



Towards the End of Speciesism

Many authors have found that our relationship to the animals is based on **speciesism**¹. By analogy with **racism** and **sexism**, this concept refers to the ideology considering that the lives and interests of animals can be overlooked simply because they are of another species. These thinkers conclude that speciesism is irrational and unfair, because humans are not the only ones to **feel emotions** and that we should also **respect the lives and interests of other sentient beings who share this planet with us**.

A century ago, it was thought that the animals cannot suffer. Today, not only is it well known by all that **animals suffer and feel emotions**, but a lot of ethological studies have shown that many also have **self-awareness** (chimpanzees, bonobos, dolphins, elephants, pigs, magpies, ravens, parrots etc.). At one time humans distinguished themselves from other animals by their ability to manipulate tools, but now we know that more than a hundred **animals can use tools**.

¹ Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Paola Cavalieri, Martha Nussbaum, Steve Sapontzis, Stephen Clark, Richard Ryder, Andrew Linzey, Evelyn Pluhar, Gary Francione, etc.

Animals are beings endowed with mental life, with interests, desires, their own personality and therefore must be regarded as **individuals**. But despite the scientific advances, our society is still speciesist and still uses them as a resource.

- They are killed **in slaughterhouses** or die from suffocation **in fishing nets**, while millions of vegetarians and vegans show that this is not a necessity and while everyone considers it wrong to kill animals without necessity;
- They are used as **laboratory tools**, whilst we are being taught that in a civilized society the strong should not harm the weak;
- They are legally considered **property** that can be bought and sold, while everyone knows that animals are not things.



These inconsistencies must stop. We can no longer caress cats and dogs whilst planting our forks in the bodies of another animal who felt emotions, and who also had an interest in living the longest and happiest life possible.

Injustices of the past have been abolished or reduced, such as slavery or the low status assigned to women. These issues were also embedded in the collective consciousness to the point that they were thought to be eternal. But history has shown the opposite, and we can easily imagine that one day slaughterhouses will be considered as a **symbol of injustice and barbarism**. The fact that many of our contemporaries think it is an urgent imperative to **expand our moral circle** and include all beings who experience emotion, goes in this direction. As our society is working to end sexism and racism in the same way it must also **work for the end of speciesism**.

