

A Critical Evaluation of Peter Singer's Ethics



By

Tanuja Kalita

Roll No. 08614103

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Guwahati - 781039

India

A Critical Evaluation of Peter Singer's Ethics

A thesis submitted to Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



By

Tanuja Kalita

Roll No. 08614103

Supervisor

Dr V Prabhu

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Guwahati - 781039

India

April 2013



Dedicated to

My

Parents, Father-in-law and Daughter

Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis, entitled *A Critical Evaluation of Peter Singer's Ethics*, is the outcome of my own research work in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India, which has been carried out under the supervision of Dr. V Prabhu in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

IIT Guwahati

April 2013

Tanuja Kalita

Certificate

It is certified that the matter embodied in the thesis entitled *A Critical Evaluation of Peter Singer's Ethics*, submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by **Tanuja Kalita**, a student of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India, has been carried out under my supervision. It is also certified that this work has not been submitted anywhere else for the award of a research degree.

IIT Guwahati
April 2013

Dr V Prabhu
Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati, Assam, India

Acknowledgement

My sincere thanks go first and foremost to my guide, Dr V.Prabhu for his patience and confidence in my abilities and for being the touchstone of all my effort and academic endeavour. His unstinted guidance and support has been a great motivation all through and I consider myself fortunate to have had the privilege of being under his guidance.

I do express my gratitude to the members of the doctoral committee. I would like to thank Dr Archana Barua for her loving attitude, valuable suggestions and encouragement. I express my sincere gratitude to Dr Rohini Mokashi Puneekar for her encouraging words, support and sound advice. I offer my earnest gratitude to Dr Krishna Barua for her gracious encouragement, support and suggestions. I also wish to acknowledge my infinite gratefulness to the faculties of Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati for their valuable advice, support and guidance.

It gives me great pride to be a part of an institution of great excellence; I would like to thank IIT Guwahati for the financial assistance and availability of internet facilities without which it may not have been possible to complete this study. The IIT Guwahati Central library has been an asset while conducting this research along with all the great aids that I have received from the Administrative staff at IIT Guwahati. I wish to thank them all.

I would also like to thank North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Gauhati University and Pandu College for permitting me to make use of

their valuable library books related to my research work. I would like to thank those Philosophy teachers from different institutions especially from Cotton College, whose invaluable suggestions helped me tremendously in many ways.

To my colleagues and friends at IIT Guwahati, I owe much appreciation for all those moments of mirth and merry which made this academic journey really enjoyable.

I am indebted to my late father, Dharendra Chandra Kalita and my late father-in-law Motiar Rahman whose blessings and prayers are my source of sustenance. My father's teachings have made me what I am today. They continue to be my greatest inspiration.

My unending gratitude to my lovely daughter, Tara, who made all rough terrains in course of this academic journey appear smooth and effortless as herself. My husband Raqibul Hassan and my elder brother Dr Mrinal Kalita, deserve due credit for motivating me and being great support, whenever I needed it the most.

To my mother Smt. Kusum Kalita, my family and my in-laws, particularly to my younger brother-in-law, Farhan Hussain and Uncle Rustam Ali - I thank them all for their love, empathy and support.

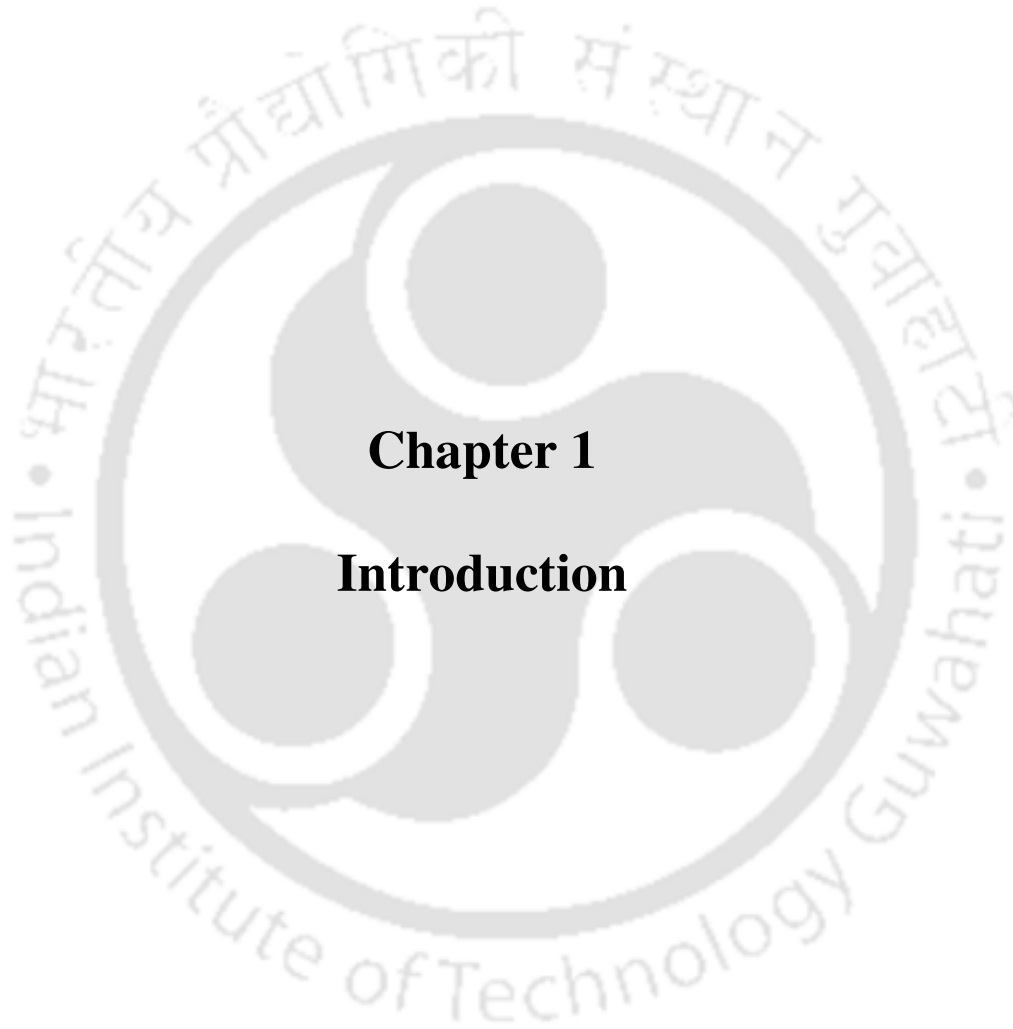
Tanuja Kalita

IIT Guwahati

April 2013

Contents

	Page
Statement :	ii
Certificate :	iii
Acknowledgement:	iv-v
Chapter 1 : Introduction	1-13
Chapter 2 : Peter Singer on the Principles of Suffering, Person and Preference Satisfaction	14-37
2.1:Suffering Principle	15-20
2.2:Concept of Person	20-26
2.3:Preference Satisfaction	27-37
Chapter 3 : Peter Singer on Animal Liberation : Criticisms and Response	38-70
Chapter 4 : Peter Singer on Abortion : Criticisms & Response	71-97
Chapter 5 : Peter Singer on Euthanasia : Criticisms & Response	98-131
Chapter 6 : Conclusion	132-143
Bibliography :	144-156
Research Output :	157-159



Chapter 1

Introduction

Doing research in humanities in general and philosophy in particular entails that researcher is personally and academically oriented towards her research topic. The reason is the philosophical problems are not just theoretical problems that are dissociated with human conditions. On the other hand, they can well be construed as the problems that emerge out of human conditions in our world. Perhaps, if not all philosophical problems, at least the problems related to the domain of ethics have to do with human conditions in concrete life situations. As I am interested to dwell on a research area that engages in discussions of concrete life situations, I have chosen applied ethics as my research area as it involves considerable deliberation on the issues of practical concern. Applied ethics engages in discussing the application of normative ethical theories to practical moral problems. The practical moral problems include issues like abortion, animal rights, euthanasia and like. On what basis (ethical theories), do we make the right course of action with respect to these issues? What determines the moral 'oughtness' in a given situation for the mentioned issues? These are the questions I would like to deliberate on in this research project.

I would like to address the above mentioned problems with reference to one particular thinker, Peter Singer. Peter Albert David Singer was born on July 6, 1946. Singer studied law, history and philosophy at Monash University. In 1967, he received an M.A. for his thesis *Why should I be moral?* He was a student of moral philosopher Richard Mervyn Hare. Currently Singer is the Ira .W.De Camp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton

University. He is also the laureate Professor at University of Melbourne at the centre for applied philosophy.

Singer has contributed, and still contributing, extensively in the domain of applied ethics. Singer is well-known for his books *Animal Liberation* and *Practical Ethics* that deals with an array of practical moral issues including animal liberation, abortion, euthanasia and like. Singer's importance in the issues of practical ethics is acknowledged by many contemporary thinkers. As Jeffrey A. Schaller says,

Why is Peter Singer important? In part because he puts his finger on moral or ethical issues that many of us consider vital, but shy away from confronting and discussing—issues such as how best to live, who should live and who should die, the relative importance of humans and other animals, including humans of limited abilities... (Schaller, 2009, p. xvii)

Though Singer is an important thinker in the applied ethics discussions, his importance is not marked by a unanimous acceptance to the position he holds on different issues. As a matter of fact, Singer's importance is to the extent that he has taken some issues for discussion that has often been set aside as Schaller pointed out. Singer is as much controversial as he is important, if not more. Singer is considered 'perhaps the most controversial philosopher in the world' (Rooney, 2004). On one side, in 2004, he was recognized as the 'Australian Humanist of the year'. He was considered as the champion of animal liberation. Pointing out Singer's *Animal Liberation* book Newsweek magazine mentions "the modern (animal rights) movement may be dated to the publication of *Animal Liberation*." (May 23, 1988). Dale Jamieson writes, "For many years this book was given

away by people for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, one of the organizations founded in the wake of Animal Liberation and now one of the largest and most effective animal rights organizations in the world.” (Jamieson, 1999, p. 1)

On the other side, Singer was dubbed as ‘professor death’ (Feder, 1998) for his views on euthanasia and other similar ethical issues. In an interview Singer replied to Andrew Denton that for his sanctity of life views Singer is described as the ‘most dangerous man on the planet’. (Singer, Professor Peter Singer, 2004) There is an allegation against Singer that some of his views are akin to those of Nazis. (Glock, 1994) Singer was even been physically assaulted. Why Singer is viewed with such unease? Why there is so much of animosity on one hand and on the other hand so much of goodwill for him? How the same thinker who was praised for caring and championing for animal welfare is being criticized for being inhumane towards human beings? Is that an outcome of his ethics? In that case, what type of ethical theory he holds to come up with such a position? Is he consistent in his position? Is his ethics sufficient to take care of the different situations that demands ethical introspection? These are some questions that will be addressed in this thesis by trying to critically evaluate his position. The project hence is set forth to understanding Singer’s ethical philosophy and critically examining it.

Singer is a utilitarian thinker and he subscribes to an ethical position, preference utilitarianism. According to utilitarianism the moral worth of an action is determined solely by the action’s contribution to overall utility, for example, in terms of producing happiness for more number of people. Utilitarianism is based on two fundamental ideas:

1.consequences of the action, 2. one can assess and compare consequences in terms of happiness or unhappiness. Peter Singer belongs to one form of utilitarianism, that is, preference utilitarianism. Preference utilitarianism interprets the best consequences in terms of preference satisfaction. This means that ‘good’ is described as the satisfaction of each person’s individual preferences or desires, and a right action is that which leads to this satisfaction.

Basically, Singer’s ethics is a form of consequentialism because utilitarianism is a consequentialistic theory. According to consequentialism a morally right action is one that produces a good outcome or consequences. It is the view that normative properties depend only on consequences, how good or bad the consequences may be for a given action. As Beauchamp mentions,

The utilitarian maintains that one must choose the action that would produce the best consequences for all persons affected by that action. This advice springs from two connected theses of critical importance to utilitarianism: 1.that an action or practice is right (when compared with any alternative action or practice) if it leads to the greatest possible balance of good consequences or to the least possible balance of bad consequences in the world as a whole, and 2.that the concepts of duty, obligation and right are subordinated to, and determined by, that which maximizes the good. (Beauchamp, 2001, p. 104)

The utilitarian tradition has a long history starting prominently from Jeremy Bentham. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was the earliest and most influential utilitarian philosopher. Bentham was a psychological hedonist and maintained that man naturally seek pleasure. “Psychological hedonism restricts the range of self-interested motivations to

only pleasure and the avoidance of pain.” (May, 2011) According to Bentham the only intrinsic value in the world is pleasure and pain. Bentham writes,

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. (Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, 1789, p. 2)

For Bentham, good is that which produces greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. According to utilitarianism if the consequences of the action produce happiness then the action is right and if it produce unhappiness then the action is wrong. Bentham writes,

By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness. (Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, 1789, p. 2)

According to Bentham, the value of pleasure or pain will be greater or less according to the seven aspects- its intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent. Bentham’s theory of utilitarianism is criticized on a number of grounds. Bentham ascribed four sanctions for why one should concern with the happiness of others. But these are actions of obligation and may not be ethical. Actions

which are done out of fear may not be ethical. Ethical actions are often voluntary. Bentham has given quantitative aspect of pleasure. Feelings of pleasure and pain are purely subjective states of mind and cannot be measured like coin. The criticism of Bentham's utilitarianism is that he ignored qualitative aspect of pleasure. By ascribing quantitative aspect of pleasure he turned human pleasures to animal pleasures.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) gave a qualitative aspect of utilitarianism. Bentham accepts a quantitative aspect of utilitarianism while Mill accepts a qualitative aspect of utilitarianism. Mill citing Bentham's theory said that it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than to be a pig satisfied. Mill argues that cultural, intellectual and spiritual pleasures are of greater value than mere physical pleasures because the former would be valued higher than the latter by competent judges.

If I am asked what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account. (Mill, 1863)

Though Mill talks of difference in quality of pleasures, still, for him as well, right action is that which promotes pleasure. According to Mill, utility or the greatest happiness principle holds that actions are right in proportion to promoting happiness, and wrong in proportion to promoting unhappiness.

While Bentham and Mill were the supporters of psychological hedonism, Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900) was a supporter of ethical Hedonism. Sidgwick argues that pleasure is the proper and rational object of desire and not the natural object of desire. Sidgwick does not argue like Mill that pleasure is desirable because it is desired by men. He argues that reason tells us that pleasure is the highest good which is desirable in itself. Sidgwick does not distinguish between pleasure and happiness. The ultimate good is pleasure or happiness. Sidgwick defines,

By 'Utilitarianism' I mean the ethical theory according to which in any given circumstances the objectively right thing is to do is what will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole- taking into account all whose happiness is affected by the conduct. (Sidgwick, 2010, p. 200)

In twentieth century developments of utilitarianism, Hastings Rashdall (1858-1924) and G.E.Moore (1873-1958) advocated what is called as ideal utilitarianism. Ideal utilitarianism considers other intrinsic good along with happiness. It is not concerned only with happiness but also with other intrinsic good such as beauty or knowledge. According to the ideal utilitarian, there is more to life than pleasure. Hastings Rashdall in *The Theory of Good and Evil* (1907) first used 'ideal utilitarianism' for non hedonistic utilitarianism. According to Rashdall, virtue, knowledge and culture, beauty and happiness constitute the highest good. Virtue is the supreme value. Knowledge, beauty and happiness are subordinate to it. Rashdall made a hierarchy amongst these highest good. For Rashdall knowledge, culture, enjoyment of beauty, intellectual activity of all kinds have a higher

value than the pleasures arising from the gratification of the mere animal propensities of eating and drinking or the physical exercise of the like. (Sinha, 1984)

In line with Rashdall, Moore also believed that pleasure alone cannot be considered as the only intrinsic value. He mentions,

A world in which absolutely nothing except pleasure existed—no knowledge, no love, no enjoyment of beauty, no moral qualities—must yet be intrinsically better –better worth creating—provided only the total quantity of pleasure in it were the least bit greater than one in which all these things existed as well as pleasure. (Moore, 1912)

For Moore, good is not identical with pleasure. It includes pleasure, knowledge, beauty and virtue.

So far, I have discussed about utilitarianism as that which talks of the rightness or wrongness of an action as determined by the happiness or pain or any other ideal that is produced by that action. There are many criticisms against the classical utilitarianism; preference utilitarianism tries to overcome the shortcomings of classical utilitarianism as put forward by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. For Bentham and Mill measuring the happiness was one major issue. Though Bentham came out with a hedonistic calculus, it had its limitations and one of the major shortcomings of Bentham's is that it did not make any difference in quality of pleasures. The traditional utilitarianism is criticized on the ground that people value other things besides happiness.

Preference utilitarianism, on the other hand, bases the rightness or wrongness of the action, not on the basis of pleasure and pain or any particular ideal, but on the basis of the preferences of the person who does that action. Preference utilitarianism is contrasted with both hedonistic utilitarianism and ideal utilitarianism by specifying the end to be pursued neither in terms of pleasure nor of any other specific ideals, but in terms of maximizing the satisfaction of desires or preferences of the concerned individuals. As Richard Norman says,

Some contemporary utilitarians have suggested that the theory could be more neutrally formulated in terms not of 'happiness' but of concepts such as 'interests', 'inclinations', 'desires' and 'satisfactions'. This has been called 'preference utilitarianism' –the theory that what we ought to do is maximize the satisfaction of people's preferences. (Norman, 1998, p. 182)

Thus Preference utilitarianism interprets the best consequences in terms of preference satisfaction. This satisfaction may be derived from happiness or from many other things as well. This means that 'good' is described as the satisfactions of each person's individual preferences or desires, rather than posing an ideal object which can be contentious and a right action is that which leads to this satisfaction. Every person's experience of satisfaction will be unique.

For classical utilitarianism good is that which seeks to maximize the amount of happiness in the world or that which seeks to minimize the amount of pain in the world. On the other hand preference utilitarianism as Susan Lufkin Krantz says, "seeks as much as possible to produce states of affairs that accord with the preference of all who are

affected by a given action or its consequences.” (Krantz, 2002, p. 28) The major drawback of classical utilitarianism is that people may seek other objects rather than happiness. Preference utilitarianism, thus subscribes to the view that different individuals have different preferences. Comparatively the preference utilitarianism is more complex as a moral theory than classical utilitarianism. Krantz says,

According to preference utilitarianism actions are good in so far as they satisfy the interest of those affected and bad in so far as they fail to satisfy those interests. Thus preference utilitarianism recommends a policy somewhat more sophisticated than that promoted by classical utilitarianism because preference utilitarianism makes use of the concepts of preference and interest in such a way that the satisfaction of interests may be understood to go beyond the simple maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain for the majority in the long run. (Krantz, 2002, p. 28)

Peter Singer subscribes for preference utilitarianism based on the principle of satisfaction. On the basis of this utilitarian standpoint Singer has put forward his view regarding applied ethical issues. In this thesis I shall discuss his views on three ethical issues: animal rights, abortion and euthanasia. By reading Singer’s ethics I understand that in his ethics Singer extensively employed principles such as concept of suffering, person and preference satisfaction. The purpose of my work is to study these three principles in terms of its application in the different applied ethical issues. The research tries to examine whether Singer is consistent in the application of his principles to pertinent ethical issues.

My endeavour is to see why Singer is looked up with such unease and hostility by some, but while some other looked him as a proponent of new ethic. Calling him as

'Professor Death' and equating his theory as similar to Nazi type of an ideology are serious allegations. Whether these allegations are the result of misunderstanding Singer's ethics? Or whether they are obvious outcomes of an ethical theory like Singer's? Or these are the outcomes of identifying Singer's personal inclinations on the specific issues? I try to seek answers and plausible explanations for the mentioned questions in this thesis.

The research will be analytical in nature based on the primary sources; the books and articles of Peter Singer and the secondary sources; the books and articles that are written on Peter Singer and his views. The thesis is done with the following chapters.

The second chapter (the first chapter is Introduction) deals with Singer's three principles namely suffering principle, person concept and the preference satisfaction. These three principles are comprehensively used by Singer to apply in different ethical issues. The suffering principle occupies an important place in his work. And then comes, the concept of person and then the preference satisfaction. The logic behind this is that, all beings capable of suffering, is taken in a single group. And within that group, there is a division of a being as either a person or a non-person. And the persons have preferences, whereas the non-persons do not possess it.

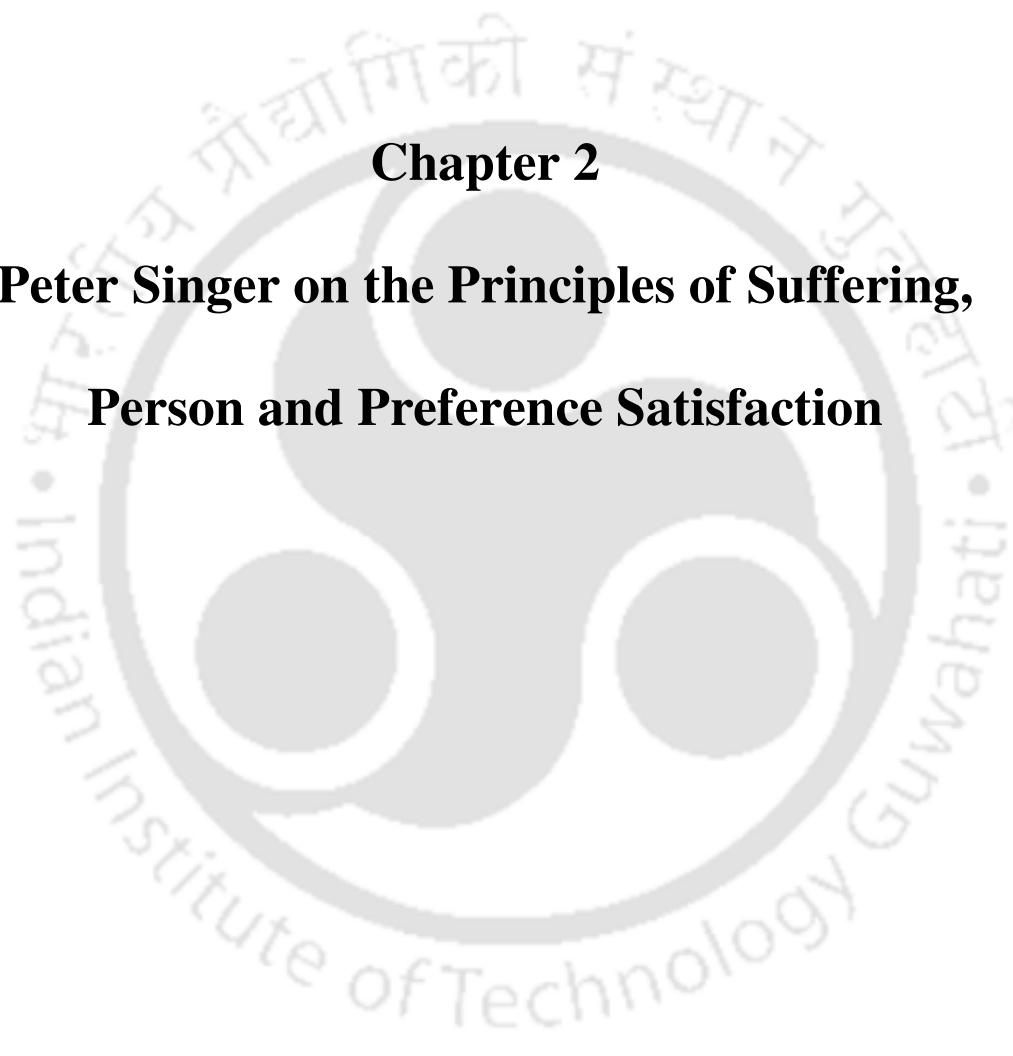
The third chapter is devoted to Singer's view on animal liberation. His concept of animal liberation is built on the basis of his suffering principle. Taking a utilitarian standpoint, Singer, tries to argue for animal liberation and welfare on the basis of their capacity to suffer. This chapter proceeds first by understanding Singer's position with

respect to animal welfare issues followed by criticisms of different thinkers on animal welfare of Singer and a critical evaluation of their arguments.

The fourth chapter discusses Singer's view on abortion. His moral stand with respect to the issue of foetus-killing is justified by understanding whether the foetus is a person or not. In this chapter there is an attempt to give a detailed study on the ethical issue concerning abortion. This chapter also includes criticisms of different persons against Singer's concept of abortion and assessment of their arguments.

The fifth chapter deals with Singer's notion of euthanasia. Singer's principle of preference satisfaction is primarily used in Singer's concept of euthanasia. In the case of euthanasia Singer maintains the preference of the person outweighs the preference of the other persons too. This chapter also includes criticisms against Singer's concept of euthanasia and evaluation of the arguments.

The final chapter is the conclusion that summarizes the issues and outcomes that are involved in this research. The conclusion tries to see the plausible explanations for the questions that have been raised in the introduction. It also tries to overall assess Singer's ethics pointing out the prospects and problems in his theory.



Chapter 2
**Peter Singer on the Principles of Suffering,
Person and Preference Satisfaction**

The thesis proceeds with first understanding Singer's principles and then the application of his principles to specific applied ethical issues. Singer uses the principles of suffering, person and preference satisfaction exhaustively to build his position with respect to specific ethical issues. Hence, in this second chapter, there will be a discussion of Peter Singer's principles. In this chapter, the discussion will pertain to three of his most important principles – the concept of suffering, concept of preference satisfaction and the concept of person.

