frustrated at their inability to do so, they often develop what farmers call "vices" and peck each other to death. To prevent this, the beaks of young birds are cut off. This kind of treatment is not limited to poultry. Pigs are now also being reared in stalls inside sheds. These animals are comparable to dogs in intelligence, and need a varied, stimulating environment if they are not to suffer from stress and boredom. Anyone who kept a dog in the way in which pigs are frequently kept would be liable to prosecution, but because our interest in exploiting pigs is greater than our interest in exploiting dogs, we object to cruelty to dogs while consuming the produce of cruelty to pigs (Animal liberation 10).
Animal liberation today:

Peter Singer explains how in the past few years the animal liberation movement has made unprecedented gains (The Animal liberation 10). Whereas a few years ago the public in most developed countries are largely unaware of the nature of modern intensive animal rearing, now in Britain, in West Germany, in Scandinavia, in the Netherlands and in Australia, a large body of informed opinion is opposed to the confinement of Laying hens in small wire cages, and of pigs and veal calves in stalls so small they cannot walk a single step or even turn around. In Britain a House of Commons Agriculture Committee has recommended that cages for laying hens be phased out. Switzerland has gone one better, actually passing legislation which will get rid of the cages by 1992. A West German court pronounced the cage system contrary to the country's anti-cruelty legislation - and although the government found a way of rendering the court's verdict ineffective, the West German state of Hesse announced that it would follow Switzerland's example and begin to phase the cages out.

Perhaps the most positive step forward for British farm animals has been in the worst of all forms of factory farming, the so called "white veal trade". Veal calves were standardly kept in darkness for 22 hours a day, in individual stalls too small for them to turn around. They had no straw to lay on - for fear that by chewing it they would cause their flesh to lose its pale softness - and were fed on a diet deliberately made deficient in iron, so that the flesh would remain pale and fetch the highest possible price in the gourmet restaurant trade. A campaign against the trade led to a widespread consumer boycott; as a result, Britain's largest veal producer conceded the need for change, and moved its calves out of
their bare, wooded, five feet by two feet, stalls into group pens with room to move and straw for bedding.

Peter Singer has shown the other major area of concern to the animal liberation movement, because of the numbers of animals and the amount of suffering involved, is animal experimentation. Here too there have been important gains, although in contrast to the situation with factory farming, these have occurred mostly in the United States. The first success came in 1976, in a campaign against the American Museum of Natural History. The museum was selected as a target because it was conducting a particularly pointless series of experiments which involved mutilating cats to investigate the effect this had on their sex lives. In June 1976 animal liberation activists began picketing the museum, writing letters, advertising and gathering support. They kept it up until, in December 1977, it was announced that the experiments would no longer be funded. This victory may have saved no more than sixty cats from painful experimentation, but it had shown that a well-planned, well-run campaign can prevent scientists doing as they please with laboratory animals. Henry Spira, the New York ex-merchant seaman, ex-civil rights activist who had led the campaign against the museum, used the victory as a stepping stone to bigger campaigns. He now runs two coalitions of animal groups, focusing on the rabbit-blinding Draize eye test and on the LD50, a crude, fifty-year old toxicity test designed to find the Lethal Dose for 50% of a sample of animals. Together these tests inflict suffering and distress on more than five million animals yearly in the United States alone.

With the efforts of the animal liberation activists, coalitions have begun to reduce both the number of animals used, and the severity of
their suffering. US government agencies have responded to the campaign against the Draize test by moving to curb some of the most blatant cruelties. They declared that substances known to be caustic irritants, such as lye, ammonia and oven cleaners, need not be re-tested on the eyes of conscious rabbits. If this seems too obvious to need saying by a government agency, that merely indicates how bad things were until the campaign began. The agencies have also reduced by one-half to one-third the suggested numbers of rabbits needed per test for other products. Two major companies, Procter and Gamble and Smith, Kline and French have released programs for improving their toxicology tests which should involve substantially less suffering for animals. Another company, Avon, reported a decline of 33% in the number of animals it uses.

In another recent step forward, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have announced that it does not require the LD 50. At a stroke, corporations developing new products have been deprived of their standard excuse for using the LD50 - the claim that the FDA forces them to do the test if the products are to be released onto the American market.

Other dramatic successes came about through the patient work of individual activists. In one celebrated case Alex Pacheco volunteered for work in the laboratory of a Dr. Edward Taub. Pacheco found that Taub's work involved severing the nerve connections in the arms of monkeys, and then seeing to what extent they could recover the use of their limbs. Moreover the conditions in the laboratory were filthy, and when the monkeys inflicted wounds on themselves, they were not given veterinary attention. Patiently Pacheco gathered his evidence, and then he went to the police. Taub was convicted of cruelty, the first American
experimenter ever to be found guilty of this offence. The conviction was later reversed on a technicality relating to the jurisdiction of state law when federal government grants were involved; but Taub lost a sizable government grant and the public image of animal experimentation were badly dented. That public image was to suffer even worse damage in 1984-5 when members of the Animal Liberation Front broke into a head injury research laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. At the laboratory, Dr. Thomas Gennarelli specialized in inflicting head injuries on baboons. The animal liberationists did not release any of the baboons, but they took several hours of videotapes, made by the experimenters themselves. When segments of these tapes were shown on national television they caused a horrified reaction. They showed the experimenters joking as they handled the baboons roughly, calling them "sucker" and using other mocking language. The tapes also made it plain that, contrary to Gennarelli's claims, the baboons were not properly anaesthetised when the head injuries were inflicted. After much protest, a sit-in at the offices of the National Institutes of Health, the government body which had funded the experiments, led to a dramatic victory: the United States Secretary for Health and Human Services announced that there was evidence of "material failure" to comply with guidelines for the use of animals, and funding to the laboratory was suspended (Animal liberation 11).

