

## Consequences of Anthropocentric Exploitative Activities on Nonhuman Animals

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**Abstract** – Human centered activities unswervingly or ramblingly affects nonhuman animals within the ecosystem. Actions executed by humans aim at a certain goal. Man is inclined to what brings him comfort, but he appears to be ignorant that he is not the only animate being in the universe. Any action carried out therefore does not affect him alone but also affect other organisms like plants and nonhuman animals. The use of nonhuman animals as means of supporting humans in their existence seems to have its root cause in man’s centeredness behaviour. Man sees himself as inclined to nonhuman animals for his selfish benefits. Singer argues that, it is due to man’s failure to understand that nonhuman animals have rights and also experience pain just like humans, though his argument is good, it does not give the root cause for the exploitation. The researcher has employed analytic method to address Singer’s shortage in addressing nonhuman animals’ exploitation. Man is egoistic, hence considers himself as of much value than other nonhuman animals, something which Singer does not address. Man should not therefore draw attention to his own comfort alone but also to that of nonhuman animals.

**Keywords:** Consequences, anthropocentric, exploitative, activities, nonhuman, animals.

### Introduction

The chapter looks at those human-centered activities that are directed to animals with the aim of benefiting human beings and not necessarily animals. Such activities are what the researcher refers to as, human centered exploitative activities. The use of animals for human benefits, most of the time violates animals’ rights. Human’s involvement in the abuse of animals may either be direct or indirect. Indirect participation in the exploitation is usually committed when we support industries which use animals’ products as raw materials like leather and fur, by buying their finished goods. The problems facing animals in terms of exploitation merits our time as well as our energy. We have responsibility of caring for not only animals but also for the environment.

### 1.1 Anthropocentric argumentation

Much of anthropocentric arguments are revealed in philosophy by various philosophers. Man becomes the point of focus in the age of reason. Anthropocentrism is the view that, “human beings are the central entities in the world. Anthropocentrism regards humans as separate from and superior to nature and holds that human life has intrinsic value, while other entities like animals and plants are resources that may justifiably be exploited for the benefit of mankind.”<sup>1</sup> Human beings are considered as superior to all other creatures within the environment.

Anthropocentrism may find some justification in the elevation of man as a being having a soul, ability to speak and capacity to reason which makes him unique among other creatures in the universe. Such a characteristic, “sets man apart from the rest of the nature and make ethics an exclusively human matter.”<sup>2</sup> Human beings conceive that other beings exist for their service. Rene Descartes in his skepticism perpetuates anthropocentrism when he asserts that, “I think and therefore I am. Descartes says that, if I convinced myself of something then I certainly exist.”<sup>3</sup> The ability to reason therefore becomes a point of reference in defining existence. “A thing that doubts,

<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica on <http://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropocentrism> (Retrieved on 27/7/2018).

<sup>2</sup> Tim Hayward on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) (Retrieved on 27/7/2018).

<sup>3</sup> Rene Desartes, *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 140.

understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling and also imagines and has sensory experience.”<sup>4</sup> The capacity to reason becomes a central point in defining beings and their existence.

Man is seen as the center of the world:

Man, may be regarded as the center of the world; in so much that if man were taken away from the world, the rest would seem to be astray, without aim or purpose, hence leading to nothing. There is nothing from which man does not derive use and fruit in so much that all things seem to be going about man’s business and not their own business.<sup>5</sup>

In other words other things attain meaning only in their reference to man. Things that exist around the environment do not have their own purposiveness, they exist for human service. “In nature not only plants but also animals are made for our use.”<sup>6</sup> Plants as well as animals and other non-living things are to serve man’s interests. Anthropocentric proponents elevate man giving him higher values than other beings which exists in the same universe with him. Other beings are only treated as means or instruments with no intrinsic values. “When it comes to anthropocentric policies, intrinsic value presumably affords humanity existential rights, privileges and protections that are denied to Earth’s less fortunate non-humanity.”<sup>7</sup> Other nonhumans have no rights which preserve their existence since they are in place to serve man.

Humans have the mentality that, Animals are:

All the living things that man does not recognize as his fellows, his neighbors, or brothers and that is so in spite of the infinite space that separates the lizard from the dog, the protozoan from dolphin, the shark from the lamb, the parrot from the chimpanzee, the camel from the eagle, the squirrel from the tiger, the elephant from the cat, the ant from the silkworm or the hedgehog from the echidna.<sup>8</sup>

The above paragraph simply means that “animals” may be meaningful if only they are useful in relation to humans. Human beings give meaning to things.