2.1 Suffering Principle

The concept of suffering occupied a prominent position in the history of philosophy. Suffering may have different connotations, but it is generally conceived of as “a negative basic feeling or emotion that involves a subjective character of unpleasantness, aversion, harm or threat of harm.” (Suffering, 2008) Suffering is thus a subjective feeling caused at the physical level or at the mental level. Though the pain is experienced at the mental level, some causes for suffering can happen at the physical level. Thus, an injury caused is a physical suffering, whereas a threat of harm is at the mental level. Raymond De Vries mentions suffering as what one individual ‘bears’. He writes in this regard,

The dictionary offers several definitions of suffering: to undergo hardship, to feel pain, to have a disease or condition, to endure or to undergo, or interesting enough, to allow. The etymology of the word ‘suffer’ is associated with two Latin words: sub, or under, and ferra, to carry or to bear. Suffering is something that someone carries or bears. (Vries, 2011, p. 69)

Philosophical reflection on suffering was carried out from ancient period onwards. As a matter of fact, in both the eastern and western traditions, suffering was an important issue of discussion. Some thinkers opine the discussion on suffering was rather a major problem only in religious philosophy. C.A. Campbell observes thus,

The problem of suffering is essentially a problem in philosophical theology. For many philosophical systems the phenomena of suffering set no special problem at all.... The problem is a relevant one only for those philosophies which claim to be in at least general accord with the 'religious interpretation of the universe'. (Campbell C. A., 1935, p. 154)

Campbell may not be correct in asserting that suffering is essentially a problem in philosophical theology alone. The metaphysical understanding of suffering about why there is suffering in this world given the case that God is all-merciful can well be an issue in philosophical theology; but, suffering as an ethical issue goes beyond the confines of religious philosophy.

As a matter of fact, ethical traditions, particularly utilitarian tradition considers suffering as an important principle in trying to determine whether an action is ethical or not. The early proponent in the Utilitarian tradition of considering suffering as the prime factor in considering the ethical worthiness of the action was Jeremy Bentham. Jeremy Bentham (1748 –1832) who is considered to be the exponent of utilitarian tradition comments on the principle of suffering. Bentham writes, “A thing is said to promote the interest, or to be for the interest, of an individual, when it tends to add to the sum total of

his pleasures: or, what comes to the same thing, to diminish the sum total of his pains.”
(Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, 1789, p. 2)

Peter Singer following the utilitarian tradition bases his ethical philosophy on the concept of suffering. Utilitarian thinkers like Singer are bothered about suffering when they consider the nature of ethical actions. He is concerned with the minimization of the suffering of beings. Singer writes in his *Practical Ethics* thus,

If a being suffer, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. No matter what the nature of the being, the being, the principle of the equality requires that the suffering be counted equally with the like suffering-in so far as rough comparison can be made—of any other being.... If a being is not capable of experiencing suffering or happiness then there is nothing to be taken into account. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, pp. 57-58)

According to Singer, there should not be any unwanted suffering. Thus, the extinction of suffering is one of the core points in his ethics. Singer maintains this position throughout his works. In an interview Singer says with regard to suffering thus,

I think that if we follow that idea of ‘doing unto others’, then, even though people have different sorts of preferences and different wants, one thing is pretty general: people do not want to suffer. They do not want extreme physical pain; they do not want emotional deprivation and suffering...(Singer, Writings on an Ethical Life, 2000, pp. 321-322)

Singer uses the notion of pain and suffering synonymously. Generally, pain is understood as an emotional experience that beings do not want to undergo. Zimmermann

defines pain as “an aversive, sensory and emotional experience which elicits protective motor actions, results in learned avoidance and may modify species- specific traits of behaviour.” (Ryder, *The Ethics of Painism: The Argument Against Painful Experiments*, 2002) The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP, 1980) defined pain as “an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential damage or described in terms of such damage”. (Rose, 1996) Singer does not find any difference between suffering and pain as both talk of an emotional experience that is detested by beings. In his writings he uses the two words interchangeably. In the introduction part of his work *Writings on and Ethical Life* he mentions his position of equating pain and suffering to mean the same. He writes,

*Pain is bad, and similar amounts of pain are equally bad, no matter whose pain it might be. By ‘pain’ here I would include suffering and distress of all kinds. This does not mean that pain is the only thing that is bad, or that inflicting pain is always wrong. (Singer, *Writings on an Ethical Life*, 2000, p. xv)*

Ryder, who coined the term ‘painism’ also, associated the experience of pain with suffering. He says, “By ‘pain’, I mean all forms of suffering – that is to say, I include fear, grief, anxiety, distress, the effects of captivity and boredom”. (Ryder, *The Ethics of Painism: The Argument Against Painful Experiments*, 2002)

Singer acknowledges that there can be instances where one has to undergo pain to get a greater happiness or to undergo momentary suffering in order to achieve a less suffering in the long run. He remarks,

Sometimes it may be necessary to inflict pain and suffering on oneself or others. We do this to ourselves when we go to the dentist, and we do it to others when we reprimand a child or jail a criminal. But this is justified because it will lead to less suffering in the long run; the pain is still in itself a bad thing. (Singer, Writings on an Ethical Life, 2000, p. xv)

Thus, for utilitarians like Singer, suffering is the central issue for a being to be worthy of moral consideration. Singer considers suffering as the basis for taking the interest of a being. Singer ascribes suffering to the beings which are sentient. Singer has given the meaning of sentience as ‘the capacity to suffer or experience enjoyment or happiness’. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) He has given the example of a comparison of mouse and a stone. A mouse should be taken into consideration but not a stone. A mouse can suffer but not a stone. So, according to Singer, as one should give importance to the suffering of a being in moral consideration, a mouse is worthy of moral consideration, but not a stone.

For Singer, ethics based on suffering shall determine which action is right and which action is wrong. If it is in our capacity to reduce the suffering, then according to Singer, one ought to do it. For Singer “we should reduce the amount of suffering in the world, if we can do so.” (Singer, Writings on an Ethical Life, 2000, p. 322) Schmitz mentions this point with reference to Singer. He says according to Singer, if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it. (Schmitz, 2009)

Peter Singer has given the arguments for issues such as animal rights, euthanasia and abortion based on suffering. His suffering principle is more perceptible in animal rights and euthanasia. In the further chapters, those issues will be discussed.

2.1 The Concept of Person

The other principle with which Singer engages seriously is with the concept of person. As a matter of fact, the concept of person plays a major role in Singer's understanding of issues related to abortion. Singer distinguishes beings into two different categories - the persons and the non-persons.

The word 'person' is from Latin origin (persona) which referred to the masks worn by actors on stage. By putting on masks the actors signified that they were acting a role. Later 'person' came to mean the one who plays a role in life and one who is an agent. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'person' as a self-conscious or rational being.

The issue of person has been a matter of constant discussion in the history of philosophical thought. Discussion on person concept is available even from Greek and Roman periods. Regarding the origin of the term 'person' Richard De Smet writes, "Originally a designation of the stage-mask of Greek and Roman actors, it had quickly taken the meaning of stage-part or dramatic hero." (Coelho, 2010) Plato (424/423 – 348/347 BC) used the term person as synonymous with the term human being. This view also appeared in Aristotle's (384 – 322 BC) philosophy.

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics presents an account of the 'human being'—the ancient analogue of 'person'...Aristotle's' earlier passage gives a general sketch of the human function as distinct from those of lower animal and human happiness as a whole. (Goswami, 2006, pp. 17-18)

One finds a systematic interpretation of person for the first time in Boethius (480–525 AD) philosophy. He defined person as an “individual substance endowed with a rational nature.” (Coelho, 2010, p. 11)

Deliberating who or what a person is not only a metaphysical issue, but also an ethical one. The discussion on the concept of person has ethical repercussions as well. The deprivation of rights to non- persons was clear in the ancient Roman legal system, where a distinction between persons and non-persons was made to exclude a set of human beings (non-persons) to enjoy the rights and privileges given to others (persons). In the Roman legal system, only persons are entitled for legal rights. The slaves were not regarded as persons and they were regarded as property as they were not the citizens of the state. Thus, person concept is used to distinguish citizens and noncitizens to deprive rights for a set of human beings.

The Roman jurists took an extremely important step when they began using persona to indicate the citizen as subject of rights and duties, for now the term was predicated not merely of the nature of the individual but of its complete being. (Coelho, 2010, p. 11)

Christian theologians ousted this exclusivity in rights given for persons. They tried to accommodate all the human beings as persons. In Christianity there is no difference

between person and human beings, all human beings are regarded as persons. In Christian view everyone is said to be a person in the proper sense of the term because man was created in the image of God. Christians considered all of the human beings as persons; it does not matter whether they are free or slaves, citizens or foreigners. (Coelho, 2010)

In the modern period, John Locke (1632-1704) defines person as “a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 87) But philosophers like Descartes (1596-1650) and Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), used the word ‘person’ as synonymous with human beings. In this concept of person, as soon as a human being is born, immediately she or he possesses personhood and they can virtually enjoy all the rights and privileges of being a person.

Primarily the relationship of personhood with respect to humans is understood in two different ways. One way of understanding is that as soon as a human being is born, immediately he or she possesses personhood. In this concept personhood is considered automatic right from birth. The other way of understanding is that personhood is gained over time by the human beings. Singer subscribes to this principle in his concept of person. For Singer a being is a person not because that one has some intrinsic values but because of some qualities such as self-awareness, capacity to experience something that is capacity to feel pain or to have any kind of feelings.

The concept of person occupies a prominent place in Singer's ethics. He uses this concept in dealing with important ethical issues like abortion. According to Singer, persons are those who have reached a certain level of cognitive sophistication. Persons are self-aware and self-motivated and they recognize themselves as individuals over time. Singer writes, "In any case, I propose to use 'person', in the sense of a rational and self-conscious being, to capture those elements of the popular sense of the 'human being' that are not covered by 'member of the species Homo sapiens.'" (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 87)

Singer makes the distinction of person against non-persons. According to him, non-persons are those who are sentient but whose mental capacities are limited to the here and now. On the concept of non-persons, Singer mentions,

If a being is incapable of conceiving of itself as existing over time, we need not take into account the possibility of it worrying about the prospect of its future existence being cut short. It cannot worry about this, for it has no conception of its own future. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, pp. 91-92)

I use the term 'person' to refer to a being with that kind of self awareness –in the words of the philosopher James Rachel a being who can live a biological life and not merely a biological life. A person has a lot more to loss when his or her life is ended than a being that is conscious, and can feel pain, but nevertheless is conscious of its existence only moment by moment, experiencing only one moment of consciousness and then the next, without understanding the connection between them. (Singer, Writings on an Ethical Life, 2000, p. 320)

Many thinkers subscribe to Singer's way of understanding personhood as that which is gained over time. They agree that personhood is a gained attribute, but differ

amongst themselves as what constitute personhood and when exactly it is gained. But, a minimal acceptance with respect to person concept is that it should be self-conscious and *minimally* rational. According to John Harris the concept of person has come to be intimately connected with the question about the value of life. John Harris' concept of person is similar to Singer's concept of person. According to John Harris any self-conscious, minimally intelligent being will be a person.

Singer's person concept is given to criticisms and particularly when it has ethical implications. Bonnardel in his article *Humanism, and Then What* (Dardenne, 2009) has criticized the person concept as given by Peter Singer. Bonnardel observes that the concept of person is abstract and hence vague. He mentions,

1. *Unclear, because awareness, freedom or intelligence are rarely defined*
2. *Elitist, in that they tend to exclude humans that do not fit the description*
3. *Irrelevant, in that they favour individuals that possess those qualities.*

(Dardenne, 2009)

Emilie Dardenne has commented that according to Bonnardel the person concept is not based on relevant criteria but it is based on arbitrary and unfair criteria. (Dardenne, 2009) Singer's concept of person is abstract to the level that it talks of rational and self-conscious being, but it need not be deemed as arbitrary. But, Singer does admit that members that constitute within the person concept is susceptible to change. He bases his account on the advances and findings of science. Many a time he takes the help of scientific discoveries and advancement to come out with his position of persons and who constitute the group of persons. In one instance, he remarks, "are animals self-conscious?"

There is now solid evidence that some are. Perhaps the most dramatic evidence comes from apes who can communicate with us using a human language.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 111)

Singer presumes that person concept as relevant criteria for understanding one’s moral obligations. In person concept there are two distinguishing characteristics, rationality and self-consciousness. According to Singer, it is a misleading thought that only human possess these two characteristics. There are also some other animal being who possess these two characteristics. Singer has mentioned in good number of instances which indicates that animals for instance Chimpanzee, Gorilla are self-conscious and have the desire for the future. Thus Singer says,

The great apes - chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans – may be the clearest cases of non-human persons, but there are almost certainly others. Systematic observation of whales and dolphins has, for obvious reasons, lagged far behind that of apes, and it is quite possible that these large-brained mammals will turn out to be rational and self-conscious. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 118)

Similarly, for Singer, in his concept of person there can also be some humans who are not person. In this list he includes foetuses, newborn infants and mentally disabled beings. They are included in non-persons group. Singer writes, “A newborn baby is not an autonomous being, capable of making choices.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 171)

According to Singer only persons have a right to live. Like Micheal Tooley (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972) for Singer also, only persons have a right to live.

According to Tooley only person is capable of conceiving herself or himself as distinct entities over time and only person have a right to live. Tooley concluded that “to have a right to life, one must have, or at least at one time have had, the concept of having a continued existence.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 98) Thus for Tooley a person is a creature that is capable of desiring to continue as a subject of experience and other mental states. (Helga & Singer, Bioethics : An Anthology, 2006) Along with persons, non-persons who include sentient beings are also capable of experiencing pain, pleasure or happiness. For Singer, it is true that one has to take care of the suffering of those sentient beings, even though they are non-persons. However, Singer maintains that persons have an edge for right to live over and against the non-persons. Singer says, “Person’s life has some distinctive values over and above the life of a merely sentient being.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 100) Again he writes, “The killing of a person is more seriously wrong than the killing of a being who is not a person.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 110)

Thinkers like Singer realized the need for coming up with the concept of ‘person’ to take into account certain applied ethical issues like abortion and euthanasia. While there is agreement amongst thinkers that person concept is important in moral considerations, over and beyond the category of human beings, there is not much agreement of the conclusions and consequences of adopting a moral standpoint based on the concept of person. The concept of person is abstract and intangible unlike the category of human beings. In the further chapters, it is to be discussed how Singer uses this concept to take a stand on ethical issues like abortion and euthanasia.

2.3 Preference Satisfaction

Closely associated with the person concept is the preference satisfaction. As a matter of fact, Singer derives his ethical philosophy of preference utilitarianism from the preference satisfaction concept. Preference utilitarianism is a utilitarian theory in the domain of ethics, advocated by R.M.Hare (1919-2002). Peter Singer one of the adherers to the preference utilitarianism school of thought holds that the good is preference satisfaction, that is getting what one wants and the bad is the opposite of it, that is, not getting what one wants. According to preference satisfaction a right action is that which will maximize the satisfaction of preferences. Singer says, “I hold to the preference utilitarian approach because I cannot deny that for me, a good life is one in which my own considered, informed preferences are maximally satisfied.” (Singer, A Response to Martha Nussbaum, 2002) Peter Singer has formulated the preference utilitarianism in the following way:¹ “We should satisfy, to the greatest extent possible, the preferences a being has, except that we should not satisfy a preference that results from errors of reasoning or errors about matters of fact.” (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 156)

Singer thus identifies preferences as choices born out of proper reasoning taking into consideration the available relevant facts. The right action for him thus lies in satisfying the preferences of the persons. Peter Sandoe (Sandoe, Quality of Life: Three Competing Views, 1999) discusses three views regarding the ways of meaningful life. The article discusses the views of perfectionism, preference theory and hedonism. He maintains

¹ Formulation is given by Sebastian Knell to Singer in their personal communication.

that in perfectionism and hedonism there is a clash between personal autonomy and given virtue. But in preference theory there is no clash of personal autonomy. In the preference theory preference is fully subjective. Sandoe remarks that preferences do not expect and neither has it imposed any standards. It is an aggregate of preferences of the persons and by it the universalisability is achieved. He mentions,

Since preferences are subjective and are fixed from the perspective of the individual who has the preferences, no standard is imposed....To claim that quality of life should be defined in terms of preference satisfaction is still to endorse a universal standard, viz. that preference-satisfaction and only preference satisfaction is what makes a person's life go well. (Sandoe, Quality of Life: Three Competing Views, 1999, p. 12)

Preference satisfaction, thus, tries to provide a non objective standpoint as far as the quality of life is concerned. Moreover, preference utilitarianism tries to overcome the shortcomings of classical utilitarianism as put forward by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. For Bentham and Mill measuring the happiness was one major issue. Though Bentham came out with a hedonistic calculus, it had its limitations and one of the major shortcomings of Bentham's is that it did not make any difference in quality of pleasures. Preference utilitarianism in that sense made a shift from classical utilitarianism to have an empirically testable method by identifying the preferences of the person. In the preference theory it is possible that the quality of life of an individual can be revealed by the preferences of the individual. Therefore it is possible to know the quality of life of a person by empirical method. (Sandoe, Quality of Life: Three Competing Views, 1999) Since there is a possibility to empirically account for individual preferences, preference utilitarianism

takes away the problems faced by classical utilitarianism. Singer maintains that the quality of life of a person is known through one's preferences.

There are a good number of criticisms against preference utilitarianism from contemporary moral thinkers. One of the major aspect in the criticism of preference utilitarianism is its close relation to desire. What does it mean to say to have preferences? Is it just the desire of the individual to act in a specific way or disposition to act in a specific way? Criticisms levelled against preference satisfaction is primarily oriented towards this issue.

Preferences for Singer do not mean merely the individuals' desires. He makes a distinction between desires and preferences. Singer says, "...for a preference to be one we should act upon, it should be based not only on accurate information, but also on a calm and rational assessment of the situation. This is an idealized desire view." (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 155) Desire may be false, erroneous or idealized. And Singer identifies idealized desire with preference. Though Singer frequently uses the term 'desire' in his book *Practical Ethics* (1993), in the book *Peter Singer under Fire* (2009) he makes it clear that by preference he means idealized desire. He interchangeably uses the term 'desire' and 'preference'; by the words 'preference' and 'desire' he indicates 'idealized desire'. Singer says, "Our own happiness, for example, is of intrinsic value, at least to most of us, in that we *desire* it for its own sake." (Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 1993, p. 274) In another place he writes, "We should act as to satisfy, to the greatest extent possible, the intrinsic preferences a being has." (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 156)

Moreover, Singer also maintains that reason plays an important part in making a preference. And that reason has to be an impartial one. The rationality for Singer cannot be done in just personal choices or self-interests alone. That means, he doesn't think of giving reasons purely in terms of personal choices. For example, "Why it is unethical to tell a lie?" According to Singer, the answer 'it is going to be helpful to me, thereby satisfying my self-interests' cannot be an answer, for though it does have a rational component by trying to give a justification, but it cannot be taken as an ethical act as the reason merely springs from one's personal self-interest. Singer did not consider justifications that are given purely on the basis of self-interests as an apt justification for one to engage in ethical actions.

Self-interested acts must be shown to be compatible with more broadly based ethical principles if they are to be ethically defensible, for the notion of ethics carries with it the idea of something bigger than the individual. If I am to defend my conduct on ethical grounds, I cannot point only to the benefits it brings me. I must address to a larger audience. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 10)

This is the reason Singer doesn't equate preferences with self-interests/ desires. As a matter of fact, he calls preferences as 'idealized desires'. (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009) According to Peter Singer individual preference of an action is universalisable. On one hand Singer defends the preferences of individual person. On the other hand he also says, "Ethics requires us to go beyond 'I' and 'you' to the universal law, the universalisable judgment, the standpoint of the impartial spectator or ideal observer, whatever we choose to call it." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 12)

The emphasis on reason and that too deprived of self-interests marks the characteristics of Singer's ethics. So, his ethics can be taken as a conjunction of employment of reason and at the same time not for self-interests. If reason is employed in ethical decisions and if it is not for self-interest, then does it imply that all people will come up with the same decision for a given context, if they reasoned correctly? Though Kant may come up with such an answer as Singer points out (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) he deviates from that. He doesn't think that all people will come up with the same decision as individual preferences are not the same. And in Singer's ethics, the individual's preferences, or more technically, the person's preference is of the supreme importance in making the ethical decisions. According to Singer in the same conditions two different persons may not have the same preferences though both of them are rational. He says, "The utilitarian will judge lying bad in some circumstances and good in others, depending on its consequences." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 3) So from this argument it is evident that by employing reasons in the same situation different persons may have different preferences. The difference in the decisions of the individuals is because of their difference in their preferences. This exercising of one's preferences marks the central theme of Singer's ethics.

Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 2001), Don Marquis (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009) and others have criticized Singer in particular and preference utilitarianism thought in general of the supposed problem in subscribing to preferences. Nussbaum remarks that preferences can be of the nature of ignorant or greedy preferences

and how can one can entertain such types of preferences. Singer tries to address this issue when he says, “The preferences we should satisfy, other things being equal, are those that people would hold if they were fully informed, reflective and vividly aware of the consequences of satisfying their preferences.” (Singer, A Response to Martha Nussbaum, 2002)

In the similar vein, Don Marquis criticizes Singer’s principle of preference. Marquis remarks that Singer’s preference theory may justify the desire to suicide and one’s sacrifice of his body for the devotion of God. (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009) In the present day moral realm, one do not subscribe to acts of suicide, but, if one goes by Singer’s theory, then one should not see anything wrong in committing to suicide or to prefer to commit suicide. Marquis observes that Singer’s account of preferences makes one to accept this position of committing to suicide as an ethically viable position.

Criticisms of Nussbaum and Marquis are serious criticisms not only for Singer, but for the preference utilitarian theory. Peter Singer as a response to such and similar criticisms tries to reemphasize on his formulation of preference utilitarianism, thereby countering their claims. Singer tries to differentiate between desires and preferences. When Nussbaum points out that preferences can be greedy or ignorant preferences, Singer tries to attribute such types of greedy or ignorant preferences as those preferences resulting from errors of reasoning or errors about matters of fact. Thus, Singer tries to show that those preferences need not be entertained.

Similar is the case of depressed person's desires. Singer doesn't want to equate the depressed person's preferences to that of normal person's preferences. For example, a depressed person may come up with his wish to die. In this case of the depressed person, Singer admits the essential preference of the person is not to die. In a sense, this position of Singer's is in accord with Marquis' position as well. The person is depressed and hence he wants to die because he thinks that if he continues his life it is to be miserable and depressed for the entire life as it is now. This may be an erroneous preference. Assume that one has a severe headache or toothache. The severity is so high that she feels like killing herself. Is that a proper preference? No. She has that because of her erroneous belief that her life is going to be miserable and depressed for the entire life. But, as soon as she sees a doctor and gets the proper medicines, her pain subsides, she gets cured and she comes back to normal life. So, her preference taken at that juncture is purely an irrational preference. Singer remarks that one need not satisfy such an irrational preference, but rather one should try to satisfy one's preference for normal life. In this regard, Singer remarks thus,

Marquis offers two counterexamples: the depressed woman whose desire to die is linked to her depression, and the religious believer who wants to be sacrificed to the Gods because he believes that he will be gloriously rewarded in a life to come... These cases raise the issue of how we should respond to people whose preferences are based on false beliefs or beliefs that are influenced by mental states like depression that interfere with a rational consideration of the situation.
(Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 154)

Singer as a matter of fact distinguishes two types of preferences. He mentions them as intrinsic and instrumental preferences. Singer describes these two types of preferences

thus, “An intrinsic preference is something that is desired for its own sake. An instrumental preference is a preference for something as a means to satisfying either another instrumental preference, or an intrinsic preference.” (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 156)

In the case of depressed persons, even though they have the preferences of killing oneself, that may not be their intrinsic preference. Their intrinsic preference would be to lead a normal life without suffering. They erroneously believe that such an intrinsic preference could be achieved by taking an instrumental preference of killing oneself, which in most of the cases may not be true. Hence, Singer claims that it is important to satisfy their intrinsic preference as much as possible and in that case, it may not be necessary to satisfy their instrumental preferences. The instrumental preferences of the depressed persons are of their present condition which according to Singer may not be a proper preference at all.

Singer through the above passage essentially makes a distinction between preferences based on proper information and true belief and preferences based on erroneous information and false beliefs. A true belief with proper information could be considered as an ‘idealized desire’. In this regard Peter Singer puts forward his view of the idealized desire. Singer says, “...we can conclude that for a preference to be one we should act upon, it should be based not only on accurate information, but also on a calm and rational assessment of the situation. This is an idealized desire view.” (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 155)

Singer thus makes a criterion to see if a person's preference is worthy to be acknowledged. Singer tries to relegate the types of preferences as accounted by Nussbaum and Marquis as preferences that need not be accepted as they are misinformed preferences or misdirected preferences without any proper reasoning and deliberations. A preference accompanied by proper reasoning with all possible information can well be exercised.

Singer maintains that a proper preference exercised with all possible information can well be exercised. According to an informed desire version, a fully informed decision is that which is taken considering about all the (non-evaluative) facts. If a person's desire is reasonable and it is informed then there is no problem in desire theory. But some thinkers do not agree with this position. For instance, John Rawls has given a criticism against this informed desire.

