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Singer, Peter. *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement*. New York: Open Roads Media, 2015. Kindle.

Why are chimpanzees and oysters both considered animals, but humans are held to a much higher standard than the closely related primates? Why do Americans protest Korean people eating dogs while they themselves eat animals that come from terrible situations? People try to justify their views, but these ideas are often not based on facts. Born in 1946, Peter Singer is a very influential philosopher who published more than forty books on many different topics such as ethics, poverty, abortion, and more. His book, *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement*, presents issues like these without chastising the reader and telling them that they are wrong, but rather by including data backing up his argument and aiming to make them understand, and perhaps even embrace, the attitudes of the opposing side. Peter Singer does an excellent job making his case by explaining why animals deserve equal consideration, providing a reasonable strategy for people to reduce suffering, and including statistics that support his view.

The idea of animal rights is founded on the conclusion that equal consideration of interests should be applied to both human and non-human animals. This does not mean that all people and animals require identical treatment, but that their interests are satisfied. This work compiles the research and resources of dozens of individuals in order to create the most comprehensive piece on animal rights currently in existence. Comparisons between animal rights

and the rights of different groups of people such as African Americans and women to make it easier for readers to understand. The author illustrates how people's relationships with animals have changed throughout history and how the typical family farms grew and evolved into factory farms that exist today. Over the past forty years, Singer has added more information to the book and made sure to keep various figures up to date which helps support his argument.

The details that Singer provides in this book are beneficial for someone in a related industry to get an in-depth view of what is hidden from the public eye, but it is the members of the general public who can make a difference. The information could be presented in a more user-friendly way as most people would not want to read an entire chapter on animal research and experimentation and another on factory farms. Only a few chapters would be the most beneficial for people who want to learn what they can personally do to help animals, the environment, and the world as a whole. He writes in a way that does not attack people who eat meat and he does not force his opinions on others.

Singer presents a reasonable strategy that almost anyone could follow in order to minimize the suffering that their dietary and lifestyle preferences cause. His suggestions aim to make the transition to vegetarianism easy and interesting. He chooses not to say that everyone should stop eating all animal products and instead recommends that people avoid the animal products that are typically factory-farmed, unless the origin is known, including chicken, turkey, pork, beef, veal, rabbit, and eggs. Instead of obsessing over the fact that many processed foods contain a small amount of dairy, Singer thinks that eliminating the common factory-farmed foods and replacing dairy products with vegan alternatives is enough for people to have an impact on the lives of animals. A respectable notion is that parents should be open and honest with children

about who the meat on their plate comes from in order to let them decide if they want to eat animals (since children are often fed meat before they can comprehend that it was once a living creature).

Animal Liberation includes scientific evidence and numbers that allow readers to see that the animal liberation movement is not just founded by “cranks” who have no real purpose for their goals. Singer provides data that shows how much food is wasted and that if it were properly distributed it could end world hunger. Even if Americans ate 10% less meat for one year, it would provide enough grain to feed 60 million people (3249). When discussing different studies that use animals, he does not over-exaggerate what is happening and simply explains the experiments from an objective point of view without trying to disguise what is being done. By stating where the studies took place, people can realize that these experiments take place close to home, such as Temple University subjecting rats to inescapable shock and the University of Pennsylvania inducing “learned helplessness” by strapping dogs into harnesses and shocking them. Singer repeatedly states that many studies are meaningless and have no practical results and no true applications to humans, therefore convincing readers that much of this abuse has no true justification. He includes a list of what some experiments involve, leaving the details up to the reader’s imagination: “Asphyxiation,’ ... ‘Blinding,’ ... ‘Compression,’ ... ‘Freezing,’ ‘Heating,’ ... ‘Radiation,’ ‘Starvation,’ ‘Shock,’ ‘Spinal Cord Injuries,’ ‘Stress,’ [and] Thirst,” (1417). His explanations of what tax dollars are used for, such as military research and maternal deprivation, may successfully prompt people to endorse representatives that are against using animals for research, while the details about animal testing have the potential to persuade them to purchase cruelty-free products.

One of the only flaws in the book is that Singer uses some terminology to make his points which may be offensive to some individuals, even if he did use them in a way to strengthen his argument. These terms are used when discussing the history of slaves as well as while describing intellectually disabled individuals. Singer includes examples of how Jews, women, and black people have been experimented on in the past. He asks what is stopping researchers from performing the same research on orphaned infants or intellectually disabled individuals who, like animals, would not know what is going on. He proposes finding alternatives to performing these tests on any living being, regardless of their intellectual ability and function, a goal which many people would favor.

Overall, *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement* is an excellent book for people to read in order to understand what many animals experience at the hands of humans, and what they can do to prevent such abuse. While some individuals do not require as much information as Singer included in his book, if someone is truly interested in learning what goes on behind the scenes, this book is worth the read. It has been considered one of the best and most influential books on the topic of animal rights by many leaders in the field. If someone only has a moderate interest in what goes on and what they can do to help, then perhaps the chapters discussing equality, vegetarianism and speciesism would be enough. He advocates that people discuss these issues with political representatives, family, friends, and children. He effectively presents logical arguments from both sides of the animal rights movement, provides evidence that there is no harm in going vegetarian and that it could help feed more of the world's population, and revealing that the opposing group actually has a very weak argument that is not founded on facts.