

A close-up photograph of a chimpanzee's face, showing its eye, ear, and mouth. The chimpanzee has dark brown fur and a lighter brown face. The background is black.

ANIMAL LIBERATION

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY YUVAL HARARI
AUTHOR OF *SAPIENS*

PETER SINGER

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About the Book

How should we treat non-human animals? In this immensely powerful and influential book (now with a new introduction by Sapiens author Yuval Noah Harari), the renowned moral philosopher Peter Singer addresses this simple question with trenchant, dispassionate reasoning. Accompanied by the disturbing evidence of factory farms and laboratories, his answers triggered the birth of the animal rights movement.

In the decades since this landmark classic first appeared, some public attitudes to animals may have changed but our continued abuse of animals in factory farms and as tools for research shows that the underlying ideas Singer exposes as ethically indefensible are still dominating the way we treat animals. As Yuval Harari's brilliantly argued introduction makes clear, this book is as relevant now as the day it was written.

About the Author

Peter Singer was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1946 and is one of the most influential moral philosophers at work today. He holds professorships in ethics at Princeton and Melbourne universities and has published numerous books, including *Democracy and Disobedience* (1973), *Practical Ethics* (1979), *How Are We To Live?* (1993) and, most recently, *The Most Good You Can Do* (2015). He became well known internationally after the publication of *Animal Liberation* in 1975 and has been a leading thinker and campaigner in the field of animal rights ever since. *Animal Liberation* was included in *TIME Magazine's* list of 100 Best Nonfiction Books published since 1923. In 2012 Singer was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, his country's highest civilian honor.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Democracy and Disobedience

Practical Ethics

Marx

The Expanding Circle: Ethics and Sociobiology

Hegel

How Are We To Live?: Ethics in an Age of Self-interest

Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics

Ethics into Action: Henry Spira and the Animal Rights Movement

A Darwinian Left

One World: The Ethics of Globalisation

Pushing Time Away: My Grandfather and the Tragedy of Jewish Vienna

The President of Good and Evil: The Ethics of George W. Bush

The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty

The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically

To Richard and Mary, and Ros and Stan,
and—especially—to Renata

This revised edition is also for all of you who have changed your lives in order to bring Animal Liberation closer. You have made it possible to believe that the power of ethical reasoning can prevail over the self-interest of our species.

Animal Liberation

PETER SINGER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
YUVAL NOAH HARARI



THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON

Introduction

by Yuval Noah Harari

Animals are the main victims of history, and the treatment of domesticated animals in industrial farms is perhaps the worst crime in history.

These statements would have sounded ludicrous back in 1975, when Peter Singer first published *Animal Liberation*. Today, thanks in no small part to the impact of this seminal book, more and more people accept these ideas as reasonable, or at least debatable.

In the forty years since the publication of *Animal Liberation* scientists have increasingly turned their attention to the study of animal cognition, animal behaviour and human-animal relations. Their discoveries have largely confirmed Singer's main insights. The march of human progress is strewn with dead animals. Even tens of thousands of years ago our Stone Age ancestors were already responsible for a series of ecological disasters. When the first humans reached Australia about 45,000 years ago they quickly drove to extinction ninety per cent of its large animals. This was the first significant impact *Homo sapiens* had on the planet's ecosystem. It was not the last.

About 15,000 years ago humans colonised America, wiping out in the process about seventy-five per cent of its large mammals. Numerous other species disappeared from Africa, from Eurasia, and from the myriad islands around their coasts. The archeological record of country after country tells the same sad story. The tragedy opens with a scene showing a rich and varied population of large animals, without any trace of *Homo sapiens*. In scene two, humans appear, evidenced by a fossilised bone, a spear point, or perhaps a campfire. Scene three quickly follows, in which men and women occupy centre stage and most large animals, along with many smaller ones, are gone. Altogether, *sapiens* drove to extinction about fifty per cent of all the large terrestrial mammals of the planet *before* they planted the first wheat field, shaped the first metal tool, wrote the first text, or struck the first coin.