Imagine a brilliant Harvard mathematician, fully informed about the options available to her, who develops an overriding desire to count the blades of grass on the lawns of Harvard...this case is another example of philosophical 'bedrock'. Some will believe that, if she really is informed, and not suffering from some neurosis, then the life of grass-counting will be best for her. (Well-Being, 2001)

R.G. Frey also has given argument against the informed desire. Frey argues that informed desires, that is, preferences may not be same at all points of time. It tends to change. Frey argues that there are some circumstances where informed desire is satisfied but life is going badly. (Frey, 2009) Frey writes if the preferences which judge one's quality of life vary throughout one's life then it will be a problem of isolating which preferences determine the quality of life. It is a problem of determining the preferences for

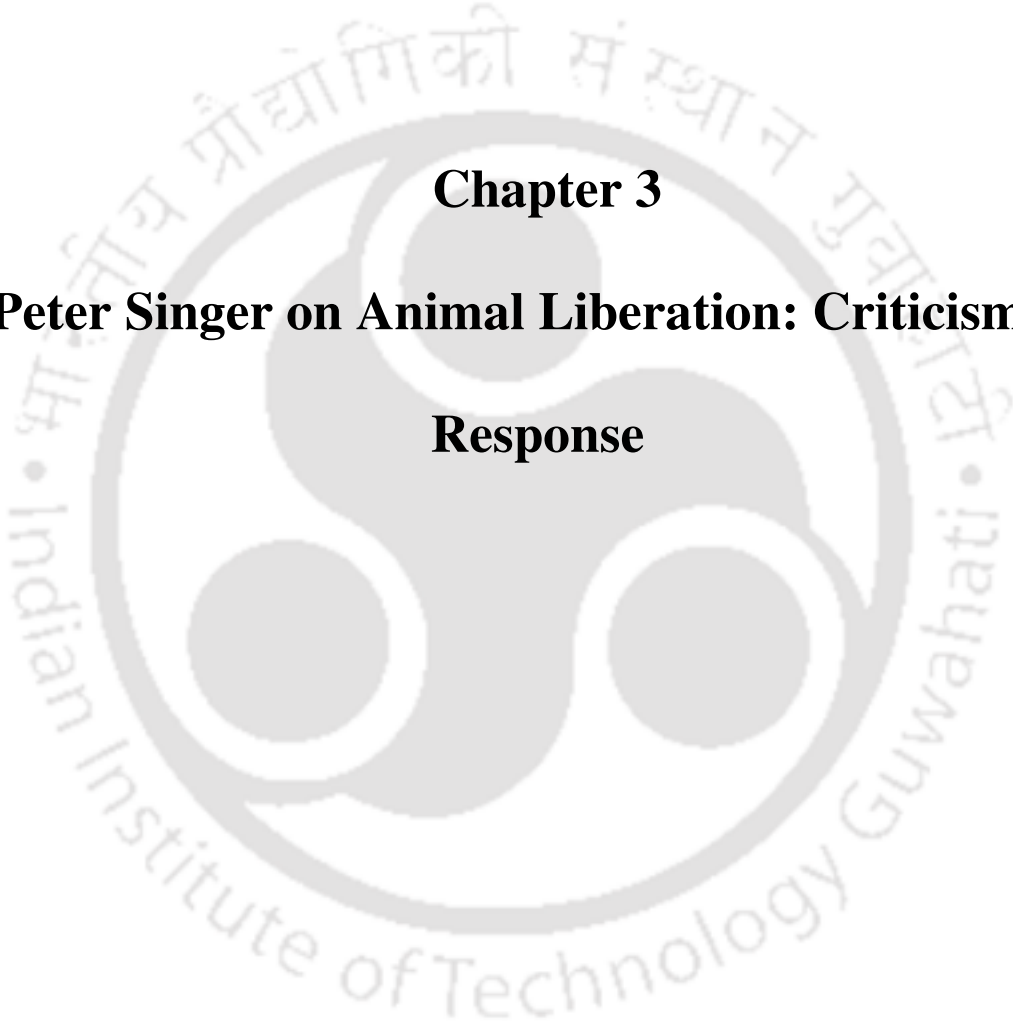
quality of life because previously which were used to determine quality of life may not be used to determine the quality of life now.

Preference theory holds that there may not be any problem with either of two situations as pointed out by Rawls or Frey. If a preference has come out after obtaining all possible information, then, it can well be upheld. And the preference, though tend to change over time, can also be dealt with by understanding the preference of the person at the given situation. Thus, the preference utilitarianism as a theory holds to this position that as a person has come up with his preference, it may not be ethically wrong to accept that person's preference and act according to it, provided person's preference is rational and carried out with due information. Singer thus accommodates two main features for the preferences to be an acceptable one. One is the preferences should not be merely a desire arising out of misinformation or erroneous beliefs; rather it should be from proper information and calm mind. This preference is mentioned as an ideal desire as it has been already mentioned and quoted. The second feature is that preference satisfaction of an individual should be universalisable.

Singer makes the preferences as ideal desires and universalisable. He, thus, tries to put forth an ethical theory based on preference utilitarianism. He tries to address criticisms levelled against him and against preference utilitarianism on the basis that preferences are not merely brute desires emanating out of uncontrolled emotions and passions. According to him, preferences are well-informed and rational decisions taken by the individual and

hence, ethical theory based on the preferences of the individuals can be a viable and sound ethical principle.

The thesis is built on the basis of my understanding of Peter Singer's three principles. I understand that of these three, the suffering principle occupies an important place in his work. And then comes, the concept of person and then the preference satisfaction. The logic behind this is that, all beings capable of suffering, is taken in a single group. And within that group, there is a division of a being as either a person or a non-person. And the persons have preferences, whereas the non-persons do not possess it. For Singer, an acceptable ethical action is that which takes care of all beings' sufferings put together. But, whenever there is a conflict of interests with respect to persons and non-persons, then the preference of the persons overrides the interests of non-persons. For him, then, the better ethical practice is that which takes care of the preference of the persons over the non-persons. In the subsequent chapters, Singer's application of these principles in the different applied ethical issues is discussed.

The logo of the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati is a circular emblem. It features a central stylized figure with three rounded, bulbous protrusions, resembling a trident or a three-lobed shape. The figure is rendered in a light gray color. Surrounding this central figure is a circular border containing text in both Assamese and English. The Assamese text at the top reads 'স্বাৰ্হীণ্য প্ৰৌদ্যোগিকী সংস্থান গুৱাহাটী' and the English text at the bottom reads 'Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati'.

Chapter 3
**Peter Singer on Animal Liberation: Criticisms &
Response**

In this chapter, Peter Singer's views on animal rights are discussed. Peter Singer's concept of animal liberation is built on the basis of his suffering principle. Taking a utilitarian standpoint, Singer, tries to argue for animal rights and welfare on the basis of their capacity to suffer.

The prominent argument for animal rights emerged from the utilitarian tradition, particularly with Bentham with their maxim of each one to account for one and none for more than one. Singer establishes his argument from this utilitarian tradition for his argument on animal rights. Singer believes that animals need to be considered from this standpoint. On the basis of utilitarian principle of equal consideration of interest, Singer argues that animals should also be brought under this maxim as animals can experience suffering. According to Singer, as animals have the capacity to experience suffering, their interests should also be considered when the maxim of equal consideration is maintained.

For Singer, all humans are equal is on the basis of the principle of equal consideration of interest. He goes further and argues that equal consideration of interest should not be confined to humans; it needs to be extended to non-human beings as well. For Singer, therefore the principle of equality is extended to other non-human beings as well. According to him and other utilitarian thinkers like Jeremy Bentham, the animals need to be brought under the moral ambit even though they cannot reason. Though there is a difference between the humans and the animals in terms of their reasoning capacity, at the same time, according to him, there is also a similarity in terms of experiencing pain or

suffering. Singer like Bentham points to this capacity for suffering as the vital characteristic that entitles a non-human being to be of equal consideration as the human beings. Singer often mentions Bentham's passage in the context of welfare of the animals. Bentham remarks thus,

The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the velocity of the skin, or the termination of the os sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a fullgrown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of today, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, can they reason? Nor can they talk? But can they suffer? (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, pp. 56-57)

In his view of animal rights Peter Singer goes against speciesism. Speciesism in ethics discourse refers to privileging one species over and against other species, which is considered as a mark of discrimination. Richard D. Ryder coined the term *speciesism* to look at those set of practices which favour a particular species over other species. In actual scenario, this practice leads to favouring the human species against animal species, when we talk about ethical actions. That is, no moral standing is given to animal species as they do not have the rationality like the humans have. While rationality is a mark of dissimilarity between humans and the animals, there is also a mark of similarity between humans and certain animals; that similarity is the experience of suffering. Both humans

and animals can experience suffering. As both animals and human species can experience suffering, Singer extends the moral standing to animals as well. In this way, Singer's ethical position tries to go beyond the notion of speciesism and he extends the ethical considerations to non-human species as well, that of animals. The way Singer tries to justify extending moral standing to animals is from a utilitarian point of view. He justifies extending ethical considerations to animals on the basis of the suffering principle. Singer tries to argue for animal rights on the basis of sentience. Sentience is the capacity for consciousness but which is not connected with self-consciousness. It is the capacity to feel suffering or happiness. For Singer the meaning of sentience is the capacity to suffer or experience enjoyment or happiness. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) For Peter Singer all beings are equal because all beings can suffer. 'If a being suffer, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration.' (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 57) If a being is not sentient then there is no need to take it into consideration. Singer has given the example of the comparison of mouse and a stone. A mouse can suffer but not a stone. Hence, a mouse should be considered but not a stone while discussing the ethics of the act. Since the animals are sentient beings and they have the capacity to suffer or feel the pain, one should not kill them.

Pain and suffering are in themselves bad and should be prevented or minimized, irrespective of the race, sex or species of the being that suffers. How bad a pain is depends on how intense it is and how long it lasts, but pains of the same intensity and duration is equally bad, whether felt by humans or animals. (Singer, Writings on an Ethical Life, 2000, p. 42)

It is from this logic of suffering, which a sentient being experiences, Singer goes beyond the confinements of speciesism. Reason may be an exclusive privilege of human beings, which makes them to be different from the animal species. But, as far as the suffering is concerned it is common amongst all sentient beings, irrespective of whether it is a human species or non-human species. By taking this logic of finding the common element of suffering in both the humans and the animals, Singer tries to extend the moral value to animals as well. By this way, he goes beyond the idea of speciesism, of privileging the humans against the animals, which Ryder remarks as one form of discrimination.

In the history of thought, the pain of animals was hardly considered. Rather the dissimilarity between the animals and the humans were emphasized. Animals have always been considered as subservient to human beings. They do not enjoy the same rights as human beings and as a matter of fact, they do not possess any right at all. The reason is that humans have the capacity to reason while the animals do not. As far as Christianity is concerned, there was a subhuman treatment to animals. Humans do not have any direct moral obligation to animals. For Augustine refrain from the killing of animals and the destroying of plants is the height of superstition. Aquinas in his classification of sins, told about sins against God, we and neighbours. But for him there is no possibility of sins against non-human animals. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) For deontologist philosopher Immanuel Kant, as animals are not rational and self conscious, animals are not persons. For Kant self-conscious beings are in the ambit of moral kingdom and therefore animals

are out of this moral kingdom. Kant had a view that animals were not being autonomous or rational and they need not be treated as end in themselves. Kant says,

Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. We can ask, “Why do animals exist? But to ask, “Why does man exist?” is a meaningless question. Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity. (Kant, 2001, p. 32)

The only reason for being kind towards animals, according to Kant, is to increase our kindness toward humans. But Kant argues that we should not inflict needless cruelty on animals. For Kant, we should refrain from inflicting needless suffering on an animal not because it is bad for the animal but rather because it is bad for us. Kant thought being cruel to animal will be bad for our relationship with other men. He says, “...for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealing with men...Our duties towards animals, then, are indirect duties towards mankind.” (Kant, 2001, p. 32) But, from the utilitarian angle, Bentham suggested that animals need to be considered and Singer following the utilitarian maxim tries to argue for animal welfare on the basis of their capacity to experience pain.

Pointing out Singer’s position of animal rights on the basis of suffering R. G. Frey writes:

Pain is a moral-bearing characteristic, so it is the ability to feel pain that gets animals into the moral community that gives them moral standing, that makes it wrong to overlook what is done to them in course of raising them for food and in raising and preparing them for experimentation. (Frey, 2009, p. 104)

Singer considers that wherever the animals are made to suffer, to undergo pain, then, those actions need to be curtailed as those actions do not take animal suffering into consideration. In his arguments related to animal welfare Singer focuses on issues like consumption of meat, using animals for experimentation and all other sorts of animal use that leads to their killing or their experiencing pain or suffering. According to Singer the pleasures that we gain through eating or using animals for any other purpose cannot outweigh the suffering inflicted on animals. Singer claims that we have a democratic right to protest against the needless torturing of animals such as in laboratory, farming. (Singer, *Animal Rights: The Right to Protest*, 2001) He argues,

...even if we were to prevent the infliction of suffering on animals only when the interests of humans will not be affected to anything like the extent that animals are affected, 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 wildlife and to hunting, trapping and the wearing of furs, and areas of entertainment like circuses, rodeos, and zoos. (Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 1993, p. 61)

Since, as I have said, none of these practices cater for anything more than our pleasures of taste, our practice of rearing and killing other animals in order to eat them is a clear instance of the sacrifice of the most important interests of other beings in order to satisfy trivial interests of our own...we must stop this practice, and each of us has a moral obligation to cease supporting this practice. (Singer, *All Animals are Equal*, 1986, p. 223)

Singer's views on animal right is also related to his concept of person. While Singer tries to argue against animal killing on the basis of their sentience, he admits further that some animals do possess the characteristics equivalent to being a person. Like many

thinkers such as Alan Dershowitz (Dershowitz, 2009), Gary L. Francione (Francione, 2008), Singer also uses the term 'person' to indicate those who have reached a certain level of cognitive sophistication, who are self-aware. Singer accommodates certain animal beings under the category of persons, thereby making a stronger case for not killing those animal beings. He included some non-human beings such as elephant, gorilla, chimpanzee, dolphin as persons. Singer takes the support of scientific and biological discoveries that suggest that certain animals are self-conscious and could exhibit certain traits which often thought to be exhibited by higher forms of life like humans. Singer mentions the case² of an Orangutan and that of the chimpanzee that exhibited higher complex functions like being self-conscious, ability to identify itself in a mirror, ability to communicate through language and other similar abilities. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993)

Singer has not only taken the issue of suffering of animals but has also taken the issue of emotional deprivation in his animal liberation. Singer points out that there are many birds species in which the bond between the male and female lasts for their whole life. The death of one causes distress and loss to another. Intense suffering is also found in mother child relationships if one of them is killed or taken away. He also points out taking the help of experts that some animals do display emotions as similar to human beings. He mentions about Jane Goodall who is considered as the world's leading expert on chimpanzee. Goodall remarks that chimpanzees like human show emotions which are sometimes can be marked as joy, sadness, fear, despair and like. The chimpanzees

² Washoe (chimpanzee) was able to point out herself in the mirror. Koko (gorilla) was able to use 1000 signs correctly and also she was able to be aware of a large number of spoken languages. It was observed that koko can identify her past birth by the sign language 'sleep eat'. When Chantek (orangutan) was given away a picture of Gorilla pointing her nose then Chantek was also able to positing her own nose.

obviously have some kind of self - concept and can desire or plan for the future. (Goodall, 1993)

In the case of factory farming, Singer opines that animals are treated in a cruel manner. The animals that are reared in factory farming is to satiate one or the other human wants, Singer remarks that animals which are used for human benefit are not given a proper treatment. Animals that are reared in factory for human consumption includes hens, pigs and other similar domesticated animals. Singer explains the types of treatment given to animals in their rearing and considers those treatments as cruel. Singer mentions, "... in modern factory farms, where the animals are so crowded together and restricted in their movements that their lives seem to be more of a burden than a benefit to them." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 121) In cages the birds are unable to extend their wings. In such a condition the more prevailing, aggressive birds cause the death of weaker hens in the cage. (Singer, The Ethics of Eating, 2006) In an current article Singer writes Singer says that pigs that human being eat are the most intelligent and sensitive animals. Singer says,

...in today's factory farms, pregnant sows are kept in crates so narrow that they cannot turn around, or even walk more than a step forward or backward. They lie on bare concrete without straw or any other form of bedding. The piglets are taken from the sow as soon as possible, so that she can be made pregnant again, but they never leave the shed until they are taken to slaughter. (Singer, The Ethics of Eating, 2006)

Singer while talking about consumption of animal food tries to give arguments from diverse viewpoints. One of the prominent arguments of Singer against animal killing is that animals can suffer and experience pain. Hence, one's tastes of animal food do not

outweigh the sufferings of the animals and hence it should not be practiced. Singer, thus, confines the moral consideration to only sentient beings, that is, the beings that has the capacity to suffer. For Singer, all the beings that have the capacity to suffer should be included for moral consideration. In his book *Animal Liberation* Singer mentions that fish, lobster, crustacean can feel pain. In the case of Oysters, clams, mussels, scallops doubts about a capacity for pain are significant. Singer says,

While one cannot with any confidence say that these creatures do feel pain, so one can equally have little confidence in saying that they do not feel pain. Moreover, if they do feel pain, a meal of oysters or mussels would inflict pain on a considerable number of creatures. Since it is so easy to avoid eating them, I now think it better to do so. (Singer, Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals, 1975)

Singer also projects arguments of human health and its relation to eating habits. Singer claims that some disease like mad cow disease are caused by eating animals. Singer writes, “The overwhelming weight of medical evidence indicates that animal flesh is not necessary for good health or longevity.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 62)

Singer tries to point out that there exists general apathy and misplaced sympathy amongst the people with respect to animal treatment. Peter Singer and Karen Dawn (Singer & Dawn, When Slaughter Makes Sense, 2004) mention that for animal disease like mad cow diseases, bird flu and like diseases, many animals are slaughtered. Singer and Dawn claims that people do not worry when such high number of animals are taken for killing for human consumption, but these people worry when those animals are killed for not

spreading disease. Singer and Karen Dawn present this problem that people worry about when the animals are killed for not spreading diseases; people think that as wastage of animal meat. They worry because animal food goes waste.

While Singer tries to argue against animal killings for human wants, he doesn't hold on to that position absolutely. Singer accepts some acts of animal killing. Singer explicitly justifies animal killings at least on two counts – animal killing done for survival and animal killing for experimentations.

On the killing of animals for survival, Singer says, “Eskimos living in an environment where they must kill animals for food or starve might be justified in claiming that their interest in surviving overrides that of the animals they kill.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 62) Again he says, “In any case, at the level of practical moral principles, it would be better to reject altogether the killing of animals for food, unless one must do so to survive.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 134) In the case of animal killing for food, Singer accepts non vegetarianism out of necessity.

The other case where Singer questions the rampant use of animals is for experimentation. Animals are used in experimentation and particularly those animals which seem to have developed cognitive sophistications as that of the humans are used extensively in experiments. From a utilitarian standpoint it is difficult to stop animal experimentation as for them the better consequences do matter. In tune with that principle, Singer does not subscribe to total stoppage of animal experimentation. He accepts animal experimentation done for human necessity, but he does not subscribe to animal

experimentations, where there is no human need. Singer mentions some of the animal experiments are not done out of necessity.

Singer apparently points out two prominent instances of animal experimentation which he says is not justified— one is for cosmetics and the other is the uncertain or non-existing benefits to humans. In the case of using animal experimentation for cosmetic purposes, Singer goes against such types of practices. He says, “Drug companies test new shampoos and cosmetics they are intending to market by dripping concentrated solutions of them into the eyes of rabbits, in a test known as the Draize test.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 65) Again,

Food additives, including artificial colourings and preservatives, are tested by what is known as the LD50-a test designed to find the ‘lethal dose’, or level of consumption that will make 50 percent of a sample of animals die. In the process nearly all of the animals are made very sick before some finally die and others pull through. These tests are not necessary to prevent human suffering. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 65)

Similarly, Singer argues against use of animals for experimentation, when the experiment has no direct result in reducing human sufferings like the U.S. Armed Forces Radiobiology Institute’s experiments and H. F. Harlow’s experiments on monkeys, or Princeton University’s experiments on rats. He mentions,

At the U.S. Armed Forces Radiobiology Institute, in Bethesda, Maryland, monkeys have been trained to run inside a large wheel. If they slow down too much then the wheel slows down, and the monkeys get an electric shock. Once the monkeys are

trained to run for long time, they are given lethal doses of radiation. Again though sick and vomiting, they are forced to continue to run until they drop. This experimentation is done for to provide information on the capacities of soldiers to continue to fight after a nuclear attack... Three experimenters at Princeton University kept 256 young rats without food or water until they died. After that they have given conclusion that young rats under conditions of fatal thirst and starvation are much more active than normal adult rats given food and water. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 66)

Peter Singer has given some examples of animal experimentation in which animals are used for the benefit of human purposes. It is not true that all animals' experiments serve critical medical purposes. Experimentation on animals is justified on the grounds that they relieve more suffering than they cause.

Singer thus accepts and admits the necessity of doing experiments when the experiment is going to benefit the members at large. Singer accepts experiments carried out of necessity. Thus, he tries to lessen killing animals for experimentation, but, not totally avoiding killing animals for experimentation. He says, "...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 equal consideration of interests that they should do so. This, at any rate, is the answer a utilitarian must give." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 67)

This passage suggests that Singer does not mind experiments on animals if it is going to be for greater and better consequences for a larger number of persons. And being a utilitarian himself, Singer would not be giving absolute right to animals on the basis of sentientism. The rights of the animals on the basis of sentientism can be overridden by

essential concerns of the persons. He further remarks, “Those who believe in absolute right might hold that it is always wrong to sacrifice one being, whether human or animal, for the benefit of another. In that case the experiment should not be carried out whatever the consequences.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 67) David D Grazia mentions the stance of utilitarian philosophy in this regard thus,

Their utilitarian position allows for harming animals only when the beneficial consequences of doing so are likely to offset the harms. The principle of equal consideration, which precludes weighting consequences differentially according to species, also justifies harming humans when doing so would maximize the good. (Grazia, 1991, p. 63)

As per the utilitarian standpoint, if it is necessary for an experiment to be done, then it hardly matters if it is done on animals or human beings. Singer maintains this position when he talks of experiment on animals. On the killing of animals for experimentation Singer writes,

If a single experiment could cure a disease like leukaemia, that experiment would be justifiable. But in actual life the benefits are always more remote, and more often than not they are nonexistent...an experiment cannot be justifiable unless the experiment is so important that the use of a brain- damaged human would also be justifiable. (Singer, Writings on an Ethical Life, 2000, p. 53)

Singer therefore argues for a particular way of evaluating whether an experiment with a non-human animal is ever justifiable. It is called by Lori Gruen (Gruen, Singer, 2009) the ‘Non Speciesist Utilitarian Test’ or NSUT. According to NSUT an experiment would be justified if and only if:

1. *Of all the options open, the experiment generates more pleasure or benefit than pain or cost on balance, for all affected*
2. *The justification for the experiment does not depend on irrelevant species prejudice or speciesism. Equal interests are to be considered equally no matter who has them.* (Gruen, Singer, 2009, p. 240)

Singer thus tries to argue for animal rights from a utilitarian perspective. Thus, Singer's concern for animals, though based on sentientism can be overridden by concerns of personism. Singer argues against killing animals which is for self - interest and not for self-survival. As a matter of fact, Singer comes up with good many passages to show that there is no reason for killing animals for the sake of pleasure, but there are enough reasons to kill animals for the sake of survival and other necessities.

Singer has given empirical evidences and statistics to show how animals have been treated cruelly and how animals have been used for human wants. Even Lori Gruen in her article *Animals* has given some data on animal torture and killing for consumption and experimentation. In experiments around the world approximately 200 million animals are used annually. In United States alone 250 million wild animals are killed by hunter year each year.(Gruen, *Animals*, 1994) In the similar line, Orlans has given information regarding country wise use of animals in research³. (Orlans, 1998)

³ Number of laboratory animals used in research, by country (in millions)

United States (1996)-----13,457,000

Japan(1991)-----12,236,000

France(1991)-----3,646,000

United Kingdom(1996)-----2,717,000

While Singer and others tried to provide arguments and statistics to prove that animals are treated and killed for human wants, there are other thinkers who maintain that animal experimentations and subsequent killings are not unethical. Carl Cohen (Cohen, 2009) argued there is no harm in using animals in research. For him, animals do not deserve rights because animals are not capable of exercising or responding to moral claims. Carl Cohen rejects both right based arguments and utilitarian arguments against animal experimentation. Cohen says,

I have argued that arguments of both kinds must fail. We surely do have obligations to animals, but they have, and can have, no rights against us on which

Germany(1993)-----	2,080,000
Canada(1995)-----	1,998,000
Switzerland(1994)-----	724,000
Italy(1991)-----	683,000
Netherlands(1996)-----	652,000
Spain(1991)-----	559,000
Sweden(1994)-----	352,000
Denmark(1991)-----	304,000
New Zealand(1996)-----	265,000
Portugal(1991)-----	87,000
Greece(1991)-----	25,000
Ireland(1991)-----	25,000
Australia (1995)-----	1,932,000 (Orlans, 1998)

research can infringe. In calculating the consequence of animal research, we must weigh all the long term benefits of the results achieved- to animals and to humans- and in that calculation we must not assume the moral equality of all animate species. (Cohen, 2009, p. 333)

Favouring experimentation on animals Carl Cohen claims that in elimination of every disease, development of every vaccination, every method of pain relief devised, invention of every surgical method, for discovery of every prosthetic device, all modern medical therapy is possible only because of experimentation using animals. (Cohen, 2009)

One can admit Cohen's position that it is because of experimentation using animals, humans have come up with better medicines for humans' welfare. But, Cohen doesn't find anything wrong in using animals as they do not have rights. Singer's position is different that though the animals do not have rights, still one cannot engage in unnecessary experimentation on them as they can feel pain. Singer's stance of using animals for necessities but not for pleasure is risky. Singer has to answer critics from either side to reinforce his position as Singer's position does not grant any absolute rights in defence of animals. Thus, Singer's position is seen too weak for the pro-animal rights group and Singer's position is seen as an unwanted and unsubstantiated discussion by the anti-animal rights group.

One of the pertinent issues with respect to Singer's arguments on animal welfare is whether the animals have rights or not. Singer faces challenge from both the pro-animal rights and the anti-animal rights group. While the pro-animal rights group can accuse him of being diluted in his arguments for animals as he cannot get them their rights, the anti-

animal rights group accuse him of not having a substantial ground for protecting animal rights and hence Singer's arguments do not take one to subscribing for animal rights.

Singer remarks that animals are incapable of demanding rights for themselves and also they are incapable of protest against their exploitation by some means as by votes, demonstration. Hence Singer remarks animal liberation will need greater altruism on the part of humanity than any other movement. (Singer, Animal Liberation at 30, 2003) To that extent that animal liberation needs greater altruism is true, but, still the question remains whether animals do possess rights. For the utilitarian, there cannot be anything like absolute rights.

This understanding of not having absolute rights can also save the utilitarian from too much rigidity. Making their discourse on animal welfare more flexible than the rights based discourse on animal rights like Regan's. However, Singer's animal rights position has been criticized from many angles. While some criticisms are directed to his position with respect to animal protection, some others try to address his intention and bias. Focusing on the issue of Singer's arguments with respect to his animal protection, there are serious questions levelled against him.

