

Animal Liberation — The Modern Revival

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The current interest in animal welfare and animal rights often leads to questions as to why this issue should have suddenly burst upon the scene and also why so many of the protagonists seem to have been raised and/or educated in Britain. Neither of these questions is easy to answer and perhaps there are no clear and unequivocal causal connections. There are many persons who are interested in animal issues and who do not have the British connection—Professor Teutsch in Germany and Professors Regan and Rollin in America being notable examples. Comments have also been made about the British love of animals. But this aspect definitely does *not* have anything to do with animal rights and animal liberation; if anything, “loving” animals may preclude any notion of animal rights. It is *respect* for animals which is important.

Leaving the issue of the British connection—why should there have been the sudden growth of interest in animal rights? The republication of Henry Salt’s first-rate book, *Animal Rights*, by the Society for Animal Rights clearly indicates that the ideas and arguments enunciated by Peter Singer are anything but new. In fact, Singer himself acknowledges this in the preface to the 1980 version of Salt’s book. However, the growing interest in the environment may have been a predisposing factor as may purely fortuitous events—such as the gathering together of a group of interested philosophy students and other academics in Oxford at the end of the

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sixties. This particular event is described below by Peter Singer, one of the philosophy students, whose life was changed as a result of his meeting with the "Oxford Vegetarians."