The next major landmark in human-animal relations was the Agricultural Revolution: the process by which we turned from nomadic hunter-gatherers into farmers living in permanent settlements. It involved the appearance of a completely new life-form on Earth: domesticated animals. Initially this development might seem to have been of minor importance, as humans managed to domesticate fewer than twenty species of mammals and birds, compared to the countless thousands of species that remained 'wild'. Yet with the passing of the centuries, this novel life form became the norm. Today more than ninety per cent of all large animals are domesticated. Consider the chicken, for example. Ten thousand years ago it was a rare bird confined to small niches of South Asia. Today billions of chickens live on almost every continent and island, bar Antarctica. The domesticated chicken is probably the most widespread bird in the annals of planet Earth. If you measure success in terms of numbers, chickens, cows and pigs are the most successful animals ever.

Alas, domesticated species paid for their unparalleled collective success with unprecedented individual suffering. The animal kingdom has known many types of pain and misery for millions of years. Yet the Agricultural Revolution created completely new kinds of suffering, ones that only got worse with the passing of the generations.

At first sight, domesticated animals may seem much better off than their wild cousins and ancestors. Wild buffalos spend their days searching for food, water and shelter, and are constantly threatened by lions, parasites, floods and droughts. Domesticated cattle, by contrast, enjoy human care and protection. People provide cows and calves with food, water and shelter, treat their diseases, and protect them against predators and natural disasters. True, most cows and calves sooner or later find themselves in the slaughterhouse. Yet does that make their fate any worse than the fate of wild buffalo? Is it any better to be devoured by a lion than slaughtered by a man? Are crocodile teeth kinder than steel blades?

What makes the existence of domesticated farm animals particularly cruel is not just the way they die but above all the way they live. Two competing factors have shaped the living conditions of farm animals: on the one hand, humans want meat, milk, eggs, leather, animal muscle-power and amusement; on the other hand, humans have to ensure the long-term survival and reproduction of farm animals. Theoretically, this should protect animals from extreme cruelty. If a farmer milks his cow without providing her with food and water, milk production will dwindle, and the cow herself will quickly die. Unfortunately, humans can cause tremendous suffering to farm animals in other ways, even while ensuring their survival and reproduction. The root of the problem is that domesticated animals have inherited from their wild ancestors many physical, emotional and social needs that are redundant in human farms. Farmers routinely ignore these needs without paying

any economic price. They lock animals in tiny cages, mutilate their horns and tails, separate mothers from offspring, and selectively breed monstrosities. The animals suffer greatly, yet they live on and multiply.

Doesn't that contradict the most basic principles of Darwinian evolution? The theory of evolution maintains that all instincts, drives and emotions have evolved in the interest of survival and reproduction. If so, doesn't the continuous reproduction of farm animals prove that all their real needs are met? How can a cow have a 'need' that is not really needed for survival and reproduction?

It is certainly true that all instincts, drives and emotions evolved in order to meet the evolutionary pressures of survival and reproduction. However, when these pressures disappear, the instincts, drives and emotions they had shaped do not evaporate instantly. Even if they are no longer instrumental for survival and reproduction, they continue to mould the subjective experiences of the animal. The physical, emotional and social needs of present-day cows, dogs and humans don't reflect their current conditions but rather the evolutionary pressures their ancestors encountered tens of thousands of years ago. Why do modern people love sweets so much? Not because in the early twenty-first century we must gorge on ice cream and chocolate in order to survive. Rather, it is because if our Stone Age ancestors came across sweet, ripened fruits, the most sensible thing to do was to eat as many of them as they could as quickly as possible. Why do young men drive recklessly, get involved in violent quarrels, and hack confidential internet sites? Not because they are obeying present-day law, which forbids all these actions, but rather because they are obeying ancient genetic decrees. Seventy thousand years ago, a young hunter who risked his life chasing a mammoth outshone all his competitors and won the hand of the local beauty - and we are now stuck with his macho genes.

Exactly the same evolutionary logic shapes the life of cows and calves in our industrial farms. Ancient wild cattle were social animals. In order to survive and reproduce, they needed to communicate, cooperate and compete effectively. Like all social mammals, wild cattle learned the necessary social skills through play. Puppies, kittens, calves and children all love to play because evolution implanted them with this urge. In the wild, they *needed* to play. If they didn't, they would not learn the social skills vital for survival and reproduction. If a kitten or calf were born with some rare mutation that made them indifferent to play, they were unlikely to survive or reproduce, just as if their ancestors hadn't acquired those skills they would not exist in the first place. Similarly, evolution implanted puppies, kittens, calves and children with an overwhelming desire to bond with their mothers. A chance mutation weakening the mother-infant bond was a death sentence.