Martin Heidegger places *Dasein* at the center of the universe, in which “Heidegger’s fundamental ontology upholds a form of transcendental anthropocentrism. Heidegger upholds the idea that all things including objects, animals and events are given order and meaning by human beings-by *Dasein* in terms of their possibility to interact into human task.”<sup>9</sup> Man is the one who assigns meaning to things. “The ready to hand is encountered within the world. The being of this entity, readiness to hand thus stands in some ontological relationship towards the world. The Being of ready to hand has the structure of assignment that it has in itself the character of having been assigned.”<sup>10</sup> Anthropocentric activities which are manifested in many ways in the universe affect nonhuman animals and the biosphere at large.

## 2.2 Animals as tools

Animals have become the main tools used in medical research that is why for Singer animals’ liberation aims to set animals free from such uses. Singer argues that “animals are widely used in products testing and research.”<sup>11</sup> A good example is the use of rabbits in testing substances like “cosmetics”. When the testing of products as well as drugs are being carried out in animals, we cannot deny that animals are made to suffer or even end up losing their lives. Singer reveals that animals undergo a lot of pain and suffering when the research is being conducted. The

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, *Commentary on the Timaeus* of Plato, as cited by O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*. (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (London: Harvard University Press 1993), p. 187.

<sup>7</sup> Kyle Burchett, *Anthropocentrism and Nature an Attempt at Reconciliation*. on <https://philosophy.as.uky.edu/sites/default/faculty> (Retrieved on 27/7/2018).

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Rob Boddice, *Anthropocentrism Humans, Animals, Environments* (Leiden: Brill Publisher, 2011), p. 205.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), pp. 114-115.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), p. 10.

often used animals are: “dogs, apes, monkeys, rats, and rabbits.”<sup>12</sup> Animals are seen as specimens for use by scientists in carrying out medical research experiments. The practice subjects animals to pain hence violates animals rights, some see the act as justifiable in a utilitarian sense because “experiments lead to discoveries about humans and experiments serve vital medical purposes they relieve more suffering than they cause.”<sup>13</sup> Many animals during such activities suffer in the hands of man and even some end up dying prematurely. Some companies test the efficacy of drugs like ‘cosmetics and new shampoos’ by introducing them into the eyes of animals like ‘rabbits’. Food additives and preservatives are also experimented by use of animals whereby they test the level of “Lethal Dose (LD).”

Singer argues that some of the tests of substances affect the involved animal(s). “The most widely acute test of Lethal Dose kills half of the animals in the study. When finding out its level, sample groups of animals are poisoned. Animals used in the test show symptoms of poisoning, including vomiting, diarrhea, paralysis, convulsions and internal bleeding.”<sup>14</sup> The argument by Singer gives us pictures of the kind of painful, malevolent practices which mostly aim at benefiting humans as they abuse nonhuman animals. In the process of using animals in medical research, many animals end up dying. According to Singer, “Congress Office of Technology Assessment has shown that many animals are used each year for toxicological testing.”<sup>15</sup> Premature death imposed by human beings, therefore, is on the run every day. Animals are not seen as beings whose death should bother anyone, simply because they are not humans.

We are supposed to be considerate when it comes to the use of animals in experiments. Singer says that “if one or even a dozen animals had to suffer experiments in order to save thousands, I would think it right and in accordance with the equal consideration of interests that they should do so. The argument gives the answer a utilitarian must give any time.”<sup>16</sup> In this case, animal interests are overridden by those of human beings. Carrying out experiments in animals aims at benefiting human beings to a greater extent than benefiting the animals. Since we can experiment with animals, why not also experiment with some humans?

Would experimenters be prepared to perform their experiments on orphaned humans with severe and irreversible brain damage if that were the only way to save thousands of men? Singer continues to assert that, if the experimenter is not prepared to use orphaned humans with severe and irreversible brain damage, their readiness to use nonhuman animals seems to discriminate on the basis of species alone.<sup>17</sup>

Our attitude towards animals is an attitude full of anthropocentrism because we think that we are the center of the contingent beings. Though some animals may be more intelligent than some humans, their interests remain inferior to us. Singer perceives such attitudes as discriminative on the basis of species.