**The Future of Animal Liberation Movement:**

Those who live from exploiting animals are now on the defensive. The research community is especially alarmed. Many laboratories have increased their security arrangements, but this is a costly business, and money spent on fences and guards is presumably not then available for
research - which is just what the animal liberation activists want. To guard every factory farm would be even more expensive. No wonder that some of those who experiment on animals, or raise them for food, hope that animal liberation will just prove to be a passing fad. That hope is bound to be disappointed. The animal liberation movement is here to stay. It has been building steadily now for more than a decade. There is wide public support for the view that we are not justified in treating animals as mere things to be used for whatever purposes we find convenient, whether it be the entertainment of the hunt, or as a laboratory tool for the testing of some new food colouring. But there is still the question of the course the movement will take. Within the animal liberation movement, some forms of direct action have widespread support. Provided there is no violence against any animal, human or nonhuman, many activists believe that releasing animals from situations in which they are wrongly made to suffer, and finding good homes for them, is justified. They liken it to the illegal Underground Railroad which assisted black slaves to make their way to freedom; it is, they say, the only possible means of helping the victims of oppression.

In the worst cases of indefensible experiments, this argument is surely correct; but there is another question that should be asked by everyone interested not only in the immediate release of ten, or fifty, or a hundred animals, but in the prospects of a change that affects millions of animals. Is direct action effective as a tactic? Does it simply polarize the debate and harden the opposition to reform? So far, one would have to say, the publicity gained - and the evident public sympathy with the animals released - has done the movement more good than harm. This is, in large part, because the targets of these operations have been so well
selected that the experimentation revealed is particularly difficult to defend. Now there are signs that this crucial matter of selecting only the most blatantly indefensible targets are being neglected as the groundswell of militant activity increases. Some activists are even going beyond actions directed at releasing animals or documenting cruelty. In 1982, a group calling itself the "Animal Rights Militia" sent letter-bombs to Margaret Thatcher. The group had never been heard of before, has never been heard of since, and may not have been a genuine animal rights organization at all. But the "Hunt Retribution Squad", an offshoot of the highly successful Hunt Saboteurs Association, is undoubtedly real. To disrupt a hunt so as to make it possible for the intended victim to escape is one thing; to seek "retribution" on the benighted hunters is another thing altogether, and morally far more dubious. (If we consider the unfortunate social background and childhood experiences of most hunters, their atrocious behaviour becomes readily explicable, and more a matter for pity than retribution.) Singer doesn’t believe that illegal actions are always morally wrong. There are circumstances in which, even in a democracy, it is morally right to disobey the law; and the issue of animal liberation provides good examples of such circumstances. If the democratic process is not functioning properly; if repeated opinion polls confirm that an overwhelming majority opposes many types of experimentation, and yet the Government takes no effective action to stop them; if the public is kept largely unaware of what is happening in factory farms and laboratories - then illegal actions may be the only available avenue for assisting animals and obtaining evidence about what is happening.
Singer says his concern is not with breaking the law, as such. It is with the prospect of the confrontation becoming violent, and leading to a climate of polarization in which reasoning becomes impossible and the animals themselves end up being the victims. Polarization between animal liberation activists, on the one hand, and the factory farmers and at least some of the animal experimenters, on the other hand, may be unavoidable. But actions which involve the general public, or violent actions which lead to people getting hurt, would polarize the community as a whole.

The animal liberation movement must do its part to avoid the vicious spiral of violence. Animal Liberation activists must set themselves irrevocably against the use of violence, even when their opponents use violence against them. By violence, Peter means any action which causes direct physical harm to any human or animal; and he would go beyond physical harm to acts which cause psychological harm like fear or terror. It is easy to believe that because some experimenters make animals suffer, it is all right to make the experimenters suffer. This attitude is mistaken. We may be convinced that a person who is abusing animals is totally callous and insensitive; but we lower ourselves to their level and put ourselves in the wrong if we harm or threaten to harm that person. The entire animal liberation movement is based on the strength of its ethical concern. It must not abandon the high moral ground. Instead of going down the path of increasing violence, the animal liberation movement will do far better to follow the examples of the two greatest—and, not coincidentally, most successful—leaders of liberation movements in modern times: Gandhi and Martin Luther King. With immense courage and resolution, they stuck to the principle of non-
violence despite the provocations, and often violent attacks, of their opponents. In the end they succeeded because the justice of their cause could not be denied, and their behaviour touched the consciences even of those who had opposed them (http://www.nwveg.org) accessed on 13-7-2013. The struggle to extend the sphere of moral concern to non-human animals may be even harder and longer, but if it is pursued with the same determination and moral resolve, it will surely also succeed.
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