What happens when human farmers now take a young calf, separate her from her mother, put her in a tiny cage, vaccinate her against various diseases, provide her with food and water, and then, when she is old enough, artificially inseminate her with bull sperm? From an objective perspective, this calf no longer needs either maternal bonding or playmates in order to survive and reproduce. All her needs are being taken care of by her human masters. But from a subjective perspective, the calf still feels a very strong urge to bond with her mother and to play with other calves. If these urges are not fulfilled, the calf suffers greatly.

This is the basic lesson of evolutionary psychology: a need shaped thousands of generations ago continues to be felt subjectively even if it is no longer necessary for survival and reproduction in the present. Tragically, the Agricultural Revolution gave humans the power to ensure the survival and reproduction of domesticated animals while ignoring their subjective needs. In consequence,

domesticated animals are collectively the most successful animals in the world, and at the same time they are individually the most miserable animals that ever existed.

The situation has only worsened over the last few centuries, during which time traditional agriculture gave way to industrial farming. In traditional societies such as ancient Egypt, the Roman Empire, or medieval China, humans had a very partial understanding of biochemistry, genetics, zoology and epidemiology. Consequently, their manipulative powers were limited. In medieval villages, chickens ran free between the houses, pecked seeds and worms from the garbage heap, and built nests in the barn. If an ambitious peasant tried to lock a thousand chickens inside a crowded coop, a deadly bird-flu epidemic would probably have resulted, wiping out all the chickens, as well as many of the villagers. No priest, shaman or witch doctor could have prevented it. But once modern science deciphered the secrets of birds, viruses and antibiotics, humans could begin to subject animals to extreme living conditions. With the help of vaccinations, medications, hormones, pesticides, central air-conditioning systems, automatic feeders, and lots of other novel gadgets, it is now possible to cram tens of thousands of chickens into tiny coops, and produce meat and eggs with unprecedented efficiency.

The fate of animals in such industrial installations has become one of the most pressing ethical issues of our time, certainly in terms of the numbers involved. For nowadays most of our planet's big animals live in industrial farms. We imagine that our planet is populated by lions, elephants, whales and penguins. That may be true of the National Geographic channel, Disney movies and children's fairytales, but it is no longer true of the real world outside the TV screen. The world contains 40,000 lions and 1 billion domesticated pigs; 500,000 elephants and 1.5 billion

domesticated cows; 50 million penguins and 20 billion chickens.

In 2009 there were 1.6 billion wild birds in Europe, counting all species together. That same year, the European meat and egg industry raised 1.9 billion chickens. Altogether, the domesticated animals of the world weigh about 700 million tons, compared with 300 million tons of humans, and less than 100 million tons of large wild animals ('large' meaning animals that weigh at least a few kilograms).

This is why the fate of farm animals is not an ethical side issue. It concerns the majority of Earth's large creatures: tens of billions of sentient beings, each with a complex world of sensations and emotions, but who live and die as cogs in an industrial production line. If Peter Singer is right, industrial farming is responsible for more pain and misery than all the wars of history put together.

The scientific study of animals has so far played a dismal role in this tragedy. The scientific community has used its growing knowledge of animals mainly to manipulate their lives more efficiently in the service of human industry. Yet this very same knowledge has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that farm animals are sentient beings, with intricate social relations and sophisticated psychological patterns. They may not be as intelligent as us, but they certainly know pain, fear, loneliness and love. They too can suffer, and they too can be happy.

It is high time we take these scientific findings to heart, because as human power keeps growing, our ability to harm or benefit other animals grows with it. For four billion years life on Earth was governed by natural selection. Now it is increasingly governed by human intelligent design. Biotechnology, nanotechnology and artificial intelligence will soon enable humans to reshape living beings in radical new ways, which will redefine the very meaning of life. When we come to design this brave new world, we should

take into account the welfare of all sentient beings, and not just of *Homo sapiens*.