Since apes, monkeys, dogs, cats and even mice and rats are more intelligent, more aware of what is happening to them, more sensitive to pain, and so on, than many brain-damaged humans barely surviving in hospital wards and other institutions. There seems to be no morally relevant characteristic that such humans have which nonhuman animals lack. Experimenters then show bias in favor of their own species whenever they carry out experiments on nonhuman animals for purposes that they would not think justified them in using human beings at equal or lower level of sentience, awareness, sensitivity and so on.<sup>18</sup>

Nonhuman animals though different in one or another from human beings, our continued use of animals in research is not genuine but is just an issue of discrimination. Exploitation of sentient animals, therefore, is wrong. Animals have rights for equal consideration of interests, experimenting in animals does not support equality of all animals. Human beings, therefore, become the first among equals.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Op. Cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> Singer, *Practical Ethics, Loc. Cit.*, p. 59.

The singer wants us to understand that we may not be justified in the use of animals for experimentation. That is why the mentally stunted as well as infants are not seen as different from “animals who may not have an idea of what is going to happen to them.”<sup>19</sup> Suffering whether of nonhuman animals or of human beings, counts equally, none is superior to the other. According to Singer, “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 wearing of furs and areas of entertainment.”<sup>20</sup> All these activities are human-centered and inflict suffering in nonhuman animals. Humans should go for synthetic wears which are made from plant products.

Humans tend to guard their interests while they look down upon the ones of animals’. “We surround the interests of human beings with protective fences, yet the interests of nonhuman animals go unprotected because they are denied the right not to be used as a mere instrument, tool or means for increasing social utility.”<sup>21</sup> The use of animals in medical research does not directly benefit other animals. Use of animals targets establishing vaccines and cure of diseases that are affecting human beings. Human beings are not justified to use animals because animals are able to experience pain and even share many characteristics with nonhuman animals. “There are no characteristics or set of characteristics that are possessed by all humans that are not possessed by at least some nonhuman animals because whatever attributes we claim makes human beings deserving the rights is shared by some animals.”<sup>22</sup> Animals are not exclusively different when it comes to rights since they are sentient beings.

The difference which exists between us and sentient animals cannot be a sufficient claim for abusing animals. Arguing for animals as belonging to a different species from us is not justifiable. “The morally relevant distinction between humans and animals cannot be species membership, while species membership might distinguish humans from nonhuman animals, it does not justify us in treating animals as property.”<sup>23</sup> The use of animals as specimens in medical research, exploits animals, for the animals are treated as mere tools. “Animals have equal *prima facie* right not to be harmed.”<sup>24</sup> Carrying out medical research harms the involved animals, first, it causes suffering and sometimes it can lead to the death of the animals. Singer argues that though there are other forms of animals abuse, like “hunting and trapping, of fur industry, of the abuse of companion animals, of rodeos, zoos and circuses means not these matters are less important, but only that the two central cases of experimentation and food production are the most common forms of exploitation.”<sup>25</sup> Animals should be treated not as beings with no intrinsic value. Animals are sentient beings with interests and desires that we ought to respect.

Singer also reveals the cruel way in which the test of cosmetics substances is done in nonhuman animals. Singer writes:

Cosmetics and other substances are tested in animals’ eyes. Such a test involves the Draize eye irritancy tests. The animals have been used are placed in holding devices from which only their heads protrude. The animal(s) is placed in a holdingthe device to prevent them from scratching or rubbing their eyes. A test substance is then placed in one eye of the animal. The method is used to pull out the lower “cup” formed. The eye is then closed and the animal is observed daily for eye swelling, ulceration, and infection and bleeding.<sup>26</sup>

We cannot deny so far that animals used in medical research regardless of how much benefit may result from the research, subject animals to painful experiences and even sometimes death. Animals used in the research for cosmetics reveals signs of stress, pain, and suffering. Animals may have, “total loss of vision does to serious internal injury to the cornea or internal structure. Animals hold eye shut urgently, may squeal, claw at the eye,

<sup>19</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Op. Cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> Cheryl Abbate, “The Search for Liability in the Defensive Killing of Nonhuman Animals”, *Social Theory and practice*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2015): 106 – 130.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Loc. Cit.*, p.16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

jump and try to escape.”<sup>27</sup> Since sentience is what we need to abide by in the argument for animals rights, we cannot justify the use of animals in medical field research. Human beings cannot wish to undergo such painful experiences which animals undergo; we should not treat animals as though they are non-sentient beings.

When we talk of suffering, we are simply referring to induced, suffering. Animals should not be discriminated because of their inability to reason or even lack of speech. The ability to experience “pain” becomes a major foundation of equality between humans and animals. Suffering is something which is avoided not only by human beings but also by other animals. Equality between animals and human beings is what Singer urges us to consider as a way of liberating animals.