The rights talk with respect to animals becomes an important point of discussion. Many a thinker equates the moral consideration on animals on the basis of whether they possess rights. Tom Regan, a pro-animal rights thinker maintains that animals do possess rights. He tries to subscribe to this position primarily from a deontological perspective. Tom Regan has criticized utilitarian treatment of animal rights and bases his argument on

right point of view. Regan criticizes Singer's utilitarian dealing of animal liberation. Regan rejects utilitarianism as lacking a concept of intrinsic value. Tom Regan writes as in utilitarianism there is no scope for individual's inherent value or worth that is why in utilitarianism there is no scope for the equal moral rights for different individuals. Regan says,

A universe, in which you satisfy your desire for water, food, and warmth, is, other things being equal, better than a universe in which these desires are frustrated. And the same is true in the case of an animal with similar desires. But neither you nor the animals have any value in your own right. Only your feelings do... (Regan, The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights, 2001, p. 43)

Regan remarks,

That utilitarianism is an aggregative theory – that different individuals' satisfactions or frustrations are added, or summed or totalled – is the key objection to this theory... A good end does not justify an evil means. Any adequate moral theory will have to explain why this is so. Utilitarianism fails in this respect and so cannot be the theory we seek. (Regan, The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights, 2001, p. 43)

Regan has given the intrinsic value property to animals which is absent in Singer's concept of animal liberation. For Regan animals have basic rights because they are also 'subject-of-a-life'. Therefore for Regan eating animals or doing harmful experiment is the violation of these rights. For Regan an individual who are subject of a life have the following features:

Individuals are subjects-of-a-life if they have beliefs and desires; perception, memory and a sense of the future, including their own future; an emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference and welfare-interests; the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychological identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them, logically independently of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else's interest. (Regan, The Case for Animal Rights., 2004, p. 243)

These conditions are, for Regan, certainly satisfied by almost all human, including young children and the mentally disabled. This criterion of subject-of-a-life would not apply to human beings who are in persistent vegetative states and person in coma states. The criterion is also satisfied by all normal members of mammalian species. The criterion for subject-of-a-life is also satisfied by many species of birds, and possibly by reptiles, amphibians and fish, but Regan does not wish to take a stand on these later types of case. Then it can be guessed that Regan's eventual case for animal rights will strictly speaking, be limited to mammals only. (Rowlands, Animal Rights: A Philosophical Defence, 1998)

Tom Regan is an absolutist regarding the treatment of animals. For him any means of animals to human ends is morally unacceptable. As Regan mentions, "the animal right movement is dedicated to a number of goals which include: the total abolition of the use of animals in science, the total disbanding of commercial animal agriculture and total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping." (Regan, The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights, 2001) Regan's theory implies a view against the research on animal in the absolute manner. Regan says that the supporters of right view

will be contended only with the total abolition of harmful use of animals in science, in education, in testing of toxicity, in research.

Diana Mertz Hsieh (Hsieh, 2005) comparing Regan's and Singer's position with respect to animal rights maintains that neither of the positions, the deontological and the utilitarian, do come up with a satisfactory arguments for animal protection. In conclusion she remarks,

Peter Singer's case for animal liberation and Tom Regan's case for animal rights largely depend upon their capacity to establish their respective egalitarian moral theories. If that can be done, then, then the zoocentric extension of the relevant principles to animals is fairly straightforward. As we have seen, however, neither Singer nor Regan is able to offer even a remotely plausible justification for their respective moral theories. Consequently, both animal liberation and animal rights may be justly dismissed as dangerous nonsense. (Hsieh, 2005, p. 16)

To just simply say that they are dangerous nonsense is to set aside the issue. Singer from the utilitarian perspective and Regan from deontological perspective do argue for animal liberation. The effects of their claims and arguments, if not paid the dividend as they expected, for sure, the impact of their work did give a tangible result.

A similar position is found in Michael Fox's book, *The Case for Animal Experimentation* (Fox, 1986) where he tries to argue that animals are not members of the moral community and therefore human being who belong to a moral community have no obligation to animals. (Fox, 1986) If his view is true then we have also no obligation to foetus, mentally disabled person. For to overcome this difficulty included foetus and

mentally disabled person in his moral community view as they are human beings. As Lori Gruen pointed out, after less than one year publication of his book Fox rejected the central thesis of his book by identifying some mistakes. (Gruen, Animals, 1994) Fox remarks that moral obligation to avoid causing harm to human beings should be widened to animals as well. It would be wrong for us to get benefit from the sufferings of animals. (Gruen, Animals, 1994)

Peter Carruthers has argued from the contractualist perspective. For contractualism the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by contracts or agreement between individuals. He argues that we have no direct duties towards animal. Animals are incapable of being part of this social contract and therefore we have no direct duties to them. Carruthers writes, "...moral standing is possessed by all and only human beings (together with other rational agents, if there are any), who thus make direct moral claims upon us. Animals, in contrast, lack standing and make no direct claims upon us." (Carruthers, Against the Moral Standing of Animals) Thus Carruthers argues there is no moral wrong in hunting, factory farming, or laboratory testing on animal. He says those who are supporting to any aspect of the animal rights movement are thoroughly mistaken. (Carruthers, 1992)

According to Carruthers though we have no direct duties towards animals but we have indirect duties towards animals. He says,

They derive from the good or bad qualities of moral character that the actions in question would display and encourage; where those qualities are good or bad in

virtue of the role that they play in the agent's interactions with other human beings. On this account, the most basic kind of wrong-doing towards animals is cruelty. A cruel action is wrong because it evinces a cruel character. But what makes a cruel character bad is that it is likely to express itself in cruelty towards people, which would involve direct violations of the rights of those who are caused to suffer. (Carruthers, Against the Moral Standing of Animals)

But for Singer ethics cannot be based on reciprocity. According to Singer, the drawback of Carruthers' position is that this reciprocity may also not be applicable to children. Singer says, "The difficulty with this approach to ethics is that it also means we have no direct duties to small children, or to future generations yet unborn." (Singer, Ethics and Animals, 2007) For Singer, contractualism is not a sound doctrine of ethics, particularly when one tries to understand the moral obligations towards beings like animals, children and like. Similarly, Tom Regan also had argued against contractarian ethics. For him, contractarianism is a theory which regards might makes right.

On the other hand, Mark Rowlands in his book *Animal Rights: A philosophical defence* (1998) has given a contractarian defence of animal rights. While Peter Carruthers tried to argue against animal rights from the contractarian perspective, Rowlands tries to defend animal rights from contractarian perspective. According to Mark Rowlands though Peter Singer's and Tom Regan's theory of animal right is influential, but contractarian defence for animal rights is more satisfactory than these two. Mark Rowlands claims that contractualism grants the most satisfactory basis for the moral rights to non-human and non-rational individuals. Mark Rowland claims that though Peter Singer's interpretation of animal rights is influential it is not satisfactory at all. Singer's attempt fails because

utilitarianism, by its very nature, is committed to an inadequate understanding of the concept of equal consideration. (Rowlands, *Animal Rights: A Philosophical Defence*, 1998) Rowlands argues that Singer's notion of equal consideration of interest is depended on his principle of utilitarianism. Two principles are conflicted here: the principle of equal consideration, i.e. the principle that every person should be treated with equal consideration and the principle of aggregation of interests, i.e. 'we are to aggregate the interests of all people and adopt whatever course of action maximally satisfies the aggregation.' (Rowlands, *Animal Rights: A Philosophical Defence*, 1998) Rowlands says that the principle of the aggregation of interest accepts the view that 'individuals can have other-directed preferences as well as self-directed ones' and this entails the view that individual are concerned with what others happen to think of them. This principle (aggregation of interests) involves the view that each person's moral status depends on 'the content of the attitudes that every other person bears towards them.' Thus this view is incompatible with the principle of consideration of interest which asserts that every person should be treated with equal consideration and no matter of other's attitude towards them. So the principle of aggregation of interest is incompatible with principle of equal consideration. (Rowlands, *Animal Rights:A philosophical defense*, 1998)

For David Oderberg since animals are not moral agent, animals do not have rights. In his article *Oderberg On Animal Rights* (Jackson, 2008) Keith Bergson Jackson has shown many mistake that has done by Oderberg in his concept of animal rights. According to Oderberg having of rights is two fold: (i) knowledge - a right holder must first know that he is pursuing a good and (ii) Freedom-he must be free to do so. (Jackson, 2008) For

Oderberg, no one is under a duty to respect another's right if the later do not have the knowledge of right and wrong. The animals do not have the two features of a right holder. So animals do not have rights. But critics such as Keith Bergess Jackson remarks that there is no necessary relation between a right and a demand of another individual to respect that right. (Jackson, 2008) Jackson has given counterexample of babies-the obvious reply to this argument is that babies are not moral agents. Hence, by Oderberg's logic, they lack rights. But Oderberg oppose this claim by arguing that babies are of a class of human being and most of whose members are moral agents. Oderberg differentiates babies and humans such as mentally handicaped, the senile and the comatose with the animals because humans creatures are different from other creatures because of their kind.

The author, Keith Bergess Jackson denies this argument of Oderberg by saying that,

The first thing to notice about this argument is that it's a different argument. Oderberg began by saying (on my construal) that moral agency is a necessary condition for being a right holder. Now he is saying that being a member of a class... But we were not in doubt about whether a particular baby is a moral agent; we know that it is not. So why we should the baby get to be treated as a member of the class? Oderberg gives no reason. (Jackson, 2008)

Oderberg have argued that If animals have rights, then so do plants; but surely plants don't have rights and so animals also do not have rights. Jackson has taken Singer's stance and remarks that difference of animals and plants is the sentience. The animals have the capacity to experience pain and pleasure but plants do not have this ability. Jackson

adds “Singer has discussed these matters at length. Oderberg, inexplicably, ignores them.” (Jackson, 2008)

Lori Gruen (Gruen, *Animals*, 1994) has given a virtue ethics standpoint in her view of treatment of animals. According to her sympathy is a special virtue to treat to animals though reason plays a tremendous role in discussion of morality. Lori Gruen says that for the development of complete moral sensibilities sympathy and compassion are important. She gives importance in the power of emotion too. She remarks as Singer has not give much importance in the power of emotion, though there are some supports of Singer’s ethics yet they do not give up to eat animals meat. She says,

If reason were the sole motivator of ethical behaviour, one might wonder why there are people who are familiar with the reasoning of Singer’s work, for example, but who nonetheless continue to eat animals. While many have suggested that to act rationally entails acting morally, reason is only one element in decision-making .Emotion, though often dismissed, plays a crucial role as well.
(Gruen, *Animals*, 1994, p. 351)

It may not be true that Singer is not taking the emotional consideration with respect to animals. As a matter of fact, Singer’s argument for animal protection stems from their capacity to undergo suffering and the moral behaviour ought to reduce that unnecessary suffering. To reduce unnecessary suffering of others, clearly emanates from an emotional standpoint. Moreover, as a utilitarian Singer is concerned with animal welfare and not precisely their rights. As Jeffrey A. Schaler observes that Peter Singer is speaking of liberating animals and not the rights of animals,

Do animals capable of suffering have 'rights' ? Peter Singer speaks of 'liberating' animals, liberating them from human captivity, liberating them from being killed for food and clothing. While he does not like to speak of animal rights, he is concerned about the suffering that we create in animals..... Singer disapproves of suffering, whether human or non- human. (Schaler J. A., 2009, p. xx)

Singer's cause for animal liberation is perhaps diluted for he is not in a position to argue for their rights. Hence, even thinkers who are sympathetic to Singer's attempt may find that his position is weak. R.G. Frey (1941-2012) supporting Singer's position tries to argue that though pain is relevant in the discussion of animal rights, but it cannot be the central focus. He writes, "of course pain is relevant to animals and the morality of what is done to them. But it is not, I want to suggest, the central focus of such a discussion, in the way it is made to be in *Animal Liberation*." (Frey, 2009, p. 107) Again he says, "Suppose one undertakes some medical experiment upon an animal that is entirely painless: is it wrong to undertake that experiment? If so, the infliction of pain will not establish the point." (Frey, 2009, p. 107) R. G. Frey argues that if the issue of animal rights are only based on suffering principle, then that should not be a value towards animal lives. By describing the utilitarian treatment of animals Lori Gruen also says, "If the animals live happy, stress free, natural lives before they are painlessly killed, the utilitarian may not object to their use as food." (Gruen, *Animals*, 1994, p. 349)

Frey argues from the value of animals. Again this value is to be of the nature of intrinsic value, which he says is missing in Singer's *Animal Liberation*. To his concerns for animals Frey has argued from two point of views: Animals as a moral agent of a moral

community and from suffering principle. But for him only suffering may not be sufficient reason to fight for animal issues. Concern for animals should also be extended by a value argument. Along with suffering part, it is to be noted that animals should also be valued for its own sake. Frey remarks, “Animal life has some value, but it does not have the same value as normal adult human life. ” (Frey, 2009, p. 110) Frey talks of degree of the values of life. He says,

It is not the painful use of animals that centrally is at issue but the use of their lives at all, and what most who reflect on the matter give as their rationale for using these lives turns upon their conception of how valuable those lives are....To be sure, we think we can benefit from using them either as research subjects or as food; but the argument from benefit is connected to the comparative value of lives. (Frey, 2009, p. 108)

Frey says that subjective experiences determines the quality of life and the quality of life determines value of life. He argues that quality of life view determines the value not only of humans but also of animal life. Frey writes,

animals are members of the moral communityI think a quality of life view determines the value not only of human but also of animal life....Animal has some value, but it does not have the same value as normal adult human life....because the value of the lives of the latter far exceed the value of the lives of the former. The truth is that not all creatures who have moral Standing have the same moral standing. (Frey, 2009, pp. 110,112)

Frey says that though human suffering is more than suffering of animals, it should not affect on the recognition of animal suffering. Frey also gives reason why though he argues

for the degree of life of different beings, in the mean time he also give arguments for his position that he is not a non speciesist. He writes,

The reason normal adult human lives are more valuable than animal lives is not because of species but because of richness and scope for enrichment. I am not guilty, therefore, of discrimination in favour of humans because they are human. Indeed, my view plainly allows that the quality and therefore value of some human lives can fall well below that of some animal lives. (Frey, 2009, p. 112)

R.G.Frey and Singer are somehow similar in their views regarding animal rights. Frey's justification of animal experimentation is same as Singer's view. Frey defended experiments on animals because of the benefits he believes they bring, but added that he could not conceive of any way of making such a defence consistent, except to allow that, at least in principle, experiments on severely intellectually disabled human beings with a quality of life no higher than that of non-human animals can also be justified. Frey's line here is similar to Singer's position. Singer says,

I defended in Animal Liberation, when I wrote that "in extreme circumstances, such absolutist answers always break down. and added that "if a single experiment could cure a disease like leukemia, that experiment would be justifiable." I went on to suggest that a test for whether a proposed experiment on animals is justifiable, on nonspeciesist grounds, is whether the experimenter would be prepared to carry out the experiment on human beings at a similar mental level—say, those born with irreversible brain damage. There might be cases, I added, in which it is right to do such an experiment, but, as the extensive accounts of experiments performed on animals in Animal Liberation made clear, such cases would be a very small proportion of the experiments that are performed on animals. (Singer, Reply to R.G. Frey, 2009, p. 124)

One of the arguments related to Singer's position on animal welfare is of an epistemological in nature than an ethical one. Towards the question on how do we know that animals can feel pain, Peter Singer responded in the following way,

We can never directly experience the pain of another being, whether that being is human or not .When I see my daughter fall and scrape her knee, I know that she feels pain because of the way she behaves—she cries, she tells me her knee hurts, she rubs the sore spot, and so on. I know that I myself behave in a somewhat similar—if more inhibited-way when I feel pain, and so I accept that my daughter feels something like what I feel when I scrape my knee. The basis of my belief that animals can feel pain is similar. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 69)

While knowing other human's pain intensity on the basis of one's own experience of pain intensity is possible, can it be extended across species? The essential question is how one can know other person in pain; more specifically, when one is talking of other species' pain. The epistemological problem arises because of the position that it is impossible to compare human pain intensity with non human animal's pain intensity. Francione says,

Singer's theory needs some notion of how we can measure (however imprecisely) inter-species experience.....It is difficult to compare pain intensity when we are concerned only with humans who can give detailed verbal reports of the sensation that they are experiencing-it becomes virtually impossible to make even imprecise assessments when animals are involved. (Francione, 2003, p. 15)

Perhaps, one way of answering is that though pain-intensity measure may not be possible, but, there is no denying the fact that the animals undergo pain. In situations, where one cannot understand whether the animals are in pain or not, Singer prefers if it is easy for one to disengage in inflicting 'pain' on them, however less the intensity, perhaps that could be considered a better action against animals.

As far as the reception of Singer's animal rights cause is concerned, Gensler argues that while Singer's phase 1 of animal liberation, that is, on animal experimentation has succeeded, Singer's animal liberation movement's second phase, against eating meat has not succeeded. Against this position of Gensler's, Peter Singer has put forward some evidences. Singer writes,

If Gensler were to make that comparison, he would find that in Europe there has been at least as much success in reducing cruelty in farming as there has been in reducing cruelty in experiments on animals. Although the United States lags behind Europe in both areas, the American animal movement has recently achieved some notable successes for farm animals. (Singer, Reply to Harry J. Gensler, 2009, p. 187)

As some of the arguments against Singer talks about his conception of animal rights, his understanding of animals' suffering and similar issues, the other perspective and arguments regarding Singer's position comes up as an issue that questions Singer's intentions. Some critics make serious allegations that Singer is unduly favouring the animal species against the humans and Singer tries to level down the humans to that of animals. Oderberg believes that Singer is trying to downgrade human beings; a similar accusation is also done by Luc Ferry. Luc Ferry says that in Peter Singer's ethics one may

observe that “It is a levelling up of animals which are brought into the moral world of humans or rather a levelling down of newborn children, patient in a deep coma, the severely handicapped.” (Dardenne, 2009)

Though these criticisms are not universal, but a few thinkers voice their opinion that Singer is perhaps biased and trying to lower the humans. As a counter observation, Jackson argues that there is no such sense of bias from Singer. He argues,

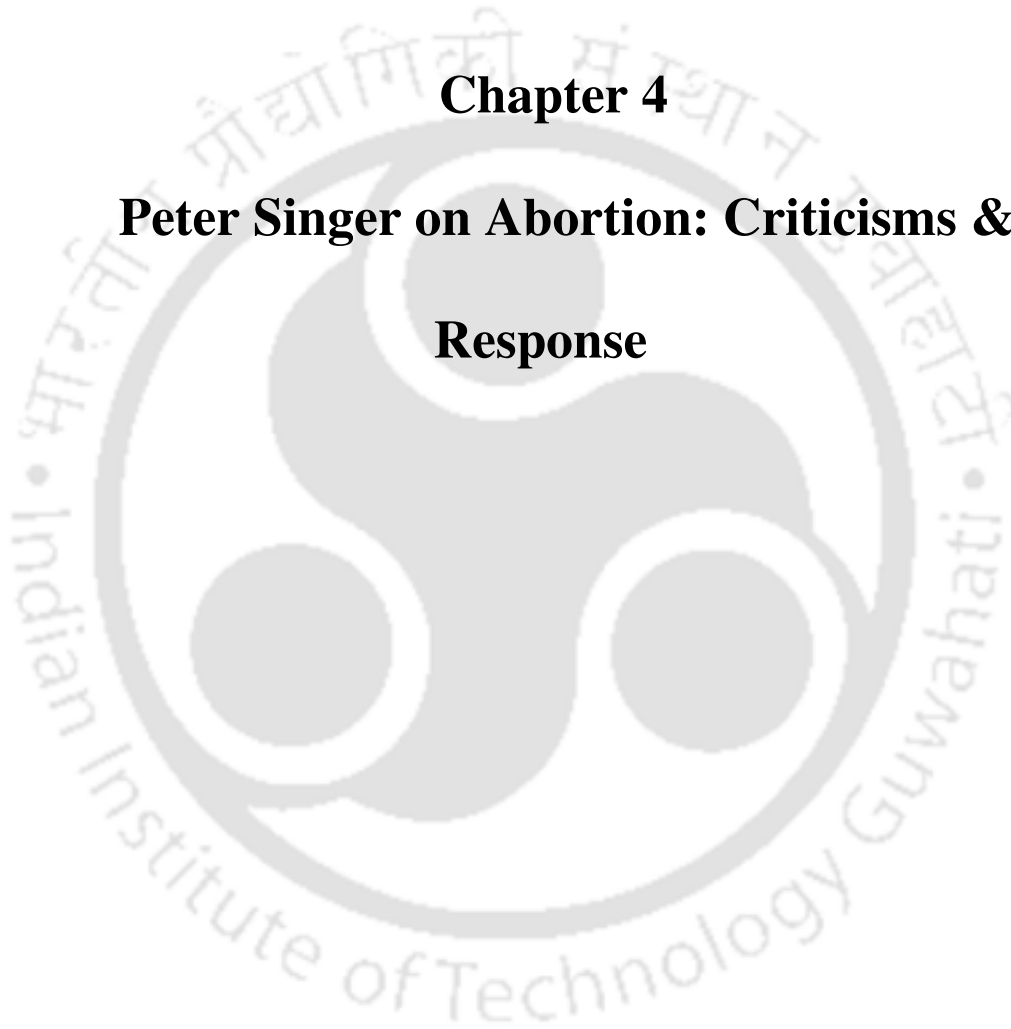
He is trying to persuade people that animals, qua sentient beings, have an important interest, namely, the interest in not suffering. Why Oderberg thinks that this downgrades human beings is puzzling. Does he conceive of rights-possession as a zero sum game, such that, by adding a right to animals, one must subtract a right from humans? Singer is a tireless defender of all rights, including those possessed by human beings. What Singer has said is that the mere fact of humanity (a biological category) is morally irrelevant—in the same way that race and sex are morally irrelevant. He has never said, or implied, that humans and animals have identical interests or rights. Recognizing an animal’s right not to be made to suffer no more downgrades humans than recognizing a black person’s right not to be enslaved downgrades whites. (Jackson, 2008)

In spite of severe criticisms Singer’s contribution to the discussion of animal welfare and rights is undoubtedly remarkable. But, still, the criticisms are also challenging. The criticisms that talk about the insufficiency of utilitarianism to promote animal welfare by defending for animal rights do criticize Singer’s position and his arguments. Similarly, thinkers who argue against animal rights do criticize arguments of Singer that tries to uphold animal rights. Both these criticisms centre on Singer’s concern for animal welfare. But, more important issue is the criticisms and charges that are levelled against Singer that

questions his intentions and motives to try to defend animal rights. The reason is Singer, while he tries to defend animal rights on the one side; on the other side, he comes up with some issues in morality that goes against the traditional and intuitive types of morality. The charges levelled against Singer that he is biased and questions his intentions are because of the reason that Singer often compares humans with animals. Singer often tries to argue against animal killing or experimentation by comparing such acts being performed on infants. He tries to make this comparison to show that infants and animals are at the same level of cognitive sophistication; except that one is human and the other is not. The reason why Singer compares animals with humans and how he can equate some animals' species with some human beings depends on his concept of person. By taking the concept of person, he again goes against the traditional ethical conception with respect to abortion, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Peter Singer on Abortion: Criticisms & Response



In this chapter, Peter Singer's views on abortion will be discussed. Singer contemplates on the issue of abortion from the concept of 'person'. His moral stand on the issue of foetus-killing is justified by understanding whether the foetus is a person or not. In this chapter there is an attempt to give a detailed study on the ethical issue concerning about abortion.

The New World Encyclopaedia defines abortion as,

The removal or expulsion of an embryo or foetus from the uterus, resulting in or caused by its death, when artificially induced by chemical, surgical, or other means. When a foetus is expelled from the womb spontaneously it is called a miscarriage or 'spontaneous abortion'. (Abortion, 2010)

There are two types of Abortion: (a) spontaneous abortion and (b) induced abortion. Spontaneous abortion is naturally caused, while induced abortion is the result of human action. The induced abortion again subdivided to therapeutic abortion and elective abortion. (Abortion, 2010) Therapeutic abortion is the process of removing the foetus for any medical reasons. Therapeutic abortion is performed if there are convincing reasons to end the pregnancy. This kind of abortion is performed because of medical reasons like to save the life of the woman, or to preserve the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or because of prenatal testing that has shown that foetus will be born with severe disorder. The ethical issue with respect to abortion is often discussed in the realms of elective abortion. Elective abortion can be understood as doing away with one's foetus for any reason other than the medical one.

Singer explicitly justifies elective abortion in certain cases. In order to understand how Singer justifies abortion in all circumstances, it is essential to take a note of Singer's concept of persons and non-persons. For Singer, the concept of person and non-persons occupies a prominent place in his ethics. According to Singer, persons are those who have reached a certain level of cognitive sophistication. Persons are self-aware and self-motivated and they recognize themselves as beings who continue over a period of time. Non-persons are those humans and non-humans who are sentient but whose mental capacities are limited to the here and now. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) According to Singer, the preference of person overrides the interests of non-persons as persons are future oriented. In the issues of abortion, the preference of parents as a person is taken into account. In Singer's ethics, fetuses are not persons as because they are not self-conscious and future-oriented. Singer, thus tries to justify abortion on the basis that fetus are not persons. Traditionally, the central argument against abortion is:

It is wrong to kill an innocent human being – premise (1)

A human foetus is an innocent human being – premise (2)

Therefore it is wrong to kill a human foetus – conclusion.

(Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993)

Generally, the defenders of abortion deny the second premise of this argument. The second premise is concerned with the dispute about whether the foetus is a human being or not. In other words, when a human life begins is the central issue here. While Singer is also concerned with that, Singer's argument for abortion also concentrates on the first premise. For Singer, there is nothing wrong to kill an innocent human being. Singer opines that in

the context of abortion, it need not be taken as unethical if it involves killing an innocent human being, that is, foetus. In the context of abortion Singer argues that as the foetus is not a person, there is nothing wrong in killing it. Thus, Singer tries to reject the first premise that it is wrong to kill an innocent human being. According to Singer a foetus is not a person at all. For him, one should consider the foetus for what it is – the actual characteristics it possesses and the value of its life. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) In the second premise the term ‘human’ may stand for two meanings- membership of the species Homo sapiens, and being a person, in the sense of a rational or self-conscious being. Singer argues,

If ‘human’ is taken as equivalent to ‘person’, the second premise of the above argument which asserts that foetus is a human being, is clearly false; for one cannot plausibly argue that a foetus is either rational or self-conscious. If, on the other hand, ‘human’ is taken to mean no more than member of the species Homo sapiens, then it needs to be shown why mere membership of a given biological species should be a sufficient basis for a right to live. Rather, the defender of abortion may wish to argue, we should look at the foetus for what it is-the actual characteristics it possesses-and value its life accordingly. (Singer, Abortion, 1995, p. 3)

Bernard Williams frames a similar argument to explicate Singer’s position. Williams points out the following argument,

*Every human being has a right to life
A human embryo is a human being
Therefore the human embryo has a right to life. (Williams B. , 2009, p. 86)*

Williams remarks that generally the advocates of abortion deny the second premise whereas Singer rejects the first premise. Bernard Williams writes,

He (Singer) thinks that the first is correct only if 'human being' is taken to mean 'person', but in that sense the second premises is false, because the embryo is not yet a person. There is a sense in which the second premise is true (the embryo belongs to the species) but in that sense of 'human being' it is not true that every human being has a right to live. I mention this because it distinguishes Singer from those, such as most moderate pro-choice campaigners, who accept, obviously enough, that the embryo is human in the sense that it is a human embryo, but do not accept that it is yet a human being, any more than a bovine embryo is a cow. (Williams B. , 2009, p. 86)

As Singer considers no foetus as person, it is not an unethical act if a person opts for abortion. According to Singer, the ethical implication of the killing the foetus arises when the foetus gets the capability to feel pain. In this regard Singer says,

Since no foetus is a person, no foetus has the same claim to life as a person. We have yet to consider at what point the foetus is likely to become capable of feeling pain. For now it will be enough to say that until that capacity exists, an abortion terminates an existence that is of no 'intrinsic' value at all. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 151)

In the above case, one can see Singer denying any inherent value for the foetus. For him, extending his mouse and stone example, a foetus is as good as a stone. So, there is nothing harm in destroying a foetus as it is neither a person nor a sentient being like mouse. Since there is no moral worthiness of the early foetus, Singer subscribes to abortion both for medical as well as non medical reasons that includes all sorts of reasons from even

personal grounds. He justifies abortion not only for the risk of mother's life, but also for the pleasure or the interests of the parents.

There are four stages in the development of a fertilized egg to being a child and these stages are - birth, viability, quickening and the onset of consciousness. For stage one, that is, 'birth', Singer says, "The location of a being—inside or outside the womb—should not make that much difference to the wrongness of killing it." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 139) The second stage viability is marked to the point at which a human life properly begins. According to Peter Singer objection to making viability the cut off point is that viability is not an unchanging and unalterable stage of pregnancy. The third stage quickening is the line when the mother first feels the foetus move. But Singer argues, "The capacity for physical movement—or the lack of it—has nothing to do with the seriousness of one's claim for continued life." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 141) Consciousness can be regarded as the dividing line between foetus life and human life. Looking upon the fourth stage consciousness, Keith Crome points out Singer's view as,

Singer notes that neither opponents nor supporters of the right to abortion have made much appeal to consciousness. This, he argues, is because those who oppose abortion 'really want to uphold the right to life of the human being from conception, irrespective of whether it is conscious or not' (PE 142), whilst those who favour abortion, recognize it as a risky strategy, since evidence points to the existence of consciousness as early as the seventh week after conception and a similarly early date for the capacity to feel pain. (Crome, 2008)

Singer argues, “Opponents of abortion really want to uphold the right to life of the human being from conception, irrespective of whether it is conscious or not...” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 142)

Singer does accept abortion, particularly without any trouble the early abortion. The reason is that Singer does not consider them as sentient beings at all. For Singer, as long as the foetus do not have sentience, then it is not unethical to go for abortion. Singer tries to give a dividing line for the protection of foetus. Singer says that after 18 weeks of gestation the foetus needs protection from harm, at this stage foetuses are capable of feeling suffering, but though not self-conscious. But before these 18 weeks of gestation, Singer says, “... there is no good basis for believing that the foetus needs protection from harmful research, because the foetus cannot be harmed.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 165)

For Singer there is nothing wrong to kill an innocent human being. Singer argues that the right to life of a being goes with the being’s capacity to hold that preferences or not. A capacity to experience the sensation of suffering or satisfaction is a requirement to having any preference at all. Foetus at least up to around eighteen weeks, mentions Singer, has no capacity to suffer or feel satisfaction. Therefore, it is not possible for such a foetus to hold any preference at all. Therefore, the foetuses are not person and there is nothing wrong in killing them for the satisfaction of another individual. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993)

Once the foetus is developed, and could be able to feel pain, then, according to Singer that foetus needs to be taken into consideration. One's action has a moral implication with respect to that foetus as it can feel the pain. In such types of cases, for medical reasons, Singer justifies abortion maintaining the position that the life of the mother need not be compromised for the life of the foetus. In the late-term abortion, the foetuses are to some extent conscious. Singer again says, "Afterwards, when the foetus may be conscious, though not self conscious, abortion should not be taken lightly (if a woman ever does take abortion lightly). But a woman's serious interests would normally override the rudimentary interests even of a conscious foetus." (Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 1993, p. 151)

Singer is also concerned about the suffering of the foetus in the process of late term abortion. Singer comments that if there are grounds for thinking that a method of abortion causes the foetus to suffer, that method should be avoided. He says, "We should be concerned about the capacity of foetuses to suffer pain in late term abortions. On the rare occasions when such abortions are necessary, they should be performed in a way that minimises the possibility of suffering." (Singer, *Abortion, The Dividing Line*, 2007)

Thus Singer maintains that while early foetus abortion is acceptable, one cannot take the same stance for late foetus abortion. Singer accepts late foetus abortions for medical reasons and also wants to ensure the foetus has the least minimal suffering possible, while its life is taken away. Till this point Singer explicitly and directly maintains his standpoint with respect to early and late foetus abortion. But, in his *Practical Ethics*, in the line immediately following advocating late foetus abortion for medical reasons, Singer

mentions, “Indeed, even an abortion late in pregnancy for the most trivial reasons is hard to condemn unless we also condemn the slaughter of far more developed forms of life for the taste of their flesh.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 151)

In these cases, Singer’s arguments take an indirect stance trying to mention that there is nothing immoral in this case of late foetus abortion for trivial reasons as long as one doesn’t consider the other case (killing of animal) as immoral. According to Peter Singer, the main reason for arguing against abortion is the bias towards our own species - Homo sapiens. Singer says, “those who protest against abortion but dine regularly on the bodies of chickens, pigs and calves, show only a biased concern for the lives of members of our own species.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 151) For Peter Singer regarding their actuality there is no difference between the value of foetus in any stage of pregnancy and the value of calf, pig, etc.

For on any fair comparison of morally relevant characteristics, like rationality, self-consciousness, awareness, autonomy, pleasure and pain and so on, the calf, the pig and the much derided chicken come out well ahead of the foetus at any stage of pregnancy ---while if we make the comparison with a foetus of less than three months, a fish would show more signs of consciousness. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 151)

Singer goes further from the early and late foetus abortions to talk about infants and mentally challenged humans as well, to the extent of justifying infanticide in certain cases. Regarding the value of a foetus or a newborn child, Peter Singer argues that since a week old baby is not rational and self-conscious therefore it cannot be considered unethical if

killing that baby for certain reasons. Singer says there is no wrong in killing newborn baby because it is not an autonomous being that is capable of making a choice. Singer says,

A week old baby is not a rational and self-conscious being, and there are many non-human animals whose rationality, self-consciousness, awareness, capacity to feel, and so on, exceeds that of a human baby a week or a month old. If the foetus does not have the same claim to life as a person, it appears that the newborn baby does not either, and the life of a newborn baby is of less value to it than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee is to the non-human animal. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 169)

Singer's understanding of infanticide is primarily for medical reasons. Though Singer doesn't make much of distinction between the baby in the womb and the baby outside and when he makes a remark that 'late foetus abortion for trivial reasons is hard to condemn', it would be farfetched for one to construe that Singer might be talking of infanticide for any trivial reason.

Singer mentions some of the arguments against abortion and tries to counter it. Singer takes three prominent arguments against abortion. He mentions,

- 1. The opponents of abortion consider abortion as a murder. According to them, it is wrong to kill an innocent human being.*
- 2. The opponents of abortion respond that foetus is made on the image of God. So religion is a force against religion.*
- 3. The foetus has the potential to become a person.*

(Singer, Abortion, The Dividing Line, 2007)

Singer all throughout maintains that there is nothing wrong in killing an innocent human being. According to him, except for one's bias towards human being, there is no other consideration that makes killing of innocent human beings (early foetus in the context of abortion) as an unethical act. Considering the second argument, Singer argues there is no evidence for this religious claim. Singer points out that some challengers of abortion give arguments that the foetus, unlike the animals like dog or chimpanzee is made in the image of God, or has an immortal soul. Thus those and similar arguments take a religious flavour. Though that religious perspective is different from the secular or non-religious perspective, yet, it cannot be taken as the criterion to judge if abortion is right or wrong given the case that people do live in a multicultural setup. Singer says in this regard, "... in a society in which we keep the state and religion separate, we should not use them as a basis for the criminal law, which applies to people with different religious beliefs, or to those with none at all." (Singer, Abortion, The Dividing Line, 2007)

Singer thus goes against the religious belief that humans are created in the image of God and therefore they are considered superior to other animal beings. As this is a matter of belief, it can be confined to one's religious perception and to make a law on the basis of that, for Singer, could not be a proper justification in a secular state. However, this poses an important problem as not all states are secular states.

Singer argues against the third argument that mere potentiality should determine a being's right to live. Singer maintains that though the early foetus is of the human species, but, it is not a full-grown human being and it is not a person. Hence at the position of

foetus, it cannot experience pain or suffering and it is no better than a stone. But, one can make a difference between stone and the foetus on the basis that one has the capacity to be as a person, whereas the other cannot. The foetus can be a potential person and potential human being. John Thomas Noonan puts forward an argument against abortion on the basis of potentiality. He says,

If a foetus is destroyed, one destroys a being already possessed of the genetic code, organs and sensitivity to pain, and one which had an eighty percent chance of developing further into a baby outside the womb who, in time, would reason...once conceived, the being was recognized as man because he has man's potential.
(Noonan, 1970)

Against this view Singer argues thus,

It is of course true that the potential rationality, self-consciousness and so on of a fatal Homo sapiens surpasses that of a cow or pig; but it does not follow that the foetus has a stronger claim to life. There is no rule that says that a potential X has the same value as an X, or has all the rights of an X. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 153)

Continuing further, in the similar lines, Singer argues by taking help from scientific perspective as well. He argues that scientist has proved that it is possible to clone an animal. This indicates that cloning is possible in the case of human beings as well. Singer argues that this fact indicates that billions of human cells have the potentiality to become an actual person. But no one have the obligation to save all the cells for becoming actual human being. (Singer, Abortion, The Dividing Line, 2007)

Peter Singer also has given arguments for abortion from the point of view of population. He remarks the fact that the world already has more than six billion people and it will be increased by nine billion by 2050. The higher the population has a direct effect on the earth's environment. From the consequentialists standpoint, Singer questions if we should want every potential person to become an actual person. (Singer, Abortion, The Dividing Line, 2007)

Singer targets the pro-life proponents, that is, those people who argue for protecting the life of foetus and thereby argue against abortion. Singer remarks that those pro-life campaigners are essentially pro-human life. Singer remarks that those pro-life campaigners are in favour of protecting the human beings but they support to kill the non-human animals for their meal. Singer says that it should be better to name such movement as 'pro human life'. Singer even termed the movement in a narrower sense because the movement is not killing human in war in capital punishment. He argues that it should be better to term the movement as 'Pro-innocent-human-life'. Further Again Singer says that even the movement does not do anything to save the death of children from malnutrition or preventable disease in proper regions of the world. Singer argues that still pro-life movement is thought of as combating abortion in much more convinced and effective way to save the lives of innocent human beings. (Singer, Rethinking Life and Death, 1994)

The ethical issue of abortion or the problem of abortion is closely connected with the concept of person. The rightness or wrongness of abortion is closely associated with whether a human being is person or not. As a matter of fact, Singer's whole emphasis on

the moral deliberation of abortion is with the question of whether the foetus is a sentient being and whether it is a person or not. There are a few thinkers who support Singer's position on abortion and some others who go even beyond Singer's position with respect to abortion.

Michael Tooley (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972) in the similar lines of Singer argues that abortion is justified because foetus has no right to life. For Michael Tooley, only person has a right to live. Tooley writes, "I shall treat the concept of a person as a purely moral concept, free of all descriptive content. Specifically, in my usage the sentence 'X is a person' will be synonymous with the sentence 'X has a (serious) moral right to live.'" (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972, p. 40) According to Michael Tooley, person has right to live while non-persons have no right to live. He illustrates the case of person's and non-person's standing with respect to the right to life thus,

Given the choice between being killed and being tortured for an hour, most adult humans would surely choose the latter. So it seems plausible to say it is worse to kill an adult human being than it is to torture him for an hour. In contrast, it seems to me that while it is not seriously wrong to kill a newborn kitten, it is wrong to torture one for an hour. This suggests that newborn kittens may have a right not to be tortured without having a serious right to live. (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972, p. 40)

In her article *Abortion* (Warren M. A., 1994) Mary Anne Warren is concerned with examining three different lines of arguments for abortion:

- 1.that abortion should be permitted, because the prohibition of abortion leads to highly undesirable consequences
- 2.that women have a moral right to choose abortion
- 3.that fetuses are not yet persons and thus do not yet have a substantial right to life.(Warren M. A., 1994, p. 303)

Singer had a similar view like Marry Anne Warren. Warren discusses the sentience criterion of abortion and also justifies late term abortion. In her article *On the Moral and legal status of Abortion*, she had mentioned some characteristics of personhood that includes 'sentience, emotionality, reason, the capacity to communicate, self-awareness and moral agency. (Warren M. A., 2009) She claims that as the foetus do not possess these qualities it cannot claim to have personhood.

According to M.A.Warren, since fetuses do not have these qualities, so abortion is not ethically wrong. She criticised John T. Noonan (Warren M. A., 2009) for his equation of humanity with personism. Noonan argued and concluded that abortion is morally wrong, except in some cases like saving the mother's life in situations where both the mother and the foetus cannot be saved.Noonan argues that foetus is a human being from the time of conception and it had a destiny to decide for themselves. He argues that on the basis of genetic code we can regard foetus as a human being. Warren has criticised Noonan by remarking that it is not true that whatever is hereditarily human is also morally human or person. Noonan wrote: "...at conception the new being receives the genetic code.It is this genetic information,which determines his characteristics,which is biological carrier of the possibility of human wisdom,which makes him a self-evolving being.A being with a human genetic code is man." (Noonan, 1970)

But, for Marry Anne Warren it is not the case that because of sentience criterion late term abortion cannot be justified. While Singer's position is ambiguous with respect to late foetus abortion, Warren argues that all sentient beings do not have the equal right to life. She argues thus,

The sentience criterion lends support to the common belief that late abortion is more difficult to justify than early abortion....While the sentience criterion implies that late abortion is more difficult to justify than early abortion, it does not imply that late abortion is as difficult to justify as homicide.The principle of respect for the interests of sentient beings does not imply that all sentient beings have an equal right to life. (Warren M. A., 1994, p. 309)

Warren says that extending of equal moral status to fetuses threatens women's most basic rights. But women are already person, whereas fetuses are not person. Warren concludes, "They should not be treated as something less when they happen to be pregnant. That is why abortion should not be prohibited." (Warren M. A., 1994, p. 313)

Jane English understands that concept of person has different characteristics for different thinkers. According to her, the concept of person is not so simple and that is why it is not possible to answer whether a foetus is person or not and thus the concept of person is not sufficient for receiving the solution to the controversy of abortion. Jane English does not subscribe to the view that abortion is justified in all circumstances. She condemned the late term abortion. She writes,

...application of our concept of a person will not suffice to settle the abortion issue. After all, the biological development of a human being is gradual...Whether a foetus is a person or not, abortion is justifiable early in pregnancy to avoid modest harms and seldom justifiable late in pregnancy except to avoid significant injury or death. (English, 1975, p. 160)

Keith Crome (Crome, 2008) has criticized Peter Singer's concept of abortion along with a description of Singer's concept of abortion. For him Singer's argument for abortion is not justified. This is because Singer's position is too rational and abstract. It lacks a concrete appreciation of ethical action. According to Keith Crome, it can be claimed that in these instance potentiality is important not for the rights that it endows the foetus with, but because killing a foetus deprives the world of future rational and self - conscious being. For Crome, abortion is a selfish action. He writes that Singer's argument is not acceptable because of the extreme rationality of Singer's position. He writes Singer's position is not acceptable not because that his view is irrational or self - contradictory or incoherent. Crome argues that there should be limit of rationality in relation to the morality.

Crome is not finding problem with Singer's argument, rather he finds problem with Singer's attempt to using argument for issues of morality particularly with respect to abortion. Crome's contention that there should be a limit to rationality in relation to morality is an important point of discussion that needs considerable elaboration. However, Singer's position that ethical action needs to be borne out of proper reason may go against Crome's understanding of morality.

In favour of wrongness of killing, Don Marquis has given the future of value account. According to Marquis, killing is wrong because it deprives future of value of individual. (Marquis, Why Abortion is Immoral, 1989) Marquis differentiates his implications from Tooley-Singer theory. For Marquis, abortion is wrong because of the foetus' future value. Marquis writes,

We were all foetuses once. The valuable features of those foetuses are nothing more than those aspects of our past and future lives that are now, will be (Or would be), and were valued by us. If it is wrong to kill us because we have futures of value and killing us would deprive us of our futures of value, then it would have been wrong to have aborted us, for the foetuses we once were had futures (very much) like ours. Those futures consist of our own future and past lives. Therefore abortion is wrong. Infanticide is wrong for the same reason. (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009, p. 146)

Marquis differentiates his future value account with sanctity of life view and Singer's desire view. Marquis has given arguments against abortion on the basis of future of value account. Marquis has given the justification against abortion on the basis of potentiality view or the future of value. He says,

The future of value theory bases the wrongness of killing on some property an individual will have, or would have, not ultimately on a property she actually has now...The wrongness of killing foetuses resides in their potentiality because the wrongness of killing YOU resides in your potentiality. (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009, p. 147)

Peter Singer denies potentiality of beings. He bases his ethical concept on actuality of beings. He has given a quality of life view. Laing rejected Singer's view because once

we all were potential being. Singer has equated snail and infants in their actuality. Laing claimed that in their actuality snail and infants are equal but in their potentiality they are different.

For Singer, one can abort a foetus for many a reason. Such an action may not deprive the world a future rational and self-conscious being, but that only postpones such an existence. Singer gives view against future of value theory. Singer points out that the claim that rational and self - conscious beings are intrinsically valuable does not entail that all abortion deprive the world of rational and self-conscious being. Singer has given an example where the abortion is not the deprivation of self-conscious and rational being. Singer writes that a woman who is two months pregnant, but who has no children at present, if she wants to abort her child to join a mountain climbing expedition should that be considered immoral? The opponents of abortion may say it as morally wrong decision because there is no case of health of the mother; rather, the only concern is the enjoyment of the mother for mountain climbing. Singer differs with the opponents view to maintain that it need not be considered unethical. In this case the pregnancy is unwanted only because it is awkwardly timed. Singer says, "If abortion is wrong only because it deprives the world of a future person, this abortion is not wrong; it does no more than delay the entry of a person into the world." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 154) Going further in his argument against future of value account, Singer says future of value argument implies, "Not only that abortion is wrong, but that abstaining from sex that will probably result in conception is normally wrong, because both the abortion and the abstention from sex will cause one fewer valuable life to be lived." (Singer, Reply to Don Marquis, 2009, p. 158)

Harry J.Gensler (Gensler, 2009) has given a critical discussion on Singer's ethical issues that related to human life. Singer's position on abortion does not go well with theological position. Any morality based on religion, do not subscribe for abortion for any trivial reason. In that sense, Singer's position is criticized from a theological perspective. In spite of many arguments from Singer against the theological position, still, there are thinkers who opine that Singer's position may not be justified. Harry J.Gensler says,

Any member of a rational species (including Homo sapiens) has a higher dignity than that of animals- even if the individual is very young, or is physically or mentally disabled. It is seriously wrong to kill an innocent human being. Every human life deserves such respect, because We are all made in God's image and likeness, have a special role in creation and are destined to eternal life with God. (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life : A Critique, 2009, p. 184)

It seems that Gensler is favouring speciesism and also the sanctity of life view. Gensler gives some reasons as why a human being deserves such respect. Perhaps Gensler rejects abortion and infanticide because of his ethical position:

- 1. All humans are members of a rational species;*
- 2. it maximizes good results if, instead of arbitrarily drawing lines, we respect all human life;*
- 3. we are all made in God's image and likeness, have a special role in creation and are destined to eternal life with God.* (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life : A Critique, 2009, p. 184)

In most of his writings Singer criticizes speciesism and sanctity of life view. In his response to Gensler Singer says,

No species is either rational or irrational- such capacities adhere to individuals, not species. What Gensler means is that if normal mature members of a species are rational, then any member of that species has a higher dignity than any member of another species, normal mature members of which are not rational .But why should belonging to such a species give an individual higher dignity ,if the individual is not rational itself ? (Singer, Reply to Harry J.Gensler, 2009, p. 193)

One of the main themes of showing Singer's inconsistency is his position related to animal rights vis-à-vis abortion and disabled infanticides. Jacqueline A Laing (Laing, 1997) talks about Singer's inconsistency in her article *Innocence and Consequentialism: Inconsistency, Equivocation and Contradiction in the Philosophy of Peter Singer*, she makes a scathing attack on Singer's theoretical concepts and the consequences of his theoretical notions.

More importantly, she tries to point out the inconsistencies that are rampant in Singer's work, particularly with respect to his work on *Practical Ethics*. She says, "What is of concern here is first, whether Singer has been misinterpreted and secondly, whether his arguments are self-contradictory, equivocal or inconsistent precisely where rationality is crucial." (Laing, 1997)

Jacqueline has said that Peter Singer commits the inconsistency because of his bias towards non-human animals. Helene Landemore, in a similar fashion, writes that the major

inconsistency of Singer's ethical position is his loyalty to the equal rights for animals in support of their sentience but the different rights for human life in accordance with their mental complexity. Landemore remarks, "The compatibility of those two principles is not self evident." (Landemore, 2006, p. 67) A similar accusation was also made by Luc Ferry (2000) when he is talking about levelling up and levelling down of animals and humans respectively. Ferry says, "It is a levelling up of animals which are brought into the moral world of humans or rather a levelling down of newborn children, patient in a deep coma, the severely handicapped." (Dardenne, 2009)

But, it is to be discussed what made them, Laing for example, to come up with a position saying that Singer is biased towards non-human animals. She claims that Singer is using the concept of sentience in the case of animal liberation, whereas he is not taking that concept when he discusses issues related to abortion, or action towards the disabled. Apparently, Singer gives arguments for animal liberation on the basis of experiencing suffering and of abortion on the basis of person concept. In his Practical Ethics, he says, "If a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 57)

Singer tries to argue for animal rights on the basis of the concept of sentience. In the case of human centred issues like abortion and disabled, he apparently uses person concept. By the above conception of person, Singer tried to justify abortion, killing of 'disabled' human beings. Singer says, "Since no foetus is a person, no foetus has the same claim to life as a person.....an abortion terminates an existence that is of no 'intrinsic'

value at all.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 151) Pointing out Singer’s concept of the value of disabled infant, Laing writes, “...Singer holds that infants per se are not persons and so lack the features that make them valuable and worthy of protection.” (Laing, 1997)

This makes her to claim that Singer is inconsistent. The inconsistency lies with Singer in using sentience argument for animals and person argument for humans. She claims if Singer uses ‘sentientism’ for animal liberation thereby trying to protect animals from the human killings, why doesn’t he adopt the same standard for issues of abortion or treatment of disabled infants or people. Rather, in the case of abortion and like, he uses ‘personism’ as the argument for acknowledging and accepting abortion. She says, “...If we should confine ourselves to arguments on the basis of sentience in the case of non- human interests, why is the same not true of human interests? Why do we not simply confine ourselves to arguments from sentience in the human context?” (Laing, 1997)

But contrary to Laing’s claims, Singer uses personism in discussion related to animal ethics and similarly, he uses sentientism in issues related to human affairs. By pointing out the passages from Singer that tries to talk of personism and sentientism with respect to animal and human ethics respectively, it can be shown that Laing’s claim regarding Singer’s inconsistency may not be apt. And their corollary conclusion that Singer is biased towards animals and Singer is levelling down the humans also needs to be relooked.

If according to Laing's claims, Singer is talking of sentientism with respect to animals, he should never have subscribed for animal killings, for whatever the reason may be. But, Singer did not make such a claim. Singer, says, that though we need to take care of animal protection because they can also feel the suffering, but, there can be cases, where that concern can be overridden. Overriding the concern of the animals (non-persons), according to Singer can be done by the persons. So, Laing's contention that Singer is trying to argue for animal liberation from sentience is not fully correct, because in the case of animal issues as well, Singer uses the concept of person to justify some acts of human beings to kill animals. Had Singer, according to Laing's claims, uses only sentience as the arguments for animal liberation; he could never justify some acts of animal killing. But, Singer justifies some acts of animal killing. Singer explicitly justifies animal killings at least on two counts-animal killing done for survival and animal killing for experimentations.

Regarding the killing of animals for survival, Singer says, "Eskimos living in an environment where they must kill animals for food or starve might be justified in claiming that their interest in surviving overrides that of the animals they kill." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 62) Again he says, "In any case, at the level of practical moral principles, it would be better to reject altogether the killing of animals for food, unless one must do so to survive." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 134) Hence to talk of Singer's argument for animal protection from sentientism is not universally and absolutely true. Singer accepts in some cases, the killing of animals as well. In the case of animal killing for food, Singer accepts non vegetarianism out of necessity.

Similarly, in the case of animal killing for scientific experiments as well, Singer uses the personism argument. Singer tries to reduce the killing of animal experimentation, but, definitely not totally avoiding animal experimentation. He says,

...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 equal consideration of interests that they should do so. This, at any rate, is the answer a utilitarian must give. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 62)

This passage suggests that Singer does not mind experiments on animals if it is going to be for greater and better consequences for a larger number of persons. And being a utilitarian himself, Singer would not be giving absolute right to animals on the basis of sentientism. The rights of the animals on the basis of sentientism can be overridden by essential concerns of the persons. He further remarks, “Those who believe in absolute right might hold that it is always wrong to sacrifice one being, whether human or animal, for the benefit of another. In that case the experiment should not be carried out whatever the consequences.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 67) So, it clearly suggests that personism is employed by Singer in case of animal issues as well. Hence, Laing’s claim that Singer uses sentientism in case of animal issues is partly right and not wholly right. He uses personism concept as well to justify some acts of animal killing. On the same line, Singer uses sentientism and not just personism concept in human centred ethical issues.

