The problems of animal welfare and the importance of vegan education*

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1 Introduction

Conventional wisdom on the matter of animal ethics in most Western countries is that although animals have some moral value, they have less moral value than humans, and, therefore, it is acceptable to use animals for our purposes as long as we treat them 'humanely' and do not inflict 'unnecessary' suffering on them. This position is known as the animal welfare approach to animal ethics; it is the position that is most often promoted by large animal advocacy organisations in the US and Europe. Some of these organisations claim to promote animal welfare reform not as an end in itself, but as a means to the eventual abolition of animal use or, at least, the significant reduction of animal use. I have referred to this position as 'new welfarism'.[1] In any event, traditional welfarists and new welfarists all share in common the notion that nonhumans have less moral value than humans and that the primary concern is to ensure that animals have a reasonably pleasant life and a relatively painless death.

I want to argue that conventional wisdom is wrong. First, I reject the notion, which is accepted by virtually all welfarists, that animals have less moral value than humans for the purposes of being treated as a resource. Second, I maintain that because animals are property, welfare reform cannot provide significant protection for animal interests. Third, I propose that veganism is the only position that is consistent with the recognition that all sentient nonhumans have a right not to be treated exclusively as a means to the ends of humans.

 Some of the material in this chapter appears in Francione and Garner *The animal rights debate: Abolition or regulation?* (2010). Special thanks to Anna E Charlton for comments. This essay is dedicated to Robert, a little stray who was found under a car and who came to live with us. He taught me so very much and I will always be grateful to him.

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[1] See Francione *Rain without thunder: The ideology of the Animal Rights Movement* (1996).

2 The moral significance of nonhuman animals[2]

Animal welfare emerged in Britain in the nineteenth century, primarily in the writings of utilitarian theorists such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. A central tenet of this position is that although animals can suffer and, based on that characteristic alone, are entitled to some moral consideration, they are morally inferior to humans because they have different sorts of minds. Animals are not self-aware and do not have an interest in continued existence; they do not care that we use them because they are not self-aware; they care only about how we use them because they suffer. Therefore, although animals have some moral significance, they count less than humans because their minds are not similar to those of humans.

This notion about the supposed moral inferiority of nonhumans based on cognitive differences is also represented in contemporary animal welfare theory, most notably in the work of Peter Singer. Singer, a utilitarian like Bentham and Mill, maintains that animals have an interest in not suffering but have lives that are less valuable than those of humans:

> While self-awareness, the capacity to think ahead and have hopes and aspirations for the future, the capacity for meaningful relations with others and so on are not relevant to the question of inflicting pain ... these capacities are relevant to the question of taking life. It is not arbitrary to hold that the life of a self-aware being, capable of abstract thought, of planning for the future, of complex acts of communication, and so on, is more valuable than the life of a being without these capacities.[3]

According to Singer:

> An animal may struggle against a threat to its life, even if it cannot grasp that it has 'a life' in the sense that requires an understanding of what it is to exist over a period of time. But in the absence of some form of mental continuity it is not easy to explain why the loss to the animal killed is not, from an impartial point of view, made good by the creation of a new animal who will lead an equally pleasant life.[4]

That, Singer argues, is because animals do not know what it is they lose when we kill them, they do not have any interest in continuing to live and, therefore, death is need not be considered a harm to them. They do not care that we use and kill them for our purposes. They care only about not suffering as a result of our using and killing them. He argues that as long as they have a reasonably pleasant life and a relatively painless death, our use of animals may be ethically defensible:

> If it is the infliction of suffering that we are concerned about, rather than killing, then I can also imagine a world in which people mostly eat plant foods, but occasionally treat themselves to the luxury of free range eggs, or possibly even

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[2]For a further discussion of the issues discussed in this section, see Francione and Garner (n 1) 4-25.
[3]Singer *Animal liberation* (1990) 20.
[4]*Id* 228-229.