### 2.2.1 Benefits from animals research

There are various ways which scientists use to argue for use of animals in research. They argue that the use of animals may lead to coming up with drugs which may be used in treating various diseases which affect man. Scientists argue that:

Understanding causes and treatment of diseases developing new drugs or vaccines and testing the safety of chemicals are just a few goals of biomedical researchers today. Still, other projects attempt to discover more how the body and its system work. Though not all biomedical research involves the use of animals, animal-based research must be healthy, well cared for and adequately housed to produce accurate research results.<sup>28</sup>

The use of animals makes it easy for medical researchers to make advancement in the study and monitoring of genetic make-up of pathogens. The study makes it easy for them to develop drugs that are then tested in animals. The reason as to why some animals like dogs, rats, and rabbits are used in medical research is because; they share similar characteristics with humans. The animals are affected by some similar diseases to those which affect human beings.

Rats are valuable research subjects because their body systems are similar to humans and other animals in many respects. The animals are also susceptible to many of the diseases that affect humans. But rodents are not good subjects for experimental techniques in surgery and therefore animals like dogs, cats, rabbits, cattle, fish frogs, birds and non-human primates may be used. The importance of animal research to those suffering from heart and circulatory diseases can be resolved by use of research done in dogs, whereby open-heart surgery, pacemakers, and organ transplants have been made possible to people who suffer from severe heart disease. Some therapies have also been made possible.<sup>29</sup>

Some of the advancement that has been made in the field of medical research out of use of animals' experimentation include the establishment of, “polio vaccine, diphtheria, whooping cough, smallpox and tetanus” behind others. Most research aim at using animals for human benefits. Though on the other side, some argue that, animals also benefit out of the research. Some diseases like “*Feline leukemia virus*” which affects cats and *Canine parvovirus* which affect dogs have been brought under control where vaccines have been established.

Stopping the use of animals in experimentation may not be something that can be unanimously agreed on. David argues that:

A simple dedication to eliminating easily avoidable suffering and death is enough to eliminate most of the ways we use animals. The use of clothes can be made from plants or synthetics, and entertainment can be arranged by using or harming animals. Eating meat though perhaps less easy to give up for some, is avoidable, without undue hardship on our part. Abolishing animal experimentation may often be seen as the very last thing that the society might ever concede to animal rights-and indeed to animals.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>28</sup> David Bender. *The Rights of Animals* (New York: Greenhaven Press, 1999), p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> David Sztybel, “A Living Will for Supporters of Animal Experimentation”, *Journal of Applied*

Using animals in research may be something possible to abandon, the only problem is that because of our interests, the attitude of anthropocentrism becomes a barrier. There may be other alternatives that can be used as a specimen, but because of our attitude, we may fail to consider it. The view of David is that:

Many would assert that we need to be healthy and that it is indispensable to investigate cures for diseases and debilities by using animal research subjects. It is commonly assumed that from nonhuman animal models of human health problems, we can learn and enhance medical practice for a human.<sup>31</sup>

The value of animals in this matter appears as something countable not for the sake of the animals, but for the sake of how humans benefit out of the animals.

### 2.2.2 The justification for using animals for research

Use of animals in medical research is mostly justified on the basis of the benefits which man gains. Some of the researches carried on animals are for commercial, beneficial purposes. They do not aim at benefiting man or the animals directly. Singer points out that even though “we may be inclined to think that any suffering involved in medical research, is justifiable because the research is contributing to the alleviation of suffering.”<sup>32</sup> Singer does not agree to such an argument, because some tests are done with an aim of maximizing profit. Some researchers are conducted, therefore, for the sake of using them in the trading market.

Human interests always dominate those of the nonhuman animals. The use of animals as specimens in research reveals the ongoing suffering which animals encounter each day. “Very often, too basic medical research, medical research has been going on for decades and much of it, in the long run, turn out to have been quite pointless.”<sup>33</sup> Singer shows that animals encounter a lot of pain which even sometimes may not be for any gain.

### 3.0 Animals as food

Singer sees eating of animals as one of the forms of animals exploitation. “I became convinced that by eating animals I was participating in a systematic form of oppression of other species by my own species.”<sup>34</sup> Killing animals is, therefore, something wrong because it interferes with the interests of the animals hence violates their right to freedom from pain and suffering. We should not kill animals, for Singer, “going meat-free is the right decision to make.”<sup>35</sup> Since killing humiliates animals, we should not encourage meat consumption.