Animal Liberation raises ethical questions that every human should take to heart. Not everyone may agree with Singer's thesis. But given the immense power humankind wields over all other animals, it is our ethical responsibility to debate it carefully.

Preface to the 1975 Edition

This book is about the tyranny of human over nonhuman animals. This tyranny has caused and today is still causing an amount of pain and suffering that can only be compared with that which resulted from the centuries of tyranny by white humans over black humans. The struggle against this tyranny is a struggle as important as any of the moral and social issues that have been fought over in recent years.

Most readers will take what they have just read to be a wild exaggeration. Five years ago I myself would have laughed at the statements I have now written in complete seriousness. Five years ago I did not know what I know today. If you read this book carefully, paying special attention to the second and third chapters, you will then know as much of what I know about the oppression of animals as it is possible to get into a book of reasonable length. Then you will be able to judge if my opening paragraph is a wild exaggeration or a sober estimate of a situation largely unknown to the general public. So I do not ask you to believe my opening paragraph now. All I ask is that you reserve your judgment until you have read the book.

Soon after I began work on this book my wife and I were invited to tea—we were living in England at the time—by a lady who had heard that I was planning to write about animals. She herself was very interested in animals, she said, and she had a friend who had already written a book about animals and would be *so* keen to meet us.

When we arrived our hostess's friend was already there, and she certainly was keen to talk about animals. "I do love animals," she began. "I have a dog and two cats, and do you know they get on together wonderfully well. Do you know Mrs. Scott? She runs a little hospital for sick pets ..." and she was off. She paused while refreshments were served, took a ham sandwich, and then asked us what pets we had.

We told her we didn't own any pets. She looked a little surprised, and took a bite of her sandwich. Our hostess, who had now finished serving the sandwiches, joined us and took up the conversation: "But you *are* interested in animals, aren't you, Mr. Singer?"

We tried to explain that we were interested in the prevention of suffering and misery; that we were opposed to arbitrary discrimination; that we thought it wrong to inflict needless suffering on another being, even if that being were not a member of our own species; and that we believed animals were ruthlessly and cruelly exploited by humans, and we wanted this changed. Otherwise, we said, we were not especially "interested in" animals. Neither of us had ever been inordinately fond of dogs, cats, or horses in the way that many people are. We didn't "love" animals. We simply wanted them treated as the independent sentient beings that they are, and not as a means to human ends—as the pig whose flesh was now in our hostess's sandwiches had been treated.

This book is not about pets. It is not likely to be comfortable reading for those who think that love for animals involves no more than stroking a cat or feeding the

birds in the garden. It is intended rather for people who are concerned about ending oppression and exploitation wherever they occur, and in seeing that the basic moral principle of equal consideration of interests is not arbitrarily restricted to members of our own species. The assumption that in order to be interested in such matters one must be an “animal-lover” is itself an indication of the absence of the slightest inkling that the moral standards that we apply among human beings might extend to other animals. No one, except a racist concerned to smear his opponents as “nigger-lovers,” would suggest that in order to be concerned about equality for mistreated racial minorities you have to love those minorities, or regard them as cute and cuddly. So why make this assumption about people who work for improvements in the conditions of animals?

The portrayal of those who protest against cruelty to animals as sentimental, emotional “animal-lovers” has had the effect of excluding the entire issue of our treatment of nonhumans from serious political and moral discussion. It is easy to see why we do this. If we did give the issue serious consideration, if, for instance, we looked closely at the conditions in which animals live in the modern “factory farms” that produce our meat, we might be made uncomfortable about ham sandwiches, roast beef, fried chicken, and all those other items in our diet that we prefer not to think of as dead animals.

This book makes no sentimental appeals for sympathy toward “cute” animals. I am no more outraged by the slaughter of horses or dogs for meat than I am by the slaughter of pigs for this purpose. When the United States Defense Department finds that its use of beagles to test lethal gases has evoked a howl of protest and offers to use rats instead, I am not appeased.