> meat from animals who live good lives under conditions natural for their species, and are then humanely killed on the farm.[5]

Singer maintains that similar human and nonhuman interests in not suffering ought to be treated in a similar fashion, as required by the principle of impartiality, or, as Singer refers to it, the principle of equal consideration. He claims that because humans have 'superior mental powers',[6] they will in some cases suffer more than animals and in some cases suffer less, but he acknowledges that making interspecies comparisons is difficult at best and perhaps even impossible.

The rights/abolitionist position I have developed concedes for purposes of argument that given humans are, at least as far as we know, the only animals who use symbolic communication and whose conceptual structures are inextricably linked to language, it is most probably the case that there are significant differences between the minds of humans and the minds of nonhumans.[7] But my response to this is: so what? Any differences that may exist between human and animal minds do not mean that animals have no interest in continuing their existence or that their suffering has a lesser weight than does that of humans. We cannot justify using nonhumans as human resources irrespective of whether we treat animals 'humanely' in the process.

It is not necessary to come to any conclusion about the precise nature of animal minds to be able to assess the welfarist view that death itself does not harm nonhuman animals because, unlike humans, they live in what Singer describes as 'a kind of eternal present'.[8] The only cognitive characteristic that is required is that nonhumans be sentient; that is, that they be subjectively aware.[9] Sentience is necessary to have interests at all. If a being is not sentient, then the being may be alive, but there is nothing that the being prefers, wants, or desires. There may, of course, be uncertainty as to whether sentience exists in a particular case, or with respect to classes of beings, such as insects or mollusks. But the animals we routinely exploit – the cows, chickens, pigs, ducks, lambs, fish, rats, etc – are all, without question, sentient.

To say that a sentient being – any sentient being – is not harmed by death is decidedly odd. After all, sentience is not a characteristic that has evolved to serve as an end in itself. Rather, it is a trait that allows the beings who have it to identify situations that are harmful and that threaten survival. Sentience is a

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[5]Raha 'Animal liberation: An interview with Professor Peter Singer' (2006) *The Vegan* 19.
[6]Singer (n 5) 16.
[7]For an excellent discussion of the nature of animal cognition and the confusion that it has caused in moral theory about animals, see Steiner *Animals and the moral community: Mental life, moral status, and kinship* (2008) 1-55; Steiner *Anthropocentrism and its discontents: The moral status of animals in the history of Western philosophy* (2005) 18-37.
[8]Raha (n 7) 19.
[9]For a further discussion of the role of sentience in rights/abolitionist theory, see Francione *Animals as persons: Essays on the abolition of animal exploitation* (2008) 129-147, 165-166.

means to the end of continued existence. Sentient beings, by virtue of their being sentient, have an interest in remaining alive; that is, they prefer, want, or desire to remain alive. Conscious beings have an interest in not having consciousness end. Therefore, to say that a sentient being is not harmed by death denies that the being has the very interest that sentience serves to perpetuate. It would be analogous to saying that a being with eyes does not have an interest in continuing to see or is not harmed by being made blind. The Jains of India expressed it well long ago: 'All beings are fond of life, like pleasure, hate pain, shun destruction, like life, long to live. To all life is dear.'[10]

Singer recognises that '[a]n animal may struggle against a threat to its life' but he concludes that this does not mean that the animal has the mental continuity required for a sense of self. This position begs the question, however, in that it assumes that the only way that an animal can be self-aware is to have the sort of autobiographical sense of self-awareness that we associate with normal adult humans. That is certainly one way of being self-aware, but it is not the only way. As biologist Donald Griffin, one of the most important cognitive ethologists of the twentieth century, notes: if animals are conscious of anything, 'the animal's own body and its own actions must fall within the scope of its perceptual consciousness'.[11] We nevertheless deny animals self-awareness because we maintain that they cannot 'think such thoughts as "It is *I* who am running, or climbing this tree, or chasing that moth"'.[12] Griffin maintains that 'when an animal consciously perceives the running, climbing, or moth-chasing of another animal, it must also be aware of who is doing these things. And if the animal is perceptually conscious of its own body, it is difficult to rule out similar recognition that it, itself, is doing the running, climbing, or chasing'.[13] He concludes that '[i]f animals are capable of perceptual awareness, denying them some level of self-awareness would seem to be an arbitrary and unjustified restriction'.[14] It would seem that any sentient being must be self-aware in that to be sentient means to be the sort of being who recognises that it is that being, and not some other, who is experiencing pain or distress. When a sentient being is in pain, that being necessarily recognises that it is she who is in pain; there is some*one* who is conscious of being in pain and has a preference, desire, or want not to have that experience.