We consume animals as food, according to Singer, “the most direct form of contact with non-human animals is at mealtime, we eat them. This simple fact is the key to our attitudes toward other animals and also the key to what each one of us can do about changing these attitudes.”<sup>36</sup> The attitude of killing animals for luxurious purposes is not justifiable, because it denies animals’ right to freedom from pain and right to pleasure. Slaughtering animals is one of the major forms through which animals do not only undergo pain but also denies animals the ability to continue to exist. “The use and abuse of animals raised for food far exceed, in sheer numbers of animal affected, any other kind of mistreatment.”<sup>37</sup> The highest form of animals exploitation involves the butchering of animals for human consumption. That is why for Singer, “in our dinner table and in our neighborhood supermarket or butcher shop that we are brought into direct touch with the most extensive exploitation of other species that has ever existed.”<sup>38</sup> Exploitation of nonhuman animals is something which we encounter each day, though we rarely or even we don’t think about it.

The idea of killing animals is one of the major ways through which animals are subjected to pain and suffering. Man slaughters animals to use them as food. One of the reasons for justifying the killing of animals is based on the ancient belief that, animals are there for human consumption that is, for our gain of pleasure and even

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*Philosophy*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2006): 20 - 35.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation*, *Loc. Cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

convenience. A man may claim that he kills animals for food; he sees his survival as preceding the killing of animals. This cannot be a sufficient reason because there are many sources which can supply man with a nutritional value equivalent to the one supplied by animals' flesh. Science has come to a realization that:

Animals flesh is not necessary for good health or longevity. Nor is it an efficient way of producing food, since most of the animals consumed in industrialized societies have been fattened on grains and other foods which we could have eaten directly. When we feed these grains to animals only about ten percent of the nutritional value remains as meat for human consumption. So with the exception of animals raised entirely on grazing land unsuitable for crops, animals are eaten neither for health nor to increase our food supply. Their flesh is a luxury, consumed because people like its taste.<sup>39</sup>

Since animals must be killed to meet the needs of humans, we cannot deny that they are abused and led to miserable torture and suffering, in order to provide man with flesh enough for consumption. In order to meet the demand for animals consumption, new farming methods which even subject the animals to more torture are practiced in the farm industries. The scientific farming methods seem to treat animals as only objects that are used by man to maximize pleasure, through making meat from animals available to man. Singer argues that "animals are treated like machines that convert fodder into flesh. The cruelty towards animals is only acknowledged when profitability ceases."<sup>40</sup> Technology has also come up with practices like rearing birds in cages where their movement becomes controlled to an extent that they cannot move their wings or even turn their bodies.

Singer continues to assert that our mode of dining is a form of abuse to animals rights. "We are ignorant of the abuse of living creatures that lies behind the food we eat deceptively."<sup>41</sup> Killing animals therefore for Singer is generally wrong. Though, when eating the animals' flesh we may not think of its origin, just because, "We eat beef not bull, steer or cow and pork not pig- although for some reason we seem to find it easier to face the true nature of a leg of lamb. The term "meat" is itself deceptive."<sup>42</sup> The use of the term 'meat' hinders us from clearly admitting that we take away animals lives and on top, we do not consider their interest.

Singer does not only accuse those who do the act of slaughtering the animals for human consumption, but also those who eat the flesh. "Once again, however, my point is not that people who do this thing of exploiting animals are cruel and wicked. On the contrary, the attitudes of the consumers and the producers are not fundamentally different."<sup>43</sup> The act of eating meat and slaughtering animals in this sense is one and the same thing, they all encourage animals suffering. We cannot come to the realization of animals as having rights as long as we are led by the motive of using animals for gainful purposes.

Singer says that "the meat available from butcher and supermarkets comes from animals that were not treated with any real consideration at all while being reared. We should ask ourselves, not: is it ever right to eat meat? But, is it right to eat this meat?"<sup>44</sup> Killing animals for meals causes a premature death to the animals. Those who slaughter animals do not think that they are doing any wrong as well as those who consume it. "Peoples 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."<sup>45</sup> Humans have therefore to change their mode of feeding on animals' flesh.

### 3.1 Is there any justification for eating meat?

According to Singer, "killing an animal is in itself a troubling act. Death though never pleasant needs not to be painful."<sup>46</sup> Singer's concern may be the painful experiences which the animals undergo during the slaughtering activity. The assertion of Singer is that "we ought to become vegetarians, a conclusion that in the popular mind is

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>40</sup> Singer, *Practical Ethics, Loc. Cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>41</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Op. Cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp .23-24.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

generally based on some kind of absolute prohibition of killing animals.”<sup>47</sup> Though it may not be possible to kill an animal without inflicting pain in the involved animal (s), some individuals try to justify meat consumption. We cannot have meat without killing an animal.