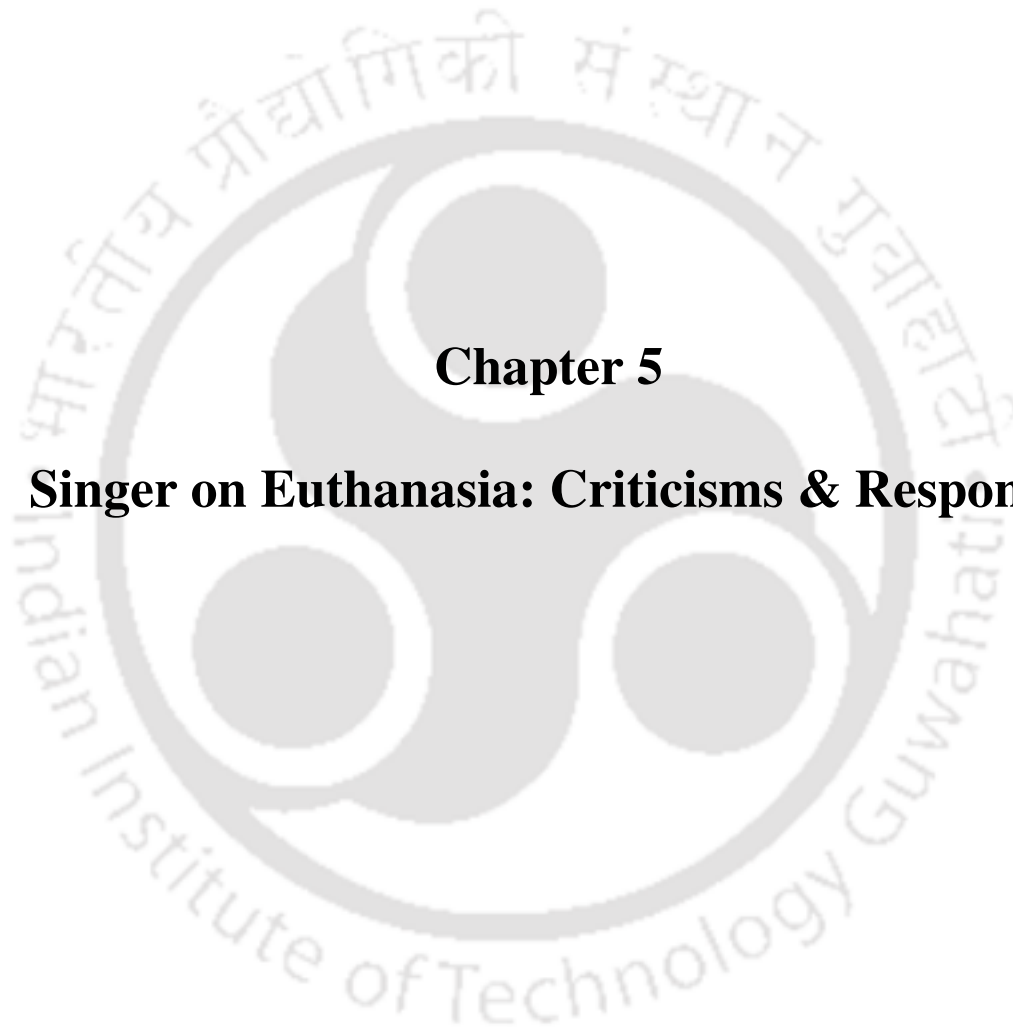
As one can make out from the passage that Singer in a sense admits that “abortion late in pregnancy for the most trivial reasons is hard to condemn”, does not it mean that Singer accepts late foetus abortion? Does not it mean that he prefers the personism for the

most trivial reasons against the sentientism in case of human centred ethics? Does it not justify that Singer is levelling down humans to animals? Perhaps, these types of instances are where people like Laing and others start finding a position that Singer is preferring personism in human affairs as against sentientism in animals. But, if one sees the argument carefully, one can see that he doesn't want to take abortion lightly, unless a serious condition is there for the woman to go for abortion. Singer gives a contradictory viewpoint giving room for both sides of interpretations when he says, '(late foetus) abortion should not be taken lightly' and immediately after few lines when he says, 'abortion late in pregnancy for the most trivial reasons is hard to condemn'. The researcher takes a standpoint that Singer doesn't want to take abortion lightly suggesting that consideration for sentientism is evident there. Perhaps an answer to that issue might come from taking a hypothetical situation like if animal killing is stopped completely, then, what will be Singer's position on abortion? Jacqueline Laing, Luc Ferry and others have also claimed that Peter Singer commits the inconsistency because of his bias towards non-human animals and he tries to bring the humans down to the level of animals. In his practical ethics and other works as well, Singer often jumps from the argument of sentientism and personism to the argument of speciesism. This perhaps made them to claim that Singer is biased towards animals and tries to level down the humans to the level of animals. This issue will be discussed in the further chapters.

The idea of right to life according to Singer is associated with persons and her preferences. The way Singer tries to argue for abortion and some cases of infanticide can make one uneasy with Singer's ethics. It might be going against conventional or intuitive

ethics. For Singer the moral standing of abortion is based on whether the foetus is person or not. For Singer, a person with her preferences can override the non-persons. Thus, abortion is justified. Singer even mentions that a person with her preferences can override other persons' preferences even though the other persons outnumber the one individual person. Singer maintains this position of prioritizing the person's preferences over other persons' preferences and he applies this concept in the issue of euthanasia. It will be discussed in the next chapter.





Chapter 5

Singer on Euthanasia: Criticisms & Response

In this chapter Singer's views on euthanasia is discussed. Singer maintains his position on euthanasia primarily on the basis of the preferences of the person. In the case of abortion, Singer maintained that the preference of the actual person outweighs the interests of the potential persons, that is, foetus; whereas, in the issues related to euthanasia Singer maintains that the preference of the person outweighs the preference of the other persons too. In the subsequent passages, Singer's views on euthanasia are discussed along with his critics' view.

Euthanasia is mercy killing. The intentional killing by act or by omission of a dependent human being for removing his or her suffering is called as euthanasia. The word euthanasia is a Greek word and it means 'good death'. Helga Kuhse in her article 'Euthanasia' writes that there are two features of the acts of euthanasia: "1. Euthanasia involves the deliberate taking of a person's life. 2. That life is taken for the sake of that person who is suffering from an incurable or terminal disease." (Kuhse, Euthanasia, 1991, p. 294) Considering the definition of euthanasia Singer writes, "Euthanasia means, according to the dictionary, 'a gentle and easy death', but it is now used to refer to the killing of those who are incurably ill and in great pain or distress, for the sake of those killed, and in order to spare them further suffering or distress." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 175)

Y V Satyanarayana says,

An essential aspect of euthanasia is that it involves taking a human life, either one's own, or that of another. The person whose life is taken must be someone who is believed to be suffering from incurable disease, or injury from which recovery cannot be reasonably possible. Another important aspect of euthanasia is that the action is deliberate and intentional. Those who seek euthanasia do so because of unbearable pain. The basic intention of the doctor involved in cases of euthanasia is not to gain some personal benefit, but to relieve the patient from acute pain and suffering. (Satyanarayana, 2010, pp. 164-165)

As euthanasia invariably relates to an act of killing or letting a being die, it involves considerable moral and legal issues. Obviously the concept of euthanasia is closely connected with the feature of death. The concept of euthanasia is associated with the question what is the philosophical meaning of death? According to the classic account death was 'the permanent cessation of the flow of vital bodily fluids.' (Singer, Rethinking Life and Death, 1994, p. 20) The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy defines death as "the irreversible cessation of organic functioning and human death is the irreversible loss of personhood." (The Definition of Death, 2007) Human death is the irreversible cessation of the capacity for consciousness.

Death involves the loss of what is essential to our existence. The fourth edition of Black's law dictionary has given the following traditional definition of death, "The cessation of life; the ceasing to exist; defined by physicians as a total stoppage of the circulation of the blood, and a cessation of the animal and vital functions consequent thereupon, such as respiration, pulsation, etc." (Singer, Rethinking life and death, 1994, p. 21) But in modern definition of death, brain activity is an important aspect to consider. The

non-voluntary euthanasia is mainly depended on the concept of brain death. Brain death is defined as the irreversible loss of all functions of the brain.

Singer understands the morality of euthanasia on the basis of preference satisfaction. Euthanasia is classified into three types. These three different types of euthanasia are: voluntary euthanasia, non-voluntary euthanasia and involuntary euthanasia. Voluntary euthanasia is one where the person makes a preference or expresses her wish to die. Non-voluntary euthanasia refers to those cases where the persons who are euthanized made no request or gave no consent as they lack the ability to consent to death because they already lost their capacity to understand their continued existence. Involuntary euthanasia refers to those cases where the person who is killed made an expressed wish to live. Singer justifies both voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia, but he rejects involuntary euthanasia as it is akin to just killing a person. Singer considers voluntary euthanasia as it goes by the preference of the persons. According to Singer the voluntary euthanasia is “carried out at the request of the person killed.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 176)

Voluntary euthanasia occurs only when, to the best of medical knowledge, a person is suffering from an incurable and painful or extremely distressing condition. In these circumstances one cannot say that to choose to die quickly is obviously irrational. The strength of the case for voluntary euthanasia lies in this combination of respect for the preferences, or autonomy, of those who decide for euthanasia; and the clear rational basis of the decision itself. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 200)

Regarding non-voluntary euthanasia Singer writes,

If a human is not capable of understanding the choice between life and death, euthanasia would be neither voluntary nor involuntary, but non-voluntary. Those unable to give consent would include incurably ill or severely disabled infants, and people who through accident, illness, or old age have permanently lost the capacity to understand the issue involved, without having previously requested or rejected euthanasia in these circumstances. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 179)

Singer defines involuntary euthanasia as, “when the person killed is capable of consenting to her own death, but does not do so, either because she is not asked, or because she is asked and chooses to go on living.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 179)

In accordance with the method of carrying out euthanasia, two types can be seen-- active and passive euthanasia. Active euthanasia is the direct action by the physician to terminate the life of the patient, usually through the administration of a lethal injection. Passive euthanasia involves withdrawing or withholding life prolonging treatment. There are three necessary conditions for the occurrence of passive euthanasia. These are

- 1. There is a withdrawing or withholding of life prolonging treatment.*
- 2. The main purpose (or one of the main purpose) of this withdrawing or withholding is to bring about (or ‘hasten’) the patient’s death.*
- 3. The reason for ‘hastening’ death is that dying (or dying sooner rather than later) is in the patient’s best interest. (Garrard & Wilkinson, 2005, p. 65)*

Singer by using the concept of preferences of the persons tries to support euthanasia and takes a moral stand that supports and justifies mercy killing. Singer’s all ethical implications are targeting towards the removing of suffering of beings and Singer’s

notion of euthanasia is also not different from that. Singer maintains that euthanasia can be justified as it helps one to annihilate one's pain. In this case, the annihilation of oneself is the process of getting away from one's pain and Singer justifies such an act to be an ethical one. While, for Singer not only voluntary euthanasia is justified, but even non-voluntary euthanasia. For him, non-voluntary euthanasia is justifiable when if those killed lack the ability to consent to death because they already lost their capacity to understand their continued existence or nonexistence.

Singer argues against the different philosophical position that argues against killing. Singer enumerates four different arguments against euthanasia and gives counterargument for these four positions. Singer mentions,

- 1. The classical utilitarian claim that since self-conscious beings are capable of fearing their own death, killing them has worse effects on others.*
 - 2. The preference utilitarian calculation that counts the thwarting of the of the victim's desire to go on living as an important reason against killing.*
 - 3. A theory of rights according to which to have a right one must have the ability to desire that to which one has a right, so that to have a right to life one must be able to desire one's own continued existence.*
 - 4. Respect for the autonomous decisions of rational agents.*
- (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 194)

Though these reasons justify the wrongness of killing of person but, according to Singer these same reasons can be taken as grounds for justifying voluntary euthanasia. For the first point Singer says that there is no reason of fear about that kind of killing. He remarks, "That people are killed under these conditions would have no tendency to spread fear or

insecurity, since we have no cause to be fearful of being killed with our own genuine consent. If we do not wish to be killed, we simply do not consent.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 194)

Though this argument substantiates voluntary euthanasia, it will be difficult to take this Singer’s argument in the case of non-voluntary euthanasia as in non-voluntary euthanasia, a person do not have the capacity to consent. For the argument from preference utilitarianism to substantiate voluntary euthanasia, Singer says, “Just as preference utilitarianism must count a desire to go on living as a reason against killing, so it must count a desire to die as a reason for killing.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 195) To counter the argument from the rights perspective, Singer says, “...to say that I have a right to life is not to say that it would be wrong for my doctor to end my life, if she does so at my request. In making this request I waive my right to life.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 195) Singer extends J.S.Mill’s argument that individuals are, ultimately, the best judges and guardians of their own interests and thus justifies voluntary euthanasia. In preference utilitarianism, Singer argues, victim’s desire is to be taken into consideration.

Similarly to justify euthanasia from the autonomy of moral persons, Singer argues,

The principle of respect for autonomy tells us to allow rational agents to live their own lives according to their own autonomous decisions, free from coercion or interference; but if rational agents should autonomously choose to die, then respect for autonomy will lead us to assist them to do as they choose. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 195)

Though Singer gives arguments to substantiate his position of voluntary euthanasia, which he mentions is far easier to substantiate than the non-voluntary euthanasia, the central point in Singer's argument is the preference of the person. As a matter of fact, this is one of the reasons why Singer feels it is easy to vouch for voluntary euthanasia as against non-voluntary euthanasia. In case of non-voluntary euthanasia, according to Singer, the person ceases to be a person and she doesn't have the capacity to make a preference either for or against euthanasia.

In utilitarian perspective, voluntary euthanasia is not only justified for incurable physical illness but also for incurable mental illness. Singer has mentioned an example from Netherlands. In 1991 a psychiatrist named Dr Boudewijn Chabot assisted in dying to one 50 years old severely depressed woman. She was not suffering from any physical disease. The doctor argued that a lot of years of treatment had failed to remove her distress. But he was accused of because no other doctors examined her. (Singer, Rethinking Life and Death, 1994) The Netherland guidelines for voluntary euthanasia also accept the justification for the voluntary euthanasia for incurable mental suffering of a person. Edward Brongersma, an 86 year old person committed suicide with the help of a doctor. The doctor was accused of his action but the Dutch Ministry of Justice was not in favour of the appeal. Referring to this case Singer argues that from the utilitarian viewpoint there was nothing wrong in the doctor's action. Brongersma's preference to die is a valid preference. It cannot be compared with the preference that is born out of temporary mental illness, for instance, a person's preference to die because of failure in love. The desire to die of Brongersma is well-informed desire and his decision was correct because no one

was in a better position than him to decide whether his life is worth living or not. Brongersma life would not be improved as because he was 86 years old. (Singer, Voluntary Euthanasia:A utilitarian perspective, 2003)

Singer subscribes for both active and passive euthanasia. As a matter of fact, in certain cases he advocates active euthanasia over passive euthanasia. Singer opines there is no intrinsic difference between active and passive euthanasia. Singer says,

Passive ways of ending life result in a drawn-out death. They introduce irrelevant factors...into the selection of those who shall die. If we are able to admit that our objective is a swift and painless death we should not leave it up to chance to determine whether this objective is achieved. Having chosen death we should ensure that it comes in the best possible way. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 213)

For Singer as the result of killing and letting die have the same result so both cases are morally equivalent. Gensler says, “Singer’s consequentialist approach says that the two acts, which have the same result are morally equivalent.” (Gensler, Singer’s Unsanctity of Human Life:A Critique, 2009, p. 181) Similar position with respect to active and passive euthanasia is held by other thinkers as well. Stephen Orlando in his article *An argument for the legalisation of Active Euthanasia* maintains that the difference between “legalized passive euthanasia and illegal active euthanasia is illusory.” (Orlando, 2010, p. 15)

However, the distinction between active and passive euthanasia is maintained by others as former involves killing while the latter may not. In the book *Peter Singer under Fire* (Schaler J. , 2009), Harry A Gensler in his article *Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life: A Critique* comments on this issue of Singer. He says it is much clear in Singer's discussion of about the difference between killing and letting die. Most non consequentialist says that it is wrong to kill a defective infant but it is not wrong to let the child die. Though Singer may claim that there is no big difference between doing and omitting, but, there is indeed a difference of opinion regarding this as it also deals with ownership of the act. To give a legal angle in this issue, for example in India, in the recently followed Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug case, the court has emphatically claimed that voluntary active euthanasia is a crime, though there are issues associated with voluntary passive euthanasia. (Supreme Court's judgment on Aruna Shanbaug euthanasia petition, 2009)

However, the bigger question is how can one be sure the decision taken by that person is a rational decision? Can it be possible for a mentally and physically distressed person to take a rational decision on euthanasia particularly in voluntary euthanasia? For his or her severe illness a person may wish to die. Singer foresees some of the objections to his claims. He remarks thus,

Some opponents of the legalization of voluntary euthanasia might concede that all this follows, if we have a genuinely free and rational decision to die: but they add, we can never be sure that a request to be killed is the result of a free and rational decision. Will not the sick and elderly be pressured by their relatives to end their lives quickly? Will it not be possible to commit outright murder by pretending that

a person has requested euthanasia? And even if there is no pressure of falsification, can anyone who is ill, suffering pain, and very probably in a drugged and confused state of mind, make a rational decision about whether to live or die?
(Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 196)

Singer reposes an enormous faith on Doctors and psychiatrists to take care of the above mentioned issues. Singer mentions that these are not direct arguments against voluntary euthanasia, but, nevertheless, they are serious issues that arise in the implementation of voluntary euthanasia. Singer takes the help of Netherlands guidelines to ensure that the preference for voluntary euthanasia are in fact genuine. According to the guidelines, the preference of the person has to be verified by two independent doctors, the patient should be severely suffering from irreversible condition causing physical or mental suffering and there is no reasonable alternative for cure. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 196) The details guidelines of voluntary euthanasia of The Royal Dutch Medical Association in Netherlands are as follows:

- *It is carried out by a physician*
- *The patient has explicitly requested euthanasia in a manner that leaves no doubt of the patient's desire to die.*
- *The patient's decision is well-informed, free, and durable.*
- *The patient has an irreversible condition causing protracted physical or mental suffering that the patient finds unbearable.*
- *There is no reasonable alternative (reasonable from the patient's point of view) to alleviate the patient's suffering.*
- *The doctor has consulted another independent professional who agrees with his or her judgment.* (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 196)

There are serious issues in taking this position of Singer. How far the doctors can be able to predict the irreversibility of the disease? Or as by Netherlands guidelines, two doctors are sufficient enough to assess the patient's condition; how far these two doctors can be correct in assessing the irreversible conditions of the patient? How far they can be right in saying there is no medicine for certain diseases to cure in the near future? Singer takes the competency of the doctor issue and says that, even if that is the case, according to a utilitarian standpoint, one can still go for advocating voluntary euthanasia. He says, "Against a very small number of unnecessary deaths that might occur if euthanasia is legalized, we must place the very large amount of pain and distress that will be suffered if euthanasia is not legalized, by patients who really are terminally ill." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 197) In this Singer is not ruling out the possibility of unnecessary deaths caused by legalizing euthanasia. His point is the number of cases that benefit from legalizing euthanasia far outnumbers the number of deaths that happen wrongfully because of euthanasia. Only few countries like Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, have authorized euthanasia till today.

In orthodox view killing of a human being is wrong because human life is a gift of God. The sanctity of life doctrine goes against killing of human life. Contemporary philosophers like Jonathan Glover (Glover, 1977); James Rachels (Rachels, The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality , 1986) and Singer himself go against this orthodox view. They argued that membership of a given species, for example Homo sapiens, can not in itself determine the value of a being's life or wrongness of killing that being. It is the quality of life view that determines the rightness or wrongness of killing a being. Sentience

is the minimal characteristics of every being, that is, experiencing pleasure or pain. Glover also speaks about being's capacity for autonomy, for making his or her own decisions. Rachel focuses on the biographical life of a being rather than the biological life of a being. This view is similar to Singer's view of the being's ability to be aware of the past and a future. Singer quotes former US president Ronald Reagan's view,

Every legislator, every doctor, and every citizen needs to recognize that the real issue is whether to affirm or protect the sanctity of all human life or to embrace a social ethic where some human lives are valued and others are not. As a nation we must choose between the sanctity of life and the quality of life ethic. (Singer, Rethinking life and death, 1994, p. 106)

In his article *The sanctity of life* (Singer, The Sanctity of Life, 2005) Singer claims that by 2040 the traditional view of sanctity of human life will be collapsed. Singer refers to the Schiavo case⁴ to support his argument for euthanasia. Singer in his concept of euthanasia and abortion bases his view on quality of life. Like Singer, Don Marquis also subscribes to the view of quality of life and argues against the view of sanctity of life.

Don Marquis says that if one accepts sanctity of life view, then the consequences of holding that view is too difficult even for the sanctity of life proponents to hold. If one accepts the sanctity of life view, then one will have to preserve the life of newborns and

⁴ During 1998 to 2005 Terri Schiavo case was a great case involving prolonged life support. On February 25, 1990 Schiavo collapsed in her home in full cardiac arrest and she suffered from massive brain damage and this brain damage turned as coma and after that the diagnosis was changed to vegetative state. After 8 years treatment of her, on 1998 a legal struggle was started between Terri Schiavo's husband Michael Schiavo and her parents Robert and Mary Schindler. Michael Schiavo petitioned to remove her feeding tube while her parents were struggling to keep her alive. On February 25, 2005 A Pinellas County Judge ordered to remove Schiavo's feeding tube. There was a huge controversy on her case but the court upheld the previous decision to remove her feeding tube. On March 18, 2005 the feeding tube was disconnected. After that she died on March 31, 2005.

kids with inborn problems without ever trying to rectify them, even if it is possible from the humans' side. Marquis says,

These consequences are very implausible. Indeed, they are so implausible that, as Singer has pointed out, even many of those who affirm the sanctity of human life doctrine are unwillingly to accept them. Accordingly, the doctrine of the sanctity of human life is vulnerable to clear counterexamples. (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009, p. 134)

As Marquis pointed out, Singer argues that one should reject the sanctity of life because it rests on a biological characteristics but not on morally relevant characteristics. Singer argues that as one rejects sexism as it is dependent on biological characteristics, in line with the similar reason one should reject sanctity of life as it is dependent on biological characteristics.

What counts from a moral point of view are characteristics that we often regard as exemplifying being 'fully human'. These characteristics are mental characteristics that are typically associated with biological humanity. Not all individuals who are biologically human possess these mental characteristics, and, for all we know, not all individuals who possess these mental characteristics are biologically human. (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009, p. 135)

In support of quality of life view Singer has mentioned some cases. In his article (Singer, A Convenient Truth, 2007) he has pointed out that Ashley a 9 years old girl has never progressed beyond that of 3 month old. Singer's questions, "Why should dignity always go together with species membership, no matter what the characteristics of the individual may be?" (Singer, A Convenient Truth, 2007) In a similar vein, Singer cites the

case of a doctor who had disconnected the life sustaining medical treatment on the request of the patient to let him die. (Singer, The Right to Die, 2007)

Singer's understanding of euthanasia doesn't just confine to the elderly and aged people who are terminally ill with one or the other disease. Singer includes mentally challenged people, infants and others as well, who can be brought under the purview of euthanasia. Singer goes further from the early and late foetus abortions to talk about infants and mentally challenged humans as well. Singer by trying to argue that these infants are not persons, and hence there cannot be any wrong in killing them.

Singer mentions infanticide of disabled infant thus,

....the fact that a being is a human being, in the sense of a member of the species Homo sapiens, is not relevant to the wrongness of killing it; it is, rather characteristics like, rationality, autonomy, and self-consciousness that make a difference. Infants lack these characteristics. Killing them, therefore, cannot be equated with killing normal human beings, or any other self-conscious beings....No infants-disabled or not-has as strong a claim to life as beings capable of seeing themselves as distinct entities, existing over time. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 182)

As infant do not possess the quality of persons, every case of euthanasia with respect to infants has to be the case of non-voluntary euthanasia. A non-voluntary euthanasia is one where the being in question does not have the capacity to consent for euthanasia and hence, somebody else has to take the decision on behalf of the infant. Singer takes a dangerous position when he remarks about the killing of infants as an act of

euthanasia. He tries to clarify his position in this regard. Singer maintains that he doesn't advocate killing of challenged infants. Rather, he wants to maintain there is nothing wrong in killing, if the parent so desire. Singer takes into consideration the wishes of parents. Singer says that, "One important reason why it is normally a terrible thing to kill an infants is the effect the killing will have on its parents." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 182) Singer also writes, "Some parents want even the most gravely disabled infant to live as long as possible, and this desire would then be a reason against killing the infant." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 183) But Singer considers the possibility of the parents not wanting their child to live with suffering throughout. Singer ponders such types of situations when he deliberates upon non-voluntary euthanasia.