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[10] 'Âkârâ?ga Sûtra' in Müller (ed) *The sacred books of the East: Vol 22: Jaina Sutras part 1* (trans Jacobi) (1989) 19 (footnotes omitted). I recognise that Jainism maintains that plants have one sense – the sense of touch. However, it appears that the way in which the Jains use sentience in this context is different from the way that the term is understood when it is applied to mobile, multi-sensed beings. Jains are forbidden from killing the latter but are allowed to kill and eat plants. Therefore, to the extent that Jains regard plants as sentient, they still draw a distinction between plants and other sentient beings.

[11] Griffin *Animal minds: Beyond cognition to consciousness* (2001) 274.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] *Ibid*.

We can see the arbitrary nature of the welfarist assumption if we consider humans who have a condition known as *transient global amnesia*, which occurs as a result of a stroke, seizure, or brain damage. Those with transient global amnesia often have no memory of the past and no ability to project themselves into the future. They have 'a sense of self about one moment – now – and about one place – here'.[15] Their sense of self-awareness may be different from that of a normal adult, but it would not be accurate to say that they are not self-aware or that they are indifferent to death. We may not want to appoint such a person as a teacher or allow her to perform surgery on others, but most of us would be horrified at the suggestion that it is acceptable to use such people as forced organ donors or as non-consenting subjects in biomedical experiments even if we did so 'humanely'. Even if animals live in a sort of eternal present, that does not mean that they are not self-aware or that they have no interest in continued existence or that death is not a harm for them. A similar analysis holds for what Singer identifies as 'any other capacity that could reasonably be said to give value to life'.[16] Some humans will not have the capacity at all, some will have it less than other humans, and some will have it less than some nonhumans. This deficiency or difference may be relevant for some purposes but it does not allow us to conclude that, as an empirical matter, a human lacking the capacities that Singer identifies as giving value to life does not have an interest in continuing to live or that death is not a harm for her.

Also arbitrary is the welfarist notion that humans have 'superior mental powers' so that in assessing animal pain, or in trying to determine whether human pleasure or the avoidance of human pain justifies imposing pain and suffering on animals, we keep in mind Mill's notion that '[i]t is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied'.[17] What, apart from self-interested proclamation, makes human characteristics 'superior' or allows us to conclude that we experience more intense pleasure when we are happy than a pig does when she is happily rooting in the mud or playing with other pigs? Just as in the case about the harm of death, such an analysis works only if we assume what we are setting out to prove.

If we restrict our analysis to human beings, the problem with the welfarist approach becomes clear. Assume we have two humans: a philosophy professor and a factory worker who has no higher education and has no interest in having any discussions that would be regarded by the philosopher as intellectually stimulating. If we were to say that it is better to be a philosophy professor dissatisfied than a factory worker satisfied, such an assertion would, quite rightly, be viewed as arbitrary and elitist.

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[15] Damasio *The feeling of what happens: Body and emotion in the making of consciousness* (1999) 16.
[16] Singer (n 5) 18.
[17] Mill 'Utilitarianism' in Ryan (ed) *Utilitarianism and other essays: JS Mill and Jeremy Bentham* (1987) 281.

The rights position, as I have developed it, rejects the notion that some nonhumans, such as the nonhuman great apes, are more deserving of moral status or legal protection than are other animals because they are more like humans. The fact that an animal is more like us may be relevant to determining what other sorts of interests she has, but with respect to the animal's interest in her life and the harm to her of death, or her interest in not being made to experience pain and suffering, her being similar to humans is simply not relevant.