This book is an attempt to think through, carefully and consistently, the question of how we ought to treat

nonhuman animals. In the process it exposes the prejudices that lie behind our present attitudes and behavior. In the chapters that describe what these attitudes mean in practical terms—how animals suffer from the tyranny of human beings—there are passages that will arouse some emotions. These will, I hope, be emotions of anger and outrage, coupled with a determination to do something about the practices described. Nowhere in this book, however, do I appeal to the reader's emotions where they cannot be supported by reason. When there are unpleasant things to be described it would be dishonest to try to describe them in some neutral way that hid their real unpleasantness. You cannot write objectively about the experiments of the Nazi concentration camp "doctors" on those they considered "subhuman" without stirring emotions; and the same is true of a description of some of the experiments performed today on nonhumans in laboratories in America, Britain, and elsewhere. The ultimate justification for opposition to both these kinds of experiments, though, is not emotional. It is an appeal to basic moral principles which we all accept, and the application of these principles to the victims of both kinds of experiment is demanded by reason, not emotion.

The title of this book has a serious point behind it. A liberation movement is a demand for an end to prejudice and discrimination based on an arbitrary characteristic like race or sex. The classic instance is the Black Liberation movement. The immediate appeal of this movement, and its initial, if limited, success, made it a model for other oppressed groups. We soon became familiar with Gay Liberation and movements on behalf of American Indians and Spanish-speaking Americans. When a majority group—women—began their campaign some thought we had come to the end of the road. Discrimination on the basis of sex, it

was said, was the last form of discrimination to be universally accepted and practiced without secrecy or pretense, even in those liberal circles that have long prided themselves on their freedom from prejudice against racial minorities.

We should always be wary of talking of “the last remaining form of discrimination.” If we have learned anything from the liberation movements we should have learned how difficult it is to be aware of latent prejudices in our attitudes to particular groups until these prejudices are forcefully pointed out to us.

A liberation movement demands an expansion of our moral horizons. Practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable come to be seen as the result of an unjustifiable prejudice. Who can say with any confidence that none of his or her attitudes and practices can legitimately be questioned? If we wish to avoid being numbered among the oppressors, we must be prepared to rethink all our attitudes to other groups, including the most fundamental of them. We need to consider our attitudes from the point of view of those who suffer by them, and by the practices that follow from them. If we can make this unaccustomed mental switch we may discover a pattern in our attitudes and practices that operates so as consistently to benefit the same group—usually the group to which we ourselves belong—at the expense of another group. So we come to see that there is a case for a new liberation movement.

The aim of this book is to lead you to make this mental switch in your attitudes and practices toward a very large group of beings: members of species other than our own. I believe that our present attitudes to these beings are based on a long history of prejudice and arbitrary discrimination. I argue that there can be no reason—except the selfish desire to preserve the privileges of the exploiting group—for refusing to extend the basic principle of equality of

consideration to members of other species. I ask you to recognize that your attitudes to members of other species are a form of prejudice no less objectionable than prejudice about a person's race or sex.

In comparison with other liberation movements, Animal Liberation has a lot of handicaps. First and most obvious is the fact that members of the exploited group cannot themselves make an organized protest against the treatment they receive (though they can and do protest to the best of their abilities individually). We have to speak up on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. You can appreciate how serious this handicap is by asking yourself how long blacks would have had to wait for equal rights if they had not been able to stand up for themselves and demand it. The less able a group is to stand up and organize against oppression, the more easily it is oppressed.

More significant still for the prospects of the Animal Liberation movement is the fact that almost all of the oppressing group are directly involved in, and see themselves as benefiting from, the oppression. There are few humans indeed who can view the oppression of animals with the detachment possessed, say, by Northern whites debating the institution of slavery in the Southern states of the Union. People who eat pieces of slaughtered nonhumans every day find it hard to believe that they are doing wrong; and they also find it hard to imagine what else they could eat. On this issue, anyone who eats meat is an interested party. They benefit—or at least they think they benefit—from the present disregard of the interests of nonhuman animals. This makes persuasion more difficult. How many Southern slaveholders were persuaded by the arguments used by the Northern abolitionists, and accepted by nearly all of us today? Some, but not many. I can and do ask you to put aside your interest in eating meat when considering the arguments of this book; but I

know from my own experience that with the best will in the world this is not an easy thing to do. For behind the mere momentary desire to eat meat on a particular occasion lie many years of habitual meat-eating which have conditioned our attitudes to animals.