Once the parents do not want their infants to live, is there anything wrong in euthanizing the infant? Singer maintains that infants do not possess any right on their own for their continued existence. For that matter, even the normal infants do not have the right to live according to Singer. Realizing this Singer argues that the right to life alone does not come for discussion, rather the discussion on the possibility of future life of the normal and disable infant come into picture. He remarks, " The difference between killing disabled and normal infants lies not in any supposed right to life that the latter has and the former lacks, but in other considerations about killing ." (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 182)

Singer maintains that the right to life alone is not the issue. There are other considerations that may primarily include the quality of life that disabled infant may have in the future against the normal infant. Singer writes,

If the future life of the being killed would hold more negative elements than positive ones—more unhappiness than happiness, more frustration of preferences than satisfaction of them- the we have a reason for killing, rather than against killing. Needless to say, this is highly relevant to the question of euthanasia. (Singer, Voluntary Euthanasia: A utilitarian perspective, 2003, p. 529)

Singer also tries to point out that infanticide is not something new to human culture. He cites many a cultural practices that indulges in infanticide for varieties of reasons. Singer does not want to justify all such acts of infanticide. Rather, he mentions that to relook at the morality of action regarding infanticide. He writes,

The fact that infanticide was –and in many parts of world, still is –widely practiced does not; of course mean that it is right. No argument from ‘everyone does this’ to ‘this is right’ can be valid. Even if infanticide could be shown to be the natural response of human beings to the birth of infants born in unfavourable circumstances, that would not make it right. Still, it is worth knowing that from a cross- cultural perspective it is our tradition, not that of the kung or the Japanese, that is unusual in its official morality about infanticide. Recognizing that fact puts the modern medical practice of infanticide in a broader perspective. (Singer, Rethinking life and death, 1994, pp. 129-130)

Apart from arguing from the point of removing suffering for the disabled infant and from the possible frustration it may have in the future, Singer also argues from the perspective of overall happiness. He says,

When the death of a disabled infant will lead to the birth of another infant with better prospects of a happy life, the total amount of happiness will be greater if the

disabled infant is killed. The loss of happy life for the first infant is outweighed by the gain of a happier life for the second. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 186)

The overall happiness can make a person to do away with a severely disabled child. Singer says that a decision can be made after the birth of an extremely ill infant to withdraw his or her treatment in certain medical circumstances. He claims that this selective non treatment is accepted when the child suffers from severe disability. Singer argues that it cannot be considered as unethical and it is accepted perhaps in many countries. He says that in regard to severe disabled baby, selective non treatment is accepted by the British department of health and social security, by the British Court of Appeal, by an Australian coroner, and also it seems that it is accepted by a significant proportion of the public, especially in countries like Britain and Australia. (Singer, Rethinking Life and Death, 1994)

Singer himself follows the position of Michael Tooley. Tooley (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972) also accepts infanticide as morally acceptable. A newborn baby has no right to live because the newborn baby does not possess the concept of a continuing self. So, “infanticide during a time interval shortly after birth must be morally acceptable.” (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972, p. 63) Though the issue of ‘shortly after birth’ is rather general and vague, Tooley doesn’t find any problem with such a vagueness involved in the issue of infanticide. He says,

It is not troubling because there is no serious need to know the exact point at which a human infant acquires a right to life. For in the vast majority of cases in which infanticide is desirable, its desirability will be apparent within a short time

after birth. Since it is virtually certain that an infant at such a stage of its development does not possess the concept of a continuing self, and does not possess a serious right to life, there is excellent reason to believe that infanticide is morally permissible in most cases where it is otherwise desirable. The practical moral problem can thus be satisfactorily handled by choosing some period of time, such as a week after birth, as the interval during which infanticide will be permitted. This interval could then be modified once psychologists have established the point at which a human organism comes to believe that it is a continuing subject of experiences and other mental states. (Tooley, Abortion and infanticide, 1972, p. 64)

Like Singer, John Harris too justifies euthanasia on the grounds of suffering. According to John Harris the obligation to prevent needless suffering justifies the prevention of the births of disabled child. He claims that “a life with disability inevitably involves suffering or harm of some significant level.” (Edwards, 2001, p. 381) Harris, as a matter of fact, goes to argue further that a parent would be doing harm to the child, if they know even before the birth of a child that it is going to be disabled. According to John Harris one does wrong if he or she intentionally brings disabled child in this world. If one gives a disabled child into this world he or she is responsible for the infliction of unnecessary suffering. It is also a wrong act if someone not terminates her pregnancy if she knows that she is going to have a disabled child. But there is also an exceptional case which is regarded as valid by John Harris. If someone has no child and it is also not possible for her to give a normal child, according to Harris it is better to her to give birth to the disabled child. ‘It is better to have children with disabilities than no children at all.’ (Edwards, 2001, p. 380) As S.D Edwards points out that Harris agreed that desire to have children to be strong one and that should be valued. In this case, the significance of

respecting the preference to have a children outweigh the obligation to prevent suffering.
(Edwards, 2001)

For John Harris there is a necessary relation between disability and suffering. Where there is disability, also there is the existence of suffering. But according to S.D.Edwards the relationship between disability and suffering is not necessary but contingent. He takes example of moderate intellectual disabilities where there may not be suffering. Remarking on John Harris view on euthanasia, Robert G.Richardson (Richardson, 2008) in his thesis 'The Politics of Euthanasia' writes,

John Harris has joined Singer and Joseph Fletcher in arguing that in these sorts of extreme cases ,there is a legitimate place for Non-voluntary active euthanasia (NVAE),because it is not wrong to humanely terminate 'creature that can not value their own existence.'Harris has specifically identified persistent vegetative state (PVS) patients as potential NVAE candidates because, there individuals are allegedly 'absent' from their body. (Richardson, 2008, p. 82)

On the issue of active as against passive euthanasia, James Rachels' (Rachels, Active and Passive Euthanasia, 1986) views regarding euthanasia are same with the view of Peter Singer. According to James Rachel there is no moral distinction between active and passive euthanasia. James Rachel says, " I argued, against the traditional view, that there is in fact no moral difference between killing and letting die-if one is permissible, then so is the other." (Rachels, More Impertinent Distinction and a Defense of Active Euthanasia, 1994, p. 139)

Though Peter Singer and James Rachel's views regarding euthanasia are same their accepting methods are different. Rachel rejects utilitarian arguments for euthanasia. According to Rachel the utilitarian argument for euthanasia may be elaborated in the following way:

1. Any action or social policy is morally right if it serves to increase the amount of happiness in the world or the decrease the amount of misery. Conversely, an action or social policy is morally wrong if it serves to decrease happiness or to increase misery

2. The policy of killing, at their own request, hopelessly ill patients who are suffering great pain would decrease the amount of misery in the world.

3. Therefore such a policy would be morally right. (Rachels, More Impertinent Distinction and a Defense of Active Euthanasia, 1994, p. 148)

Rachel rejects the first premise because happiness is one among many values. Rachel has given a counterexample for that, Suppose a person is leading a miserable life - full of more unhappiness than happiness – but does not want to die. This person thinks that a miserable life is better than none at all. (Rachels, More Impertinent Distinction and a Defense of Active Euthanasia, 1994) On the other hand, Rachel has given arguments for euthanasia from mercy and from the golden rule. The argument from mercy is the most common argument in support of euthanasia. Rachels says,

Terminal patients sometimes suffer pain so horrible that it can hardly be comprehended by those who have not actually experienced it. Their suffering can be so terrible that we do not like even to read about it or think about it.; we recoil even from its description. The argument from mercy says: euthanasia is justified because it puts an end to that. (Rachels, The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality , 1986, p. 152)

According to the golden rule one should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself. As Rachels argues that most of the people want to die peacefully. So this indicates that euthanasia is justified from the golden rule. Rachel says,

Suppose you were given a choice: suppose you were told that you would die in one of two ways, and were asked to choose between them. First, you could die quietly, and without pain, at the age of eighty, from a fatal injection. Or second, you could choose to die at the age of eighty-plus-a-few-days of an affliction so painful that for those few days before death you would be reduced to howling like a dog, with your family standing helplessly by. It is hard to believe that anyone would choose to have a rule applied that would force upon him or her the second option – if that is, they were making a choice based upon their own preferences. And if we would not want such a rule, which excludes euthanasia, applied to us, then we should not apply such a rule to others. (Rachels, The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality, 1986, p. 159)

Some thinkers like Singer, Rachels, Harris support euthanasia, some other thinkers strongly reject non-voluntary euthanasia. Singer's view of infanticide is criticized from many perspectives. By pointing out at Singer's views on infanticide, Don Marquis says, "This view has engendered great interest and great hostility." (Marquis, Singer on Abortion and Infanticide, 2009, p. 133) In regard to Singer's view on infanticide, Gensler says,

Singer mentions societies that allow infanticide but otherwise have a great respect for human life. He does not mention that much infanticide was done for very unenlightened reasons; for example, the first-born was sacrificed to bring the favour of the Gods, female babies were killed out of a preference for males, and

infanticide was used as a form of genocide. (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life:A Critique, 2009, p. 183)

Singer tries to justify non-voluntary euthanasia, particularly with respect to disabled infants on the basis of judging them as not persons, though they belong to the member of human species. Harry J. Gensler argues against Singer position specifically from that premise that human species are more important than the pigs or any other animals that Singer cites. Gensler criticizes Singer's view on infanticide from theological perspective. He says,

Any member of a rational species (including Homo sapiens) has a higher dignity than that of animals- even if the individual is very young, or is physically or mentally disabled. It is seriously wrong to kill an innocent human being. Every human life deserves such respect, because We are all made in God's image and likeness, have a special role in creation and are destined to eternal life with God. (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life : A Critique, 2009, p. 184)

Gensler argues that though Singer talks about the killing of disabled infants, but Singer's principle of infanticide covers both disabled and non disabled infants. Gensler says, "On his principle, there is little moral objection to killing any unwanted infant, healthy or not, since such beings lack self-awareness and thus have no significant right to life." (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life:A Critique, 2009, p. 171). As a matter of fact, Singer doesn't argue only on the basis of whether the disabled infants possess rights because in that case even other infants do not possess rights and they are at the equal plane as the disabled infants. Singer maintains that there are other considerations apart from whether they possess rights. Singer mentions, "The difference between killing

disabled and normal infants lies not in any supposed right to life that the latter has and the former lacks but in other considerations about killing.” (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 182)

Both Gensler and Singer agree regarding the moral status of the foetus and infant with respect to the issue of abortion and infanticide respectively. In this regard, Gensler says,

I agree with Singer that the point of birth is morally irrelevant. Birth is about where you are, not how developed you are; a late foetus may be more developed than a premature infant. So infanticide and a late abortion are in the same boat morally; both are permissible or both are wrong. Singer thinks both are permissible; I think both are wrong. (Gensler, Singer's Unsacredness of Human Life : A Critique, 2009, p. 172)

The reason as to why Gensler thinks that both are wrong comes from a theological base. In another remark, He claims that there is no compulsory direct relationship between disability and suffering, a position similar to Edwards. He gives a counterexample against Singer's view of the happiness of disabled. Gensler claims the degree of happiness of disabled and non-disabled are same. As measuring happiness is not an exact science according to him, we should look into some other factors like the rates of suicide or drug addiction. From a study described in *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 23 (1994), Gensler has taken an indication that the disabled have lower rates of suicide and drug addiction than the rates of non disabled. He has given arguments from care ethics that, “Instead of

killing disabled infants, I suggest that we love and nurture them.” (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life : A Critique, 2009, p. 171)

The problem that was offered by Gensler implies that Singer supports the view that disabled babies ought to be killed. Though there may not be a direct relationship with disability and unhappiness, Singer can still uphold the position that wherever people see the relationship, then, it is not wrong for them to engage in infanticide. Singer argues as a response to Gensler's position,

But that is a fundamental misunderstanding of my position. I don't think severely disabled babies ought to be killed. I think the parents of severely disabled babies who think it would be better if their babies died, ought to have the option of either allowing them to die, or killing them where that is the more humane course to take. Gensler himself seems to accept that parents should have the first of these choices, because he goes on to say: "Most with extreme disabilities will die off naturally, in the meantime we can help ease their pain". (Singer, Reply to Harry J. Gensler, 2009, p. 189)

Theological arguments related to sanctity of life are a perspective different from the quality of life perspective; it is difficult to reconcile both. However, as Singer mentions it is to be seen whether euthanasia can be taken as a social policy by a secular state, where the theological argument can be suspended. On the other hand, J G Williams argues that euthanasia is immoral because it violates one's natural will to continued existence. He also argues that a public policy permitting euthanasia may have severe negative practical effects (Williams J. G., 2000). J G Williams has given some arguments against euthanasia: 1.The argument from nature 2.The argument from self-interest 3.The argument from practical

effects. (Williams J. G., 2000) Williams claims the natural goal of beings is to survive and euthanasia violates this will. He says,

It is literally acting against nature because all the processes of nature are bent towards the end of bodily survival. Euthanasia defeats these subtle mechanisms in a way that, in a particular case, disease and injury might not...Unlike animals, we are conscious through reason of our nature and our ends. Euthanasia involves acting as if this dual nature—inclination towards survival and awareness of this as an end—did not exist. Thus, euthanasia denies our basic human character and requires that we regard ourselves or others as something less than fully human. (Williams J. G., 2000, p. 169)

Williams further argues that one may voluntarily accept euthanasia not just because of one's continuous suffering or pain, rather he or she admits considering the concerns of their family members. He says,

Also, we may be inclined towards euthanasia because our concern for others. If we see our sickness and suffering as an emotional and financial burden on our family, we may feel that to leave our life is to make their lives easier. The very presence of the possibility of euthanasia may keep us from surviving when we might. (Williams J. G., 2000, p. 170)

Williams also tries to argue that euthanasia can well go against the spirit of doctors' professions which is committed to saving one's life. He remarks in this regard, "Doctors and nurses are, for the most part, totally committed to saving lives. A life lost is, for them, almost a personal failure, an insult to their skills and knowledge. Euthanasia as a practice might well alter this." (Williams J. G., 2000, p. 170)

Grant Gillett in his article *Euthanasia, letting die and the pause* (Gillett, 1988) gives a similar argument against euthanasia. Gillette argues that the medical intuitions are against the justification of euthanasia. According to him death is a unique and complex process. For Grant Gillett the primary duty of a doctor is to protect or preserve person's life and not to destroy the life of the patient. He also argues that "we do not know what the final events of a person's life might hold." (Gillett, 1988, p. 61) Like other persons patients has many needs and that needs include also to know that others have not discounted his or her value of life.

Neil Campbell in his article *A problem for the idea of voluntary euthanasia* (Campbell N. , 1999) has questioned the justification for voluntary euthanasia. The justification of voluntary euthanasia, for Singer, is based on the idea of the free will of the patient. One argument for the justification of voluntary euthanasia is that one should honour the autonomous decision of a person. If a person for his or her incurable illness wish to die than one should respect his or her decision. But Neil Campbell has given a counterargument for this argument. Cambell says, "If the pain and suffering are by definition unbearable, then it seems clear enough that the decision to die is not freely chosen but is compelled by the pain." (Campbell N. , 1999, p. 243) He further argues that, "what were thought to be cases of voluntary euthanasia might actually be instances of involuntary euthanasia." (Campbell N. , 1999, p. 242) For Neil Campbell "there can be no such thing as voluntary euthanasia." (Campbell N. , 1999, p. 242) Perhaps, one can counter Campbell's position that a person can give a living will that his or her life can be terminated when he or she needs to undergo irreparable medical illness and an unbearable

situation. Campbell comes up with a position that person's wishes are changeable and hence it could be different at different times and hence one cannot base their actions on the living will.

The other point of concern is that Singer claims that voluntary euthanasia is easy to justify than non-voluntary as there is the preference of the person in voluntary euthanasia and it is not there in the non-voluntary euthanasia. As Singer brings the mentally challenged and some infants under the issue of euthanasia, he may feel that voluntary euthanasia is far easier as compared to non-voluntary one. A further distinction here in the case of non-voluntary euthanasia, one, that of terminally ill patients in a permanent vegetative state and the other that of mentally challenged and other such humans shall make one to take a different standpoint with respect to voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia. Against Singer's position, it can be argued that non-voluntary euthanasia of the former kind is easier to justify than a voluntary euthanasia. Given the issues with respect to voluntary euthanasia, it may even be the case that it may not be a genuine voluntary decision as pointed out. The preference of the person at that diseased situation can hardly be equated with preferences of the person in other ordinary situations. While in the non-voluntary euthanasia, even though there is not the preference of the person, still, there will be a decision to go for euthanasia. In this respect, a person who acts as a guardian/ parent/ the best friend takes the decision on behalf of the patient. Here, the guardian may be fairly in a better position to take the rational decision than the person who takes a 'voluntary' decision in the voluntary euthanasia case. Moreover, the mere fact that a person ceases to be a person in the non-voluntary euthanasia case suggests that non-

voluntary case is a far more serious case than a voluntary euthanasia case. The mere fact that a patient can think, (to whatever extent it can be) understand the pros and cons of an issue and makes a preference as in the voluntary euthanasia maybe comparatively a better patient than a patient who is totally at permanent vegetative state. Hence, on the above grounds, one can claim against Singer position, that perhaps, a non-voluntary euthanasia is easily justified than a voluntary euthanasia.

Another argument against euthanasia is from the care ethics perspective. Critics say that through palliative care one may waive his or her wish to die. Singer's utilitarian standpoint has its own challenges like Kubler-Ross' accounts of how the virtue of care for the dying can address the people's desire to die. Because of lack of proper care, people feel like dying as without proper care it adds misery to their life which is already made to suffer by serious diseases. If proper care is provided, then perhaps they may even rethink on their preference to go for voluntary euthanasia. Singer accepts this fact, but he also says that some cases for voluntary euthanasia goes beyond the lack of proper care as the main issue. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993) However, Singer maintains that palliative care is one of the important aspect to be dealt with in case of terminally ill patients. In this regard Singer says,

Ensure that candidate for euthanasia sees a palliative care specialist. If every patient then ceases to ask for euthanasia, both proponents and opponents of voluntary euthanasia will be pleased. But that seems unlikely. Some patients who want euthanasia are not in pain at all. They want to die because they are weak, constantly tired, and nauseous, or breathless. Or perhaps they just find the whole process of slowly wasting away undignified. These are reasonable grounds for

wanting to die. (Singer, Voluntary Euthanasia: A utilitarian perspective, 2003, p. 537)

Another criticism against Singer's position of voluntary euthanasia is the issue of pain management. Just as when proper care is given, the tendency of the patient to die is lessened, similarly if the doctors can help the patient to manage his or her pain, then he or she may not go for voluntary euthanasia. Nat Hentoff in '*Challenging Singer*' has criticized Singer's from this point of view. Hentoff's objection to Singer's concept of euthanasia is that many physicians "are unable to recognize clinical depression, which, when treated successfully, removes the wish for death." (Hentoff, 2001) Similarly, Hentoff maintain that many physicians are not good in treating pain and accurate pain relief can remove the patient's desire for euthanasia. Singer does not consider those and similar arguments as *per se* arguments against voluntary euthanasia. He considers those arguments as more of components and procedures that need to be included for voluntary euthanasia.

Let's assume that this is true. It doesn't require much thought to see that it is not an argument against legalizing voluntary euthanasia, but an argument for including in any legislation authorizing voluntary euthanasia, a requirement that a psychiatrist, or someone else trained in recognizing clinical depression should examine any patient requesting voluntary euthanasia, and certify that the patient is not suffering from a treatable form of clinical depression. (Singer, Freedom and the Right to Die, 2002)

Singer finds that arguments on the basis of doctor's expertise or on the basis of palliative care or on the basis of clinical depression and pain management are effectively technical

issues related to euthanasia and as such they do not constitute an argument against euthanasia. But, if Singer argues from the utilitarian perspective, then, those arguments also need to be taken into consideration on the same utilitarian grounds.

Nuyen comes up with a slippery slope argument against legalizing of voluntary euthanasia (Nuyen, 2000) . For him, by legalizing voluntary euthanasia, it may lead to non-voluntary and it may lead to involuntary euthanasia, which may not be ethical action at all. The slippery slope is an argument that includes different course of implications while one takes up the initial position and try to argue that the initial position that one has taken is given to discussion and hence cannot be taken in its face value. Singer himself mentions that of all arguments against voluntary euthanasia, slippery slope argument is the most prominent. (Singer, When Doctors Kill, 2009) Singer has mentioned some evidence with statistics to point out that his position on euthanasia does not lead to slippery slope argument. Singer says,

In the early days of non prosecution of doctors who carried out voluntary euthanasia, before full legalization, a government-initiated study known as the Rummelink Report indicated that physicians occasionally—in roughly 1000 cases a year, or about 0.8% of all deaths—terminated the lives of their patients without their consent. This was, almost invariably, when the patients were very close to death and no longer capable of giving consent....Such studies have become available since the publication of the Rummelink report. There was a second Dutch survey, carried out five years after the original one. It did not show any significant increase in the amount of non-voluntary euthanasia happening in the Netherlands, and thus dispelled fears that that country was sliding down a slippery slope. (Singer, Voluntary Euthanasia:A utilitarian perspective, 2003, p. 539)

Singer refers to these two empirical studies of Rummelink Report and second Dutch survey to claim that his position doesn't lead to slippery slope argument. He says, "These two studies discredit assertions that the open practice of active voluntary euthanasia in the Netherlands had led to an increase in non-voluntary euthanasia." (Singer, *Voluntary Euthanasia: A utilitarian perspective*, 2003, p. 540) The slippery slope argument can be taken as valid or as fallacious argument. I try to propose that slippery slope argument for euthanasia need not be taken as valid argument unless and until it is well substantiated that probability of the supposed grave consequences to follow is high.

Ronald Baily talks of a personal issue of Peter Singer in an interview which was entitled as *The Pursuit of Happiness, Peter Singer interviewed by Ronald Bailey*. (Baily, 2000) Baily argued that Singer's argument is that infants or newborn baby or mentally disabled persons can be euthanized. Singer's mother suffers from severe Alzheimer's disease and so she is not qualified as a person by his own standards. So Singer's mother can be euthanized, yet Singer spends time for caring his mother. He claims there is a contradiction perhaps in his thought and action. (Baily, 2000) Though personal in nature, Baily points out the contradiction in Singer's ethics and his personal life. Singer as a sort of reply mentioned that that it's not merely his decision that counts on this issue as his sister has also a part in taking decision regarding his mother. However Singer admits that given to his choice, perhaps, he would have euthanized his mother. In the article *Peter Singer's "Ethics": A Strange and Telling Story* it is mentioned that "He (Peter Singer) admitted that, had he been the only one making the decision, he would have likely withheld the treatment; but, because his sister and other family members were involved,

compassion and prolonged life prevailed.” (Peter Singer’s “Ethics”: A Strange and Telling Story, 2009)

Another personal remark against Singer’s position comes from Gensler. Gensler argues that it might be difficult for Singer to answer a question like this - “Would it have been right for your parents to have killed you before this point, but wrong afterwards.” (Gensler, Singer's Unsanctity of Human Life : A Critique, 2009, p. 170) Peter Singer replies,

To me it seems no more difficult than it is to give an affirmative answer to the question: “Would it have been right for your parents to have taken steps to avoid conception, around the time when you were conceived?” In both cases, I would not have lived the life that I have enjoyed living. In neither case would I have ever had any thoughts or plans about my future that would have been cut tragically short. Yet most people think it would not have been wrong for their parents to use contraception (or, for those opposed to conception, to have succeeded in avoiding coception by abstaining from sexual intercourse during times when your mother was likely to be fertile). (Singer, Reply to Harry J. Gensler, 2009, pp. 188-189)

While it can be seen that arguments against Singer’s position with respect to euthanasia or infanticide or any other moral issues, apart from being, a theoretical and impersonal arguments also land up to his personal realms. There were questions posed to Singer, if he is ready to euthanize his mother or will he accept his parents decision if they had aborted him. There were also criticisms that question his personal intentions. One can see that along with criticizing his theory, there were also personal remarks, doubting his intentions, questioning if he practices his theory, and other similar personal inquiries. One

cannot avoid it as ethical issues are as much personal in nature as it is theoretical and it affects the individual in terms of the decision he or she takes. Some personal remarks praise him while some others condemn him. Are they just remarks which Singer needs not bother or are they an outcome of understanding the implications of his ethical position? In the next chapter, these issues will be taken up.





Chapter 6
Conclusion

In this chapter I shall overall assess Singer's position with respect to his principles and application of his principle to the different applied ethical issue. I shall sum up Singer's position and try to assess it. I initiated this thesis to find out the moral worthiness of our actions related to some of the applied ethical issues with reference to Peter Singer. I took this exercise to see overall where Singer stands with respect to his ethics – Is he a person as dangerous as some claim him to be or is he a proponent of 'new ethic'? And also to see why Singer is been considered to be controversial. Some praise him like a hero. But, the claims by some people that he is a 'professor death' and like a Nazi are some serious allegations. First, I shall see where Singer stands with respect to his own conception of ethics.

Peter Singer has based his ethics on the concept of suffering, person and preference satisfaction. As utilitarian philosophy, even from the times of Bentham tried to minimise the pain or suffering of the individual, Singer too falls in line with the utilitarian tradition to take suffering as one of the key principle in his ethics. I have already mentioned that based on his concept of person, Singer argues on some of the issues like abortion and euthanasia. One of the major issues with respect to Singer's concept of person is that his concept is rather vague and may not be universally accepted. Critics have criticized Peter Singer's concept of person as an abstract one. The criticisms are based on the conception that person is an 'abstract' one which cannot be conceptualised by all in the same manner. The concept of person is neither concrete nor universal. Moreover, I would like to argue that assuming the concept of person which Singer claims could be universally acceptable;

it means that it is conceptualized on the basis of scientific experimentations and descriptions. For instance, when science comes up with the capacity for sentience in the lower forms of organisms, then, according to Singer's position they need to be considered because science would have revealed that they also feel pain. So, one can see that the inclusion and exclusion of beings depends on whether they are sentient and in the next case, whether they are persons. Both these things depend on how science understands the beings in this world. But we know that scientific explanations are not constant, the scientific results are changeable. Then, in that case it only suggests that Singer's concept of person, taken in both in its abstract sense or in the scientific sense, pose a problem. This suggests the concept of person, or more so, person-based ethics may not be a sufficient ground for Singer to base his ethics.

According to preference satisfaction a right action is that which will maximize the satisfaction of preferences. Preference utilitarianism thus overcomes the shortcomings of classical utilitarianism as put forward by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill where measuring the happiness was one major issue. Though Bentham came out with a hedonistic calculus, it had its limitations as it could not make any difference in quality of pleasures. Preference utilitarianism in that sense made a shift from classical utilitarianism to have an empirically testable method by identifying the preferences of the person. It is to be seen how good these preferences are. Singer believes that preferences are desires in conjunction with reason. In that respect, Singer relies heavily on reason as an important component of making an ethical decision.

I can see in the conceptual level there seems to be a consistent account of his position with respect to the relation between preferences and self-interests. He suggests that ethical decisions are judged on the basis of individual's preferences and again these individual preferences need not be equated with their self-interests, as for Singer, any self-interest based reason are no reason at all and hence they cannot be taken as the standard for ethical actions.