There is general agreement that humans have an interest in not being treated exclusively as the resource of another and that this interest ought to be protected by a basic, pre-legal right that prohibits chattel slavery. We certainly do not treat everyone equally in that, for instance, we often pay more money to people who are considered to be more conventionally intelligent or to be better baseball players. But for purposes of treating humans exclusively as the resources of others – as far as human slavery is concerned at least as a matter of moral theory and customary international law – we regard all humans, irrespective of their individual characteristics, as having equal inherent value. Human slavery certainly still exists but no one defends it. If animals matter morally, then we must apply the principle of equal consideration and ask whether there is a good reason to accord the right not to be treated as property to nonhumans as well. Is there a justification for using animals in ways in which we would regard it as inappropriate to use any humans?

The answer is clear. There is no rational justification for our continuing to deny this one right to sentient nonhumans, however 'humanely' we treat them. As long as animals are property, they can never be members of the moral community. The interests of animal property will always count for less than the interests of animal owners. We can fall back on religious superstition and claim that animal use is justified because animals do not have souls, are not created in God's image, or are otherwise inferior spiritually. Alternatively, we can claim that our use of animals is acceptable because we are human and they are not, which is nothing more than *speciesism* and is no different from saying that it is acceptable for whites to discriminate against blacks based simply on differences in skin colour or for men to exploit women based simply on differences of gender.

The animal rights position does not mean releasing domesticated nonhumans to run wild in the street. If we took animals seriously and recognised our obligation not to treat them as things, we would stop breeding domestic animals altogether. We would care for the ones whom we have here now, but we would stop breeding more for human consumption and we would leave non-domesticated animals alone. We would stop eating, wearing, or using animal products and would regard veganism as a clear and unequivocal moral baseline. We would then avoid the overwhelming number of false conflicts that so trouble

those who advance the animal welfare position.[18] These conflicts appear to exist only because we assume that the cow is there to be used as a resource and there is an ostensible conflict between the property owner and the property sought to be exploited. Once we see that we cannot morally justify using animals, however 'humanely', and that we cannot justify animal property, then these conflicts disappear.

3 Animals as property and the economics of welfare regulation

Animals are property.[19] They are economic commodities; they have a market value. Animal property is, of course, different from the other things that we own in that animals, unlike cars, computers, machinery, or other commodities, are sentient and have interests. All sentient beings have interests in not suffering pain or other deprivations and in satisfying those interests that are peculiar to their species. But it costs money to protect animal interests. As a general matter, we spend money to protect animal interests only when it is justified as an economic matter – only when we derive an economic benefit from doing so. Virtually all animal welfare laws fit this paradigm; they all protect selected animal interests and the effect of protecting these interests is to make the production process more efficient.

Anti-cruelty laws supposedly require 'humane' treatment but these laws generally either explicitly exempt what are considered as the 'normal' or 'customary' practices of institutionalised animal use, or, if the practices are not exempt, courts generally interpret pain and suffering imposed pursuant to those practices as 'necessary' and 'humane'. That is, the law defers to industry to set the standard of 'humane' care. This deference is based on the assumption that those who produce animal products – from the breeders to the farmers to the slaughterhouse operators – will not impose more harm on animals than is required to produce the particular product just as the rational owner of a car would not take a hammer to her car and dent it for no reason. The result is that the level of protection for animal interests is linked to what is required to exploit animals in an economically efficient way. Animal welfare standards generally increase production efficiency and do not decrease it in that we protect only those interests that produce economic benefits.

It is, of course, possible as a theoretical matter to achieve protection for animal interests that goes beyond what is necessary to exploit them as economic commodities; it is, however, highly unlikely as a practical matter. Any regulation

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[18]For a discussion of conflicts between humans and animals, see Francione *Introduction to animal rights: Your child or the dog?* (2000) 151-162.