Habit. That is the final barrier that the Animal Liberation movement faces. Habits not only of diet but also of thought and language must be challenged and altered. Habits of thought lead us to brush aside descriptions of cruelty to animals as emotional, for “animal-lovers only”; or if not that, then anyway the problem is so trivial in comparison to the problems of human beings that no sensible person could give it time and attention. This too is a prejudice—for how can one know that a problem is trivial until one has taken the time to examine its extent? Although in order to allow a more thorough treatment this book deals with only two of the many areas in which humans cause other animals to suffer, I do not think anyone who reads it to the end will ever again think that the only problems that merit time and energy are problems concerning humans.

The habits of thought that lead us to disregard the interests of animals can be challenged, as they are challenged in the following pages. This challenge has to be expressed in a language, which in this case happens to be English. The English language, like other languages, reflects the prejudices of its users. So authors who wish to challenge these prejudices are in a well-known type of bind: either they use language that reinforces the very prejudices they wish to challenge, or else they fail to communicate with their audience. This book has already been forced along the former of these paths. We commonly use the word “animal” to mean “animals other than human beings.” This usage sets humans apart from other animals, implying that we are not ourselves animals—an implication that everyone who has had elementary lessons in biology knows to be false.

In the popular mind the term “animal” lumps together beings as different as oysters and chimpanzees, while placing a gulf between chimpanzees and humans, although our relationship to those apes is much closer than the oyster’s. Since there exists no other short term for the nonhuman animals, I have, in the title of this book and elsewhere in these pages, had to use “animal” as if it did not include the human animal. This is a regrettable lapse from the standards of revolutionary purity but it seems necessary for effective communication. Occasionally, however, to remind you that this is a matter of convenience only, I shall use longer, more accurate modes of referring to what was once called “the brute creation.” In other cases, too, I have tried to avoid language which tends to degrade animals or disguise the nature of the food we eat.

The basic principles of Animal Liberation are very simple. I have tried to write a book that is clear and easy to understand, requiring no expertise of any kind. It is necessary, however, to begin with a discussion of the principles that underlie what I have to say. While there should be nothing here that is difficult, readers unused to this kind of discussion might find the first chapter rather abstract. Don’t be put off. In the next chapters we get down to the little-known details of how our species oppresses others under our control. There is nothing abstract about this oppression, or about the chapters that describe it.

If the recommendations made in the following chapters are accepted, millions of animals will be spared considerable pain. Moreover, millions of humans will benefit too. As I write, people are starving to death in many parts of the world; and many more are in imminent danger of starvation. The United States government has said that because of poor harvests and diminished stocks of grain it can provide only limited—and inadequate—assistance; but as Chapter 4 of this book makes clear, the heavy emphasis in affluent nations on rearing animals for food wastes

several times as much food as it produces. By ceasing to rear and kill animals for food, we can make so much extra food available for humans that, properly distributed, it would eliminate starvation and malnutrition from this planet. Animal Liberation is Human Liberation too.

Preface to the 1995 Edition

To reread the original preface of this book is to return to a world half forgotten. People concerned about animal don't offer me ham sandwiches anymore. In Animal Liberation groups, the activists are now all vegetarian; but even in the more conservative animal welfare movement, there is some awareness of the issue of eating animals. Those who do so are apologetic about it and ready to provide alternatives when preparing meals for others. A new consciousness exists about the need to extend sympathies for dogs and cats to pigs, chickens, and even laboratory rats.

I am not sure how much credit *Animal Liberation* can take for this change. Popular magazine writers have given it the tag line "the bible of the animal liberation movement." It is a line that I cannot help finding flattering, but it makes me uncomfortable at the same time. I don't believe in bibles: no book has a monopoly on truth. In any case, no book can achieve anything unless it strikes a chord in its readers. The liberation movements of the Sixties had made Animal Liberation an obvious next step: this book drew the arguments together and gave them a coherent shape. The rest was done by some very fine, ethically concerned, hard-working people—first a few individuals,

then hundreds, gradually growing into thousands and now perhaps millions—who make up the Animal Liberation movement. I have dedicated this revised edition to them, because without them the first edition would have suffered the fate of Henry Salt's book *Animals' Rights*, published in 1892 and left to gather dust on the shelves of the British Museum library until, eighty years later, a new generation formulated the arguments afresh, stumbled across a few obscure references, and discovered that it had all been said before, but to no avail.