Producing meat from animals is not something which cannot be avoided. We should oppose the killing of animals, for Singer:

One is opposed to inflicting suffering in animals, but not to the painless killing of animals one could consistently eat animals that had lived free of all suffering and been instant, painlessly slaughtered. Yet practically and psychologically it is impossible to be consistent in one’s concern for nonhuman animals while continuing to dine on them.<sup>48</sup>

In other words, we cannot argue for animals rights, yet we are consuming animals flesh each day. We cannot confess to be concerned about the welfare of nonhuman animals and yet we exploit them. Singer continues to say that, “if we are prepared to take the life of another being merely in order to satisfy our taste for a particular type of food, then that being is no more than means to our end.”<sup>49</sup> Whatever is treated as means have no intrinsic value, we can conclude that animals are seen as having no intrinsic worthiness.

Our manner of eating animals reveals our prejudice because “our eating habits are dear to us and not easily altered. We have strong interests in convincing ourselves that our concern for other animals does not require us to stop eating them.”<sup>50</sup> Human beings would be concerned about animals and their rights if we were in a position to accept and uphold that, animals have interests and are sentient. Animals cannot recognize their rights or fight for them, it is our responsibility to know them and ensure that we do not violate them. “No one in the habit of eating an animal can be complete without bias in judging whether the conditions in which that animal is reared causes suffering.”<sup>51</sup> Singer shows that even the rearing methods we adopt are themselves a cause of suffering to the animals.

#### 4.0 A Comparative argument in eating meat

In this kind of justification, the comparison between the eating of other animals’ flesh and the animals eating each other is made. Franklin argues, “If you eat one another, I do not see why we may not eat you.”<sup>52</sup> Some animals devour others but they do so without involving reason hence we hold the animals to account; we cannot argue that animals should account for their actions. That is why Singer says, “It is impossible to hold the animals responsible for what they do or judge that because of their killing they ‘deserve’ to be treated in a similar way.”<sup>53</sup> Animals though they may kill one another, they are not preconscious that they wreak pain as they kill others. Singer does not support such an argument because “you cannot evade responsibility by imitating beings that are incapable of making the choice of action.”<sup>54</sup> The comparative argument is not therefore in this sense sufficient. There are also wild animals that consume man but this does not mean that human beings should eat one another.

#### 4.1 The dominant argument in eating meat

The argument flows from the wider view based on the Bible. The most referred quotation goes this way, “the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Then man became a living being.”<sup>55</sup> The verse is commonly used to justify how mankind is superior to animals and the rest of the created creatures. Christians do not see anything wrong with the consumption of animals’ flesh. Since man has authority over creatures in the earth.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Benjamin Frankline, As cited by Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> Singer, *Practical Ethics*, *Loc. Cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>55</sup> Genesis 2:7, New International Version, on <https://www.biblegateway.com> (Retrieved on 18/7/2018).

### 5.0 Farming methods for rearing animals

The modern methods used in domesticated animal's production most of them make animals to suffer. The use of cages in poultry rearing and castration of male animals are examples of such practices that humiliate animals. The practices target faster maturity and increased production for the purposes of fetching high market prices. The factory farm appears to be nothing more than the application of technology based on the idea that animals are 'means to our ends'.

Animals are removed from their natural environment and stocked in structures that are not convenient for the animals. "It is not practically possible to rear animals for food on a large scale without inflicting considerable suffering. Even if intensive methods are not used, traditional farming involves, castration, separation of mother and the young ones, breaking up social groups and branding."<sup>56</sup> According to Singer animals have continued to suffer in our hands, through many violent human practices against them. We may not have thought of whether some of the practices cause suffering to the animals.

Majorly animals like cattle are kept for their products, like meat and milk. Such products do not benefit the animal but human beings. According to Singer:

Dairy products can be distressing for the cows and their calves. The necessity of making the cow pregnant and the subsequent separation of the cow and the calf, the increasing degree of confinement on many farms; the health and stress problem caused by feeding cows with rich diets and breeding them for greater milk yields.<sup>57</sup>

The motive we have towards our rearing of animals is to maximize our benefit as much as possible. We do not think about the interests of animals or even about their rights. Equality between our interests and that of nonhumans may not be attainable as a way of liberating animals from human exploitation, because we need to change our anthropocentric attitude. Our attitude of superiority and centeredness leads humans to keep on abusing animals. Animals are autonomous beings, their liberation calls for humans to change our conceptions about animals. Animals are not 'machines' they are beings with interests for existence; they inhabit the same universe as us. We do not own the universe but we share it with other beings. Human beings have a *prima facie* duty of not only caring for nonhuman animals but also the environment or nature.