[19]The property status of animals has been a consistent theme in my work and was the exclusive focus of Francione *Animals, property, and the law* (1995).

that is not cost-justified will generate powerful opposition from producers and consumers alike. Contemporary welfarist campaigns promoted by animal advocates demonstrate that animal welfare reform remains firmly rooted in the notion of animals as economic commodities; despite the claims of new welfarists, supposedly more progressive welfare reform does not differ significantly from traditional welfare reform.[20] These campaigns do nothing to move away from the property paradigm and to accord value to animal interests that go beyond their value as human resources.

4 Animal welfare: Making humans feel better about animal exploitation

Many animal advocates recognise the limitations of welfare reform but argue that welfare regulation will, at some point in the future, lead to the abolition of animal exploitation or, at least, to a significant reduction in animal use. These new welfarists are vague as to exactly how welfare reform will lead in an incremental way toward abolition or to significantly reduced animal use. One argument they make frequently is that welfare reform will sensitise people to the problem of animal suffering and that this greater sensitivity will lead people gradually along a path to abolition. The problem with the new welfarist position is that there is absolutely no empirical evidence to support it. We have had animal welfare – both as a prevailing moral theory and as part of the law – for more than 200 years now and we are using more nonhuman animals in more horrific ways than at any time in human history.

What new welfarists conveniently ignore in claiming that welfare reform will lead incrementally toward reduced animal use or even to abolition in the long-term is that animal welfare not only does not reduce demand or sensitise society in a way that moves it incrementally in a positive direction, but welfare reforms actually make people feel more comfortable about continuing to exploit animals by reassuring them – falsely –that standards have been improved in meaningful ways. This false reassurance reinforces the notion, which is deeply embedded in our speciesist culture, that it is morally acceptable to use animals as long as they are treated 'humanely'. The welfarist approach actually supports and strengthens the property paradigm and does not move away from it.

Making society feel more comfortable about animal exploitation is more often than not an explicit goal of animal welfare campaigns and organisations. For example, many of the large animal advocacy groups in the United States and Britain are involved in promoting labelling schemes under which the flesh or products of nonhumans is given a stamp of approval.[21] In addition to labelling

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[20] Francione and Garner (n 1) 29-61.
[21] *Id* 51-54.

schemes, animal welfare groups give awards to animal exploiters and praise them for welfare reforms.[22]

All of this is intended to make people feel better about the exploitation of nonhuman animals and that is precisely the effect that it is having. There is increasingly abundant media coverage about how people are feeling better about eating meat because they have become 'compassionate carnivores'.[23] 'Some vegetarians, and those who have reduced their meat consumption because of their conscience or politics, are beginning to eat sustainable meat, choosing products that are not the result of industrial farming practices'.[24] Peter Singer, often referred to as the 'father of the modern animal rights movement',[25] describes being a 'conscientious omnivore' as a 'defensible ethical position',[26] and claims that those concerned about animal ethics can still indulge in 'the luxury' of eating 'humanely' raised and slaughtered meat and animal products.[27]

In sum, the new welfarists have enthusiastically embraced the position that the moral issue is not that we are using animals, but only *how* we use them, and our use of nonhumans is morally justifiable as long as our treatment is acceptable. Rather than representing incremental steps toward abolition or reduced animal use, the new welfarist approach perpetuates and perhaps even increases animal exploitation by encouraging an unsuspecting public to believe that our treatment of animals has improved and that they can now consume animals without a guilty conscience and by reinforcing the traditional welfarist notion that animal use is morally acceptable as long as the level of treatment is acceptable.

5 The theoretical and practical solution: Veganism

New welfarists often argue that the animal rights/abolitionist approach is utopian or idealistic and does not provide any practical normative guidance. According to

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[22] *Id* 54-56.

[23] See Mabin 'Animal-friendly labels appeal to buyers' 5 February 2007 *Boston Globe* http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/02/05/animal_friendly_labels_appeal_to_buyers/.