This time it will not be in vain. The movement has grown too big for that. Important gains for animals have already been achieved. Far greater ones lie ahead. Animal Liberation is now a worldwide movement, and it will be on the agenda for a long time to come.

People often ask me if I am pleased about the way the movement has grown. The way they ask the question makes it plain that they are expecting me to say that I never dreamed that the book would have such an impact. But they are wrong. In my dreams, at least, everyone who read the book was going to say, "Yes, of course..." and would immediately become vegetarian, and start protesting against what we do to animals, so that more people would hear about the message of Animal Liberation, and at least the most extreme and needless forms of animal suffering would soon be stopped by an irresistible tide of public protest.

Admittedly, such dreams were balanced by my awareness of the obstacles: the conservatism of most of us when it comes to what we put into our stomachs; the financial interests that would fight to the last million to defend their right to exploit animals for maximum profit; and the solid weight of history and tradition bolstering the attitudes that justify this exploitation. So I am pleased to have met, and received letters from, many, many people who did read the book and say, "Yes, of course ...," and did stop eating

animals, and become active in the Animal Liberation movement. I am even more pleased, of course, that after many years' hard struggle by many people, the Animal Liberation movement is a political and social reality. But, even so, that is not enough; not nearly enough. As this edition shows only too clearly, the movement has as yet made little impact on the central forms of animal exploitation.

Animal Liberation was originally published in 1975. The text that follows this preface is the revised edition, first published in 1990. By that date revisions were necessary for three main reasons. First, when the book appeared there was no Animal Liberation movement. The term itself was unknown and there were no large organizations—and hardly any small ones—working to implement radical changes in our attitudes and practices toward animals. Fifteen years later, it had become decidedly odd to have a book entitled *Animal Liberation* that took no notice of the existence of the Animal Liberation movement, and for that reason made no comment on the course the movement had taken.

Secondly, the rise of the Modern Animal Liberation movement has been paralleled by an amazing increase in the amount that has been written on this topic—much of it commenting on the position taken in the first edition of this book. I have spent long evenings discussing both philosophical issues and practical conclusions with friends and fellow workers within the Animal Liberation movement. I need the opportunity of the revised edition to respond to all this discussion—if only to indicate the extent to which I had or had not altered my views.

Finally, the second and third chapters of this book describe what our present attitudes to animals mean for the animals used in experimentation and farming. By the time that the first edition was a few years old, I began to hear people saying things like “Of course, animal welfare

has improved a lot since that was written ...". I knew then that it was necessary to document the continuing suffering inflicted on animals in laboratories and farms, so as to present readers with descriptions that could not be palmed off as belonging to some distant dark age.

The new descriptions made up most of the differences between the original edition and the present one. I resisted suggestions that I should add similar accounts of other kinds of animal abuse. The factual material was never intended to serve as a comprehensive report on how we treat animals; it is rather, as I indicate at the end of the first chapter, to display in sharp, clear and concrete form the implications of speciesism presented in the first chapter. The omission of discussions of hunting and trapping, of the fur industry, of the abuse of companion animals, of rodeos, zoos, and circuses means not that these matters are less important, but only that the two central cases of experimentation and food production are sufficient to serve my purpose.

I decided against trying to respond to all the points raised by philosophers about the ethical arguments of this book. To do so would have changed the nature of the book itself, turning it into a work of academic philosophy, of interest to my professional colleagues but tedious for the general reader. Instead I indicated, at appropriate places in the text, some other writings where my replies to certain objections can be found. I also rewrote one passage, in the final chapter, about which I have changed my mind regarding a philosophical point that has only a peripheral relationship to the ethical foundation on which the argument of this book rests. As for these foundations themselves, I have lectured on them, given talks to conferences and philosophy department seminars, and discussed them at length, both verbally and in print; but I have come across no insurmountable objections, nothing that has led me to think that the simple ethical arguments