Animals are abused every day in different ways. Birds are also abused in the production of eggs, "egg industry is one of the most ruthlessly intensive forms of modern factory exploiting hens relentlessly to produce the most eggs at the least cost."<sup>58</sup> Many ways through which animals are exploited come as a result of our attitude towards animals. We always think that we are the center of all what exists in the universe and that we are superior to what surrounds our environment. Such kinds of beliefs undermine not only the nonhuman animals but even the entire biosphere.

Our discrimination against animals as so far shown by Singer is unjustifiable and it is wrong. "We ought to be concerned with the suffering of animals because suffering is intrinsically wrong, and in virtue the fact that we have some direct duties to animals, this discriminatory treatment is unjustified."<sup>59</sup> Suffering caused by humans in animals ranges from the ways in which we raise the animals and even our killing of animals for luxurious purposes. The manner in which we treat animals is as though animals are only a property. "Animals should not be seen as property, human beings should not be able to treat animals however they wish. When something is a property, you are in law and in effect, a slave, wholly subject to the will of your owner."<sup>60</sup> Animals are not free; they are not seen as autonomous beings because we decide what to do with them: how, when and where. The how, when and where are dictates of humans to the animals, in this sense animals are not recognized as having rights. In other words, animals are not free.

<sup>56</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Loc. Cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>59</sup> Federico Zuolo, "Equality among Animals and Religious Slaughter", *Historical Research*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2015):11.

<sup>60</sup> Cass R. Sunstein, "The Rights of Animals", *The University of Chicago Law Review*, Vol. 70, No. 1, (2003):103 - 116.

We keep animals in our homes, even though we own them we are not supposed to treat them in cruel ways. "Ownership is just a label, connoting a certain set of rights and also duties, and without knowing a lot more, we cannot identify those rights and duties."<sup>61</sup> Owning animals does not mean that we have the right and freedom of using or handling them as we wish.

As commodities animals are also the property of their owners. They belong to people or legal entities like corporations in much the same way as any other piece of property. The farmer can sell and buy cows, the *vivisector* can purchase mice prone to develop a certain kind of cancers, and you and I can buy purebred designer dogs or cats if we wish. Many of us we are accustomed to thinking of animals as our property that we rarely think of the impacts of the animals' status.<sup>62</sup>

The suffering of animals does not concern most of us, we only think about what we have achieved or we are to achieve out of animal exploitation. We, therefore, treat animals as means.

### 5.1 Animals in circuses

Confining animals in circuses causes suffering to animals. Animals in the circuses "are forced to live in an enclosure denying them every opportunity to express their natural behaviour. The training of animals kept in circuses like dogs often is based on fear and punishment."<sup>63</sup> Animals undergo painful experiences in our hands. When animals like dogs, are undergoing training inflicting pain is applied and even when animals are forced to enter the circuses during transportation activities. "Living conditions in circuses cause severe stress and frustration to animals. Pacing by cats, head bobbing by elephants or mouthing cage bars are behaviors which indicate an impaired welfare due to the inability to cope with unsuitable living conditions."<sup>64</sup> The suffering of animals is something real, which is revealed by the signs of stress which the animals show. Many times we ignore those signs simply because of our negative attitudes towards them.

Animals show signs of stress but we do not bother about the situation they are in. Many times we think that animals experiencing pain are not something worthy of our concern. Singer points out that there is a need for a change in the way we treat non-human animals, "like in circuses where animals are imprisoned for humans to stare at. Animals are tormented in order as a way of making them learn the tricks for circuses."<sup>65</sup> Animal suffering in our environment is, therefore, a routine activity, which seems not to worry many people.

Animals are dominated by our desires and our interests but not theirs, this is because, "animals are dominated for our wants, tastes, and pleasures. Many of us, even the most progressive and aware among us enjoy leather jackets, 'happy meat' from whole foods and other animal's products."<sup>66</sup> Accepting to share with animals' equal consideration causes tension to many people, whether they will be free to use animals as they wish or benefit from the animals without any restrictions. "Most of us have by virtue of our species; we are by and largely unwilling to see how this oppression affects the other animals."<sup>67</sup> Human beings therefore though aware of animal suffering which is so much imposed in the form of exploitations, are hesitating to make changes on this matter.