[24] Coles 'Humane farming eases pangs for some vegetarians' 14 August 2007 *Reuters* http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSSCH47468520070814?sp=true. See also Lane 'Some sausages are more equal than others' 1 February 2007 *BBC News Magazine* http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/6295747.stm; Lennon 'Why vegetarians are eating meat' August 2007 *Food and Wine* http://www.foodandwine.com/articles/why-vegetarians-are-eating-meat; Woginrich 'My beef isn't with beef; Why I stopped being a vegetarian' 19 January 2011 *The Guardian* http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cif-green/2011/jan/19/vegetarian-animal-cruelty-meat; Woginrich 'If you care about farm animals: Eat them' 18 November 2010 *The Huffington Post* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jenna-woginrich/if-you-care-about-farm-an_b_785571.html.

[25] Walsh 'Father of animal activism backs monkey testing' 26 November 2006 *The Sunday Times* http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article650168.ece.

[26] Barkham 'Alfalfa male takes on the corporation' 8 September 2006 *The Guardian* (quoting Singer) http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2006/sep/08/food.ethicalliving. See also Singer and Mason *The way we eat: Why our food choices matter* (2006) 81-183.

[27] Raha (n 7) 19.

these critics, abolitionists want nothing short of the *immediate* abolition of exploitation and they reject any sort of incremental or practical change as a means to the end of achieving that abolition.[28] The new welfarists are certainly correct to say that abolitionists want to end all animal exploitation and would like to see it all end tomorrow, or even later today. But no one thinks that is possible and the welfarists are wrong to say that abolitionists reject incremental change. The abolitionists reject regulatory change that seeks to make exploitation more 'humane' or that reinforces the property status of animals and, instead, seek change that incrementally eradicates the property status of nonhumans and recognises that nonhumans have inherent value. The abolitionist position provides definite normative guidance for incremental change both on an individual level, as well as on the level of social and legal change.

On the individual level, rights theory prescribes incremental change in the form of ethical veganism.[29] Although veganism may represent a matter of diet or lifestyle for some, ethical or abolitionist veganism is a profound moral and political commitment to abolition on the individual level and extends not only to matters of food but to the wearing or use of animal products. Abolitionist veganism is the personal rejection of the commodity status of nonhuman animals, the notion that animals have only external value, and the notion that animals have less moral value than do humans.

There is no coherent distinction between meat and dairy or eggs. Animals exploited in the dairy or egg industries live longer, are treated worse, and end up in the same slaughterhouse as their meat counterparts. There is as much, if not more, suffering and death in dairy or egg products as in flesh products, but there is certainly no morally relevant distinction between or among them. To say that one does not eat beef but drinks milk is as silly as to say that one eats flesh from large cows but not from small cows. Moreover, there is also no morally relevant distinction between a cow and a fish or other sentient sea animal for purposes of treating either as a human resource. We may more easily recognise the pain or suffering of a cow because, like us, she is a mammal. But that is not a reason to ignore the suffering or death of the billions of sentient fish and other sea animals we kill annually.

Abolitionist veganism is the *only* position that is consistent with the recognition that for purposes of being treated as a thing, the lives of humans and nonhumans are morally equivalent. Veganism must be the unequivocal moral baseline of any social and political movement that recognises that nonhuman animals have inherent or intrinsic moral value and are not resources for human use.

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[28] See Garner *Animals, politics and morality* (2004) 221.

[29] See Francione *Animals as persons* 107-15l. See also www.AbolitionistApproach.com for essays and materials concerning the centrality of veganism to the abolitionist approach to animal rights.

The more people who become vegan for ethical reasons, the stronger will be the cultural notion that animals have a moral right not to be treated as commodities. If we are ever going to effect any significant change in our treatment of animals, and to one day end that use, it is imperative that there be a social and political movement that actively seeks abolition and regards veganism as its moral baseline. As long as the majority of people think that eating animals and animal products is a morally acceptable behaviour, nothing will change. We will never find our moral compass concerning nonhuman animals as long as they are on our plates and tables, our backs, and our feet. There may be a larger selection of 'happy meat' and other fare for affluent 'conscientious omnivores' or 'compassionate consumers,' but this will not abolish animal exploitation or do anything other than make society more comfortable with exploitation and thereby entrench it more deeply.

The most important form of incremental change on a social level is creative, non-violent education about veganism and the need to abolish, not merely to regulate, the institutionalised exploitation of animals. Educational efforts can take myriad forms and are limited only by imagination. It is not necessary to have a great deal of money or be part of a large organisation to be an effective educator. Indeed, the sort of pervasive social change that is necessary requires a strong grassroots movement where neighbours educate neighbours. The animal advocacy movement in the United States has seriously failed to educate the public about the need to abolish animal exploitation. Although there are many reasons for this failure, a primary one is that animal advocacy groups find it easier to promote welfarist campaigns aimed at reducing 'unnecessary' suffering that have little practical effect and are often endorsed by the industry involved. Such campaigns are easy for advocates to package and sell and they do not offend anyone. It is easier to tell people – including, and especially, donors, many of whom are omnivores – that they can be morally conscientious omnivores than it is to take the position that veganism is a moral baseline. That, however, is precisely the problem. No one disagrees with the principle that it is wrong to inflict 'unnecessary' suffering and that we ought to treat animals 'humanely'. But, as two centuries of animal welfare have made plain, these are merely platitudes in light of the property status of animals. We have not come to grips with the basic question of whether we are justified in using animals.

Veganism and creative, positive, non-violent vegan education provide practical and incremental strategies both in terms of reducing animal suffering now, and in terms of building a movement in the future that will be able to obtain more meaningful legislation in the form of prohibitions of animal use rather than mere 'humane' welfare regulation. If, in the late-1980s – when the animal advocacy community in the United States decided very deliberately to pursue a welfarist agenda rather than an abolitionist one – a substantial portion of movement resources had been invested in vegan education and advocacy, there

would likely be many hundreds of thousands more vegans than there are today. That is a very conservative estimate given the tens of millions of dollars that have been expended by animal advocacy groups to promote welfarist legislation and initiatives. The increased number of vegans would reduce suffering more by decreasing demand for animal products than all of the supposed welfarist successes put together. Increasing the number of vegans would also help to build a political and economic base required for the social change that is a necessary predicate for legal change. Given that there is limited time and there are limited financial resources available, expansion of traditional animal welfare is not a rational and efficient choice if we seek abolition in the long-term. Educational efforts should reflect and be linked to efforts to raise consciousness about human rights issues and the relationship between racism, sexism, and homophobia on one hand, and speciesism on the other.

Finally, vegan advocacy should be nonviolent and stress the importance of nonviolence. Animal exploitation cannot be stopped through violence; animal use is pervasive and engaged in by almost everyone and, therefore, there is no identifiable group of exploiters toward which violence could be directed, even if it were morally justifiable. Those who advocate violence in the context of animal exploitation maintain that it is acceptable to use violence against institutional exploiters, such as farmers, furriers, vivisectors, and so on. But these institutional exploiters do what they do because the rest of us demand that they do so and we respond positively to the efforts of government and industry to encourage us to do so. The responsibility for animal exploitation rests, to a very considerable degree, on those who demand animal products. This includes all of those 'conscientious omnivores' or non-vegan animal advocates who consume cage-free eggs and 'happy' meat. I suppose that it is easier to characterise farmers and other institutional exploiters as the 'enemy', but that ignores the reality of the situation.

As long as there is ubiquitous demand for animal products and no acceptance of the moral personhood of nonhumans, violence will do nothing as a practical matter. If you destroy five slaughterhouses, and the demand for meat remains the same, the demand will be met, and new slaughterhouses will be built (or existing ones expanded). If you shut down a company that supplies animals used in vivisection, but the demand for animals remains the same because the public supports vivisection, someone else will supply those animals. The only way that animal use will stop or be reduced significantly is if the paradigm shifts and demand ceases or diminishes.