### 5.2 Use of animals in sports

The use of animals in sporting activities is something common in many parts of the world. The commonly used animals in sports are horses, bulls, and buffalos besides others. "Bullfight enthusiast can argue that the death of the bull in the ring gives pleasure to thousands of spectators. Such a conception gives no logical support to the defenders of cruel practices."<sup>68</sup> Using animals to entertain ourselves is a humiliating event. When we clap our hands or even laugh and shout as signs of expressing our joy, at the expense of animals that have been compelled to fight each other we are doing something wrong. We ought to be mindful of the kind of suffering and pain which the animals undergo. There are many ways in which we can get ourselves entertained without necessarily

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup> Bob Torres, *Making a Killing the Political Economy of Animal rights* (West Virginia: AK Press, 2007), p. 58.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Suffering*. on <https://www.animalsaustralia.org/factsh> (Accessed on 20/7/2018).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Loc. Cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>66</sup> Torres, *Making a Killing the Political Economy of Animal rights, Loc. Cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>68</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Loc. Cit.*, p. 231.

involving nonhuman animals. One may watch players playing football or movies instead of using animals for pleasurable activities.

When we use animals in sports and other abusive activities it shows that we never have any sympathetic feeling towards them. We are not kind to the animals but rather we are cruel. Animals' interests are not something of concern to many people. There is much need to consider our relationship toward nonhuman animals. We should not be cruel to animals or even be led by our anthropocentric attitudes in governing our relationship with other sentient beings. Though animals are not rational they are sensible beings, with the ability to avoid pain. Human beings are not justified in causing pain that leads to suffering in animals.

### 5.3 Use of Leather and fur

Animals have been domesticated for the purpose of getting fur, wool, skin and hides. These products are used as raw materials in industries. Hides can only be gotten from killed animals. "We kill animals to clothe ourselves in their skins."<sup>69</sup> There are shoes that are made from leather as well as jackets and ornaments like bangles. Some of us furnish ourselves without thinking that what we are putting on are products that have been obtained from animals. Though some people may argue that using such products is not wrong, the fact is, to obtain them much suffering is caused in animals as well as death. According to Singer, "many fur-bearing animals die only after hours or days spent with a leg caught in a steel-toothed trap."<sup>70</sup> Many animals undergo much agony during activities of exploiting the products and some end up denying.

Some people may not see anything wrong with the use of finished goods made from animals. "Fur coats have been popular for centuries. Proponents argue that fur coats provide warmth. Some animals like tigers, cheetahs and leopards are among the most sought-after skins."<sup>71</sup> Wild animals are also hunted for their skins, claws and even teeth, though this is done illegally. Suffering whether of domestic animals or of wild animals according to Singer is evil. As long as animals have interests and the capacity to feel the pain we ought not to abuse them. "We should not wear furs; we should not buy leather products either since the sale of hides for leather plays a significant role in the profitability of the meat industry."<sup>72</sup> We cannot separate the products we get from animals, with the suffering which animals undergo. In one way or another, we have been supporting animals' exploitation by taking part in economic activities that exploit animals.

### Conclusion

The study has endeavoured to show how animals are exploited by various humans'-oriented practices. Animals most of the times are used as 'means' of obtaining some human ends. Our anthropocentric attitude has much effect in not only animals but in the wider biosphere. Though there are various achievements that we attain out of the use of animals, like in medical research, many of the research involve causing much pain in animals. Animals as sentient beings try to avoid suffering hence such practices are done against them, since nonhuman animals deserve comfort. Animals' rights are therefore violated every day in our use of animals in transport activities, as a companion like pets, a source of power and in agricultural activities. Through our buying and selling activities, we have been condemned to perpetuate our abusive practices against animals; in many ways we take part in supporting industries that exploit animals.

### RECOMMEDATION

We should let go our selfishness of seeking for our own good and pleasure without taking into consideration the well-being of nonhuman animals. Nonhuman animals are part of the universe, the universe does not belong to human beings alone, it is a home for both bio-organism and non-bio organisms. Nonhuman animals as well as the diverse habitats of the universe should not therefore be eliminated from their natural habitats by man through his selfish gain. Humans ought to respect and care for the nonhuman animals for mutual coexistence.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Clifford J. Sherry. *Animal Rights* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), p. 97.

<sup>72</sup> Singer, *Animal Liberation, Op. Cit.*, p. 231.

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