Singer attempts to extend the scope of moral standing to animals on the basis of principle of suffering. But, the consequences of adopting a similar standard to humans give an uncomfortable position from the traditional or intuitive moral viewpoint. If one has to think in line with Singer, then, it means that entities which are capable of feeling pain or suffering alone are worthy for moral consideration. That is the reason, according to Singer, inanimate objects and some lower forms of life that do not have the capacity to feel pain or suffering are not worthy of moral consideration. For him, a mouse can suffer, but not a stone. So, we should consider the mouse when we discuss the ethical obligation, but, we need not consider stone. When we apply that perspective in the context of human affairs, it implies that human foetus need not be worthy of moral consideration at some of the stages of foetus development.

When Singer mentions about abortion for any trivial reason, it is too difficult to claim immediately that he wishfully subscribes to that. He doesn't bring in the personism argument there. He suggests that as long as we bring in personism argument for the sake of eating animal flesh, which is merely a matter of taste and still accept it as not an unethical

act, there cannot be any reason, in the similar lines to think of abortion for any trivial reasons as unethical, on the same personism argument, except that in the former case it is a clear bias of speciesism whereas in the latter case it is not. Here, I would like to suggest that Singer has mentioned that one should not take late term abortion lightly, that means, the consideration for sentientism is evident there. Almost every time when he discusses the issue of animal welfare or the issue of abortion and infanticide, Singer, jumps from that argument of sentientism and personism to the argument of speciesism and non-speciesism.

Singer carries out this type of argumentation of comparing human with animals throughout his work. Through those arguments, he likes to insist that if one's action is not wrong when it is done against animals, then the same action cannot be wrong when it is done against humans, unless one subscribes for speciesism. In these arguments, I should not conclude that Singer advocates person's preferences (however silly it may be) as over and beyond the suffering of the sentient beings. This argument has to be seen in the context where he denounces the idea of traditional morality where it takes the privilege of humans over and beyond the animal species. Singer questions that if such a hierarchy is acceptable for whatever may be the reasons, then why not the hierarchy between persons and non-persons is also accepted for whatever may be the reasons? This argument style is prevalent in Singer's works. For instance, while he was arguing against animal experimentation one can see how builds his argument by comparing animals with humans. He says,

.... this same argument gives us a reason for preferring to use human infant—orphans perhaps—or severely intellectually disabled humans for experiments, rather than adults, since infants and severely intellectually disabled humans would

also have no idea of what was going to happen to them. As far as this argument is concerned, nonhuman animals and infants and severely intellectually disabled humans are in the same category; and if we use this argument to justify experiments on non human animals we have to ask ourselves whether we are also prepared to allow experiments on human infants and severely intellectually disabled adults. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 60)

This does not suggest that Singer is allowing infants to be used for experimentation, whereas he fights against using animals for experimentation. Singer point is that except for our sense of speciesism what makes us to accept animal food as something not unethical, whereas in the case of person's actions over non-person humans, we immediately claim that it is unethical.

This argument style of Singer perhaps becomes the boon and bane for Singer. On one hand it has helped him to prove his point but on the other hand this comparison has made his views to be looked upon with suspicion as he favours animal species over the human species. Singer while trying to go beyond speciesism, perhaps had chosen the levelling down of human species. It is because of this reason Singer is criticized for being not considerate to human feelings. He tries to go beyond speciesism, but to argue for his position he draws too many parallels between our practices concerning humans and practices concerning animals. While doing this, he presumably engages in a sort of speciesism, but not that of privileging humans, but the other way round. Singer got entangled in his overdoing on animal protection and underplaying the human species. While overdoing on animal protection is not a serious critique as such, but underplaying the human species is. The critiques of Singer like Luc Ferry, Laing and others do take a notice of the implication of Singer's position. To resolve this, I can say that it is false to

claim that Singer brings down humans to animals; rather, I can say that Singer prefers persons over non-persons.

Then, are these biased positions of Singer, as observed by other thinkers, are purely an outcome of the logical application of his principles that had resulted to make him seemingly favouring one species over the other; that has made him to level down the humans to that of animals? If Singer's position on the ethical issues with respect to animal welfare, abortion, and euthanasia were the result of his logical position, perhaps he need not bother about those criticisms. He need not bother about the acceptability because he may take solace that he is faithful to his philosophy and ethical position and perhaps acceptability of his ethics, shall come in due course of time as he tries to propose a 'new ethic'. But, whether is it true that Singer comes up with his position on ethical issues on the basis of his logic? Laing pointed out there were some inconsistencies, which I feel that it is given to interpretation. Rather I feel that inconsistency lies in a different fashion in Singer's ethics. First, let us see how does Singer view his ethical decisions? Singer did not consider justifications that are given purely based on self-interests as an apt justification for one to engage in ethical actions.

Self-interested acts must be shown to be compatible with more broadly based ethical principles if they are to be ethically defensible, for the notion of ethics carries with it the idea of something bigger than the individual. If I am to defend my conduct on ethical grounds, I cannot point only to the benefits it brings me. I must address to a larger audience. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 10)

Singer believes that an action in the domain of ethics can become an ethical action if such an action is properly justified. Singer regards reason as playing an important role in ethical decision.

The notion of living according to ethical standard is tied up with the notion of defending the way one is living, of giving a reason for it, of justifying it....On the other hand, people cannot put forward any justification for what they do, we may reject their claim to be living according to ethical standards, even if what they do is in accordance with conventional moral principles. (Singer, Practical Ethics, 1993, p. 10)

This suggests that, Singer believes in exercising reason as the principle that makes an action ethical or not. If we have proper justification for an action, then that act is ethical and if we do not have proper justification for an action, however noble that action is, then according to Singer that action cannot be ethical. For example, why it is unethical to tell a lie? According to Singer, the answer 'my religion proscribes from telling a lie' cannot be an answer, for it doesn't involve any rational component but rather an appeal to authority. Singer believes that employing reason and following its path makes a better ethical position against an irrational moral code of conduct. In a recent work, Singer in a response to Harry J. Gensler remarks,

...as a philosopher I follow the argument where it leads. Should I, as a utilitarian, resist that urge, if the argument will lead me to say something counter-productive? That isn't so clear. Developing sound positions in ethics should, in the long run, have better consequences than doing bad philosophy, or refusing to discuss some issues for fear of losing influence on others. (Singer, Reply to Harry J Gensler, 2009, p. 186)

Any ethical decision for Singer therefore should have two components. It should be reasoned and it should be beyond self-interests; whether it is the principle of suffering, concept of person or the preference satisfaction and their application in the different applied ethical issues, should have been a reasoned one without having self-interest. If fulfilling those aspects, if he comes out with position that goes against conventional, traditional or intuitive morality, then, perhaps Singer need not worry about the criticisms. Whether that is the case is need to be seen.

I believe that Singer applied those components in animal rights issue. It considered ethics of our actions on the basis of reason and going beyond one's self-interests. Similar may be the case of voluntary euthanasia also when he championed the case of self-destruction as one gets no medical solution to one's suffering and who is terminally ill. So, in animal rights, there is the case of reason employed with no selfish interests, in the case of voluntary euthanasia, there is case of reason with self-interests, but maybe affecting only the concerned individual in terms of losing his or her life. But in the case of abortion and non-voluntary euthanasia, specifically in the case of infants and in the case of physically challenged people, the application of his theory might well have gone wrong for him. There is a case of reason (as interests of the person overriding the non-person), but the case of selfless decision making goes off. There is an apparent inconsistency. In animal liberation, he has a point of view, which seems to be different when he is talking about abortion. The selfish interests make an entry through backdoor by the idea of 'quality of life' and 'persons preferences'. Those preferences are no more 'ideal desires', but, it may well be brute desires. Singer being overzealous to accommodate personal preferences and

quality of life had set aside the issue of 'going beyond one's self-interests', which is an important component of his ethics.

Singer's ethics pays much emphasis on the notion of person to judge the rightness or wrongness of the action, particularly with respect to abortion and euthanasia. Other philosophical systems, like Buddhism for example, also talk of the concept of person but do not base the moral worthiness of the action only on the basis of whether certain entity is a person or not. Though such philosophical systems are also concerned with the idea of person, they don't base their ethics only on the notion of who is a person; their ethics pays much emphasis on the character of the moral agent. When it is necessary, then it may not be wrong to violate the sentience by personhood, but it is not advisable for any trivial actions. Mixing up with virtue-ethics approach makes Singer's ethics more flexible and makes it less vulnerable from those who criticize the person-based ethics approach. Singer's ethics perhaps fail in this issue as well, though he talks of 'trivial' and 'serious' reasons and 'going beyond self-interests' and 'ideal desires', he doesn't emphasize those elements in considering the specific applied ethical issues. Rather is concern was whether the being is 'person' or not and whether the individual person preferences can override other person's preferences or not.

Singer though would have admitted the point of having some virtues like restraint at the individual level; he essentially aims at basing his ethics on the principles of reason that can be practiced in a secular state. It needs to be seen as what Singer wants from his ethics – Does he talk of ethics getting extended to legality as well? Or is it just an attempt

to point out some individual instances where they can act in some other way than the way they usually act. It seems that Singer is more concerned with making certain actions legal and certain actions as illegal as well; at least this is visible in euthanasia, and perhaps animal welfare and abortion as well. His aim is to therefore come up with ethics that can be practiced in a secular state.

Engaging in ethics of this sort entails the need to rationalize one's actions that is concerned with ethics. This is perhaps what Singer is trying to do. We need to have concepts like 'person', 'potential person' and 'actual person' and the consideration of preferences as some yardsticks to reason out our ethical actions based on circumstances and situations. And these deliberations need to go beyond the cultural relativistic standpoints as envisaged by Singer. But, it doesn't immediately mean that every country will follow the same pattern of legal practices. The legality depends on the country specific contexts. For instance, let me take the case of abortion issue in India. In India abortion is not justified in all conditions. According to the Medical Termination Act, 1971 which was revised in 1975, in abortion there must be some significant reasons and it cannot be entertained for any trivial reasons. Moreover, parents cannot even go for tests that determine the sex of the foetus. Is there anything wrong with that preference? There may not be. But, still it is considered illegal as there is prevalence of sex-selective abortion happening in India. The male to female ratio in many states within India is unequal though there is a sign of improvement.⁵ So, the state may feel it necessary to curb the preference

⁵ In India, in some states like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujrat and Maharastra the population of female is less than the population of male. According to 1991 census against every 1000 males there are only 927 females. In 2001 census, there was a marginal improvement, it was counted that against every 1000 males there are only 933 females. In 2012 census, the figure increases to 940 per 1000 males. (Population of India, 2012)

of the persons in certain situations. So, even in a secular state, given the situations, a state perhaps may not be in a position to entertain the aggregate of the preferences of the persons. At the same time, one can see instances after instances in our present-day world, where the need and necessity of taking a universalistic standpoint in ethics becomes all the more important. The reality of globalization and humans migrations demands an attempt like that of Singer to take reason as the sole component in understanding ethics in a secular state. I would like to point out two instances that show the importance of taking a cross-cultural and transnational attempt to doing ethics. In one recent case, an Indian dentist in Ireland, Savita Halappanavar was having a miscarriage of 17 week foetus. She was denied abortion on the grounds that it was illegal in that country. And finally she died on October 28, 2012. (Ireland Abortion Row: Human Rights Commission Registers Case, 2012) Are these not cases that need to be addressed universally than taking recourse to cultural or religious pluralism? Another case is the phenomenon of the movement of the people from other countries to Switzerland. The Supreme Court of India noted that several people move to possibly get euthanized. "Many persons from other countries, especially from Germany, go to Switzerland to undergo euthanasia (Supreme Court's judgment on Aruna Shanbaug euthanasia petition, 2009). Is this not a serious matter of introspection to see how people want to determine their last phase of life, perhaps their final preference before they die? Perhaps in these contexts, Singer makes an attempt to face those issues and comes up with his deliberation that tries to make ethics universally applicable. To that extent his attempt is justified and it gives us a direction towards which the future ethical deliberations can proceed.

Bibliography



Primary Sources

Books

Singer, P. (1975). *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals*. New York: Random House.

Singer, P. (1986). *Applied Ethics (ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Singer, P. (1991). *A Companion to Ethics (ed.)*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Singer, P. (1993). *Practical Ethics (2nd Edition ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Singer, P. (1994). *Rethinking Life and Death*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Singer, P & Kuhse, H. (1998). *A Companion to Bioethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Singer, P. (2000). *Writings on an Ethical Life*. New York: The Ecco Press.

Singer, P. (2005). *In Defence of Animals(ed)*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Singer, P &. Helga, K. (2006). *Bioethics : An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.

Book Section

Singer, P. (1986). All Animals are Equal. In P. Singer, *Applied Ethics* (pp. 215-228). New York: Oxford University Press.

Singer, P. (1995). Abortion. In T. Honderich, *A Companion to Philosophy* (pp. 2-3). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Singer, P. (2009). Reply to Don Marquis. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 152-162). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

Singer, P. (2009). Reply to Harry J Gensler. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 185-194). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

Singer, P. (2009). Reply to R.G. Frey. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 123-130). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

Journal Articles

Singer, P. (1980). Utilitarianism and Vegetarianism. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* , 9 (4), 325-337.

Singer, P. (2003). Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective. *Bioethics*, 17 (5-6), 526-541.

Singer, P. (2004). Taking Humanism Beyond Speciesism. *Free Enquiry*, 19-21.

Singer, P. (2004). The Pope Moves Backward on Terminal Care. *Free Enquiry*, 24(5) , 19-20.

Electronic Sources

Singer, P. (2001, January 21). *Animal Rights: The Right to Protest*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20010121.htm>

Singer, P. (2002, May 15). *Freedom and the Right to Die*. Retrieved March 21, 2013, from <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20020515.htm>

Singer, P. (2002, November 13). *A Response to Martha Nussbaum*. Retrieved July 17, 2012, from <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20021113.htm>

Singer, P. (2003, May 15). *Animal Liberation at 30*. Retrieved January 5, 2010, from The New York Review of Books:

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2003/may/15/animal-liberation-at-30/?pagination=false>

Singer, P., & Dawn, K. (2004, February 8). *When Slaughter Makes Sense*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20040208.htm>

Singer, P. (2005, August 30). *The Sanctity of Life*. Retrieved April 3, 2013, from Foreign Policy: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2005/08/30/the_sanctity_of_life

Singer, P. (2006, Jun 14). *The Ethics of Eating*. Retrieved March 23, 2013, from Project Syndicate: <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-ethics-of-eating>

Singer, P. (2007, January 26). *A Convenient Truth*. Retrieved March 21, 2013, from The New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/26/opinion/26singer.html?_r=0

Singer, P. (2007, August 25). *Abortion, The Deviding Line*. Retrieved January 5, 2010, from Herald Sun: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion/peter-singer-abortion-the-dividing-lines/story-e6frfifo-1111114264781>

Singer, P. (2007). *Ethics and Animals*. Retrieved September 24, 2010, from animal rights korea: <http://animalrightskorea.org/essays/peter-singer-ethics-and-animals.html>

Singer, P. (2007, January 15). *The Right to Die*. Retrieved March 13, 2013, from Project Syndicate: <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-right-to-die>

Singer, P. (2009, November 13). *When Doctors Kill*. Retrieved April 4, 2013, from Project Syndicate: <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/when-doctors-kill>

Singer, P. (2012, August 13). *The Real Abortion Tragedy*. Retrieved March 24, 2013, from Project Syndicate: <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-real-abortion-tragedy-by-peter-singer>

Interview

Singer, P. (2004, October 4). Professor Peter Singer. (A. Denton, Interviewer)

Secondary Sources

Books

Beauchamp, T. L. (2001). *Philosophical Ethics : An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (3rd Edition ed.). New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Bentham, J. (1789). *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Coelho, I. (2010). *Brahman and Person Essays by Richard De Smet*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Carruthers, P. (1992). *The Animals Issue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dershowitz, A. (2009). *Rights From Wrongs : A Secular Theory of the Origins of Rights*. New York: Basic Books.

Dworkin, G.; Frey, R.G.; Bok, S (1998). *Euthanasia and Physician -Assisted Suicide (ed.)* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, M. A. (1986). *The Case for Animal Experimentation : An Evolutionary and Ethical Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Francione, G. L. (2008). *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Glover, J. (1977). *Causing Death and Saving Life*. New York: Penguin Books.

- Goswami, S. (2006). *Persons A Strwasonian Study* . Guwahati: Anwasha India.
- Jamieson, D. (1999). *Singer and His Critics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kittay, E.F;Carlson L. (2010).*Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy* (ed) Chichester: Willey Blackwell.
- Krantz, S. L. (2002). *Refuting Peter Singer's Ethical Theory :The Importance of Human Dignity*. 88 Post Road West: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Norman, R. (1998). *The Moral Philosophers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oliver, P. (2008). *Writing Your Thesis*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Rachels, J. (1986). *The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality* . Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Regan, T. (2004). *The Case for Animal Rights*. California: University of California.
- Rowlands, M. (1998). *Animal Rights: A Philosophical Defence*. New York: St.Martin's Press.
- Satyanarayana, Y. V. (2010). *Ethics:theory and practice*. New Delhi: Pearson.
- Sinha, J. (1984). *A Manual of Ethics*. Calcutta: New Central Book Agency.

Book Section

- Cohen, C. (2009). The Case for the Use of Animals in Research. In S. M. Cahn, *Exploring Ethics : An Introductory Anthology* (pp. 323-334). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frey, R. (2009). Justifying Animal Use. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 103-122). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.
- Gensler, H. J. (2009). Singer's Unsancity of Human Life : A Critique. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 163-184). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

- Goodall, J. (1993). Chimpanzees- Bridging the Gap. In C. Paola, & P. Singer, *The Great Ape Project* (pp. 10-18). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Gruen, L. (1994). Animals. In P. Singer, *A Companion to Ethics* (pp. 343-353). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Gruen, L. (2009). Singer. In C. Belshaw, & G. Kemp, *12 Modern philosophers* (pp. 232-250). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- Jamieson, D. (1999). Singer and the Practical Ethics Movement. In D. Jamieson, *Singer and His Critics* (pp. 1-17). Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- Kant, I. (2001). Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth. In L. P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics : Readings in Theory and Application* (pp. 31-32). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Kuhse, H. (1991). Euthanasia. In P. Singer, *A Companion to Ethics* (pp. 294-302). United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing ltd.
- Laing, J. A. (1997). Innocence and Consequentialism: Inconsistency, Equivocation and Contradiction in the philosophy of Peter Singer. In J. A. Laing, & D. Oderberg, *Human Lives: Critical Essays on Consequentialist Bioethics* (pp. 196-224). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Landmore, H. (2006). Why Should One Reject the Motion. In M. D. Hauser, F. Cushman, & M. Kamen, *People, Property or Pets*. Prudene University Press.
- Marquis, D. (2009). Singer on Abortion and Infanticide. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 133-152). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

- Orlans, F. (1998). History and Ethical Regulations of Animal Experimentation: An International Perspective. In H. Kuhse, & P. Singer, *A Companion to Bioethics* (pp. 399-410). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rachels, J. (1986). Active and Passive Euthanasia. In P. Singer, *Applied Ethics* (pp. 29-36). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rachels, J. (1994). More Impertinent Distinction and a Defence of Active Euthanasia. In B. Steinbock, & A. Norcross, *Killing and Letting Die* (pp. 139-154). United States of America: Fordham University Press.
- Regan, T. (2001). The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights. In L. P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics : Readings in Theory and Application* (pp. 40-45). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Regan, T. (2001). The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights. In L. P. Pojman, *Environmental Ethics : Readings in Theory and Application* (3rd Edition ed., pp. 40-45). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Schaler, J. A. (2009). Singer's Burden: Suffering and the Man. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. xvi-xxv). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.
- Schmidtz, D. (2009). Separateness, Suffering and Moral Theory. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 429-454). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.
- Vries, R. D. (2011). The Music, Art and Ethics of Suffering : Theory, Practice , Representation. In B. Hogue, & A. Sugiyama, *Making Sense of Suffering* (pp. 69-76). Oxford: Inter Disciplinary Press.
- Warren, M. A. (1994). Abortion. In P. Singer, *A Companion to Ethics* (pp. 303-313). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Warren, M. A. (2009). On the Moral and legal Status of Abortion. In S. Cahn, *Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology* (pp. 186-203). New York: Oxford University Press.

Williams, B. (2009). The Human Prejudice. In J. A. Schaler, *Peter Singer Under Fire* (pp. 77-96). Peru, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

Journal Articles

Cambel, C. A. (1935). Reason and the Problem of Suffering. *Philosophy* , 10 (38), 154-167.

Campbell, N. (1999). A Problem for the Idea of Voluntary Euthanasia. *Journal of Medical Ethics* , 25 (3), 242-244.

Crome, K. (2008). Is Peter Singer's Utilitarian Argument About Abortion Tenable? *Richmond Journal of Philosophy* , 1-9.

Dardenne, E. (2009). The Reception of Peter Singer's Theories in France. *ethic@Florianopolis*, v-8, no.1 , 9-18.

Edwards, S. D. (2001). Prevention of Disability on Grounds of Suffering. *Journal of Medical Ethics* , 27 (6), 380-382.

English, J. (1975). Abortion and the Concept of Person. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* , 5 (2), 151-160.

Francione, G. L. (2003). Animal Rights Theory and Utilitarianism: Relative Normative Guidance. *Between the Species* (3), 1-30.

Garrard, E., & Wilkinson, S. (2005). Passive Euthanasia. *Journal of medical ethics*, 31(2),64-68.

Gillett, G. (1988). Euthanasia, Letting Die and the Pause. *Journal of medical ethics* , 14 (2), 61-68.

- Glock, H. J. (1994). The Euthanasia Debate- What's the Fuss? *Journal of Applied Philosophy* , 11 (2), 213-224.
- Grazia, D. (1991). The Moral Status of Animals and their Use in Research. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* , 1 (1), 48-70.
- Hsieh, D. M. (2005). Animal Wrong. *Environmental Philosophy* , 1-18.
- Hymers, J., & KU, L. (1999). Not a Modest Proposal : Peter Singer and the Definition of Person. *Ethical Perspectives* , 6 (2), 126-138.
- Kuhse, H. (1999). Some Reflections on the Problem of Advance Directives, Personhood, and personal Identity. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* , 9 (4), 347-364.
- Marquis, D. (1989). Why Abortion is Immoral. *Journal of Philosophy* , 86, 183-202.
- Nussbaum, M. (2001). Adaptive Preferences and Women's Options. *Economics and Philosophy* , 67-88.
- Nuyen, A. (2000). Levinas and the Euthanasia Debate. *The Journal of Religious Ethics* , 28 (1), 119-135.
- Rose, M. (1996). The Problems of Pain: Concepts and Issues. *ANZCCART News* , 9 (4), 1-3.
- Ryder, R. D. (2002). The Ethics of Painism: The Argument Against Painful Experiments. *Between The Species* (2), 1-9.
- Ryder, R. D. (2010). Speciesism Again: The Original Leaflet. *Critical Society* (2), 1-2
- Sandoe, P. (1999). Quality of Life: Three Competing Views. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* , 2 (1), 11-23.

Sethi, N., & Sethi, P. (2003). Brainstem Death: Implications in India. *Journal of the Association of Physicians of India* , 51, 910-911.

Tooley, M. (1972). Abortion and Infanticide. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* , 2 (1), 37-65.

Williams, J. G. (2000). The Wrongness of Euthanasia. *Basic Issues in Medical Ethics* , 168-171.

Electronic Sources

Abortion. (2010, January 8). Retrieved December 13, 2011, from New World Encyclopedia: <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Abortion>

Baily, R. (2000, December 1). *The Pursuit of Happiness*. Retrieved January 11, 2013, from reason.com: <http://reason.com/archives/2000/12/01/the-pursuit-of-happiness-peter>

Carruthers, P. (n.d.). *Against the Moral Standing of Animals*. Retrieved March 19, 2013, from <http://faculty.philosophy.umd.edu/pcarruthers/The%20Animals%20Issue.pdf>

Feder, D. (1998, October 28). *Professor Death will Fit Right in at Princeton*. Retrieved March 16, 2013, from Jewish World Review:

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/feder102898.asp>

Ireland Abortion Row: Human Rights Commission Registers Case. (2012, November 30).

Retrieved December 7, 2012, from NDTV: <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/ireland-abortion-row-human-rights-commission-registers-case-299627>

Jackson, K. B. (2008, May 20). *Oderberg on Animal Rights*. Retrieved February 22, 2011, from Animal Ethics.blogspot: [https://www.uta.edu/philosophy/faculty/burgess-jackson/Oderberg%20on%20Animal%20Rights%20\(Final%20Version\).pdf](https://www.uta.edu/philosophy/faculty/burgess-jackson/Oderberg%20on%20Animal%20Rights%20(Final%20Version).pdf)

May, J. (2011, March 17). *Psychological Egoism*. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/psychego/>

Mill, J. S. (1863). *Utilitarianism*. Retrieved February 19, 2013, from BLTC: <http://www.utilitarianism.com/mill2.htm>

Moore, G. (1912). *Ethics*. Retrieved February 21, 2013, from <http://fair-use.org/g-e-moore/ethics/>

Noonan, J. T. (1970). *An Almost Absolute Value in History*. Retrieved March 24, 2013, from <http://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/Phil160,Fall02/noonan.htm>

Orlando, S. (2010, January 4). *An Argument for the Legalisation of Active Euthanasia*. Retrieved November 19, 2012, from http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=student_scholarship&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fsa%3Dt%26rct%3Dj%26q%3Dorlando%252C%2520an%2520argument%2520for%2520the%2520legalisation%2520of%2520

Peter Singer's "Ethics": A Strange and Telling Story. (2009, July 15). Retrieved March 8, 2013, from owen strachan: <http://owenstrachan.com/2009/07/15/peter-singers-ethics-a-strange-and-telling-story/>

Population of India. (2012, January). Retrieved January 24, 2012, from indiaonlinepages.com:<http://www.indiaonlinepages.com/population/india-current-population.html>

Richardson, R. G. (2008, May). *The Politics of Euthanasia*. Retrieved March 21, 2013, from <http://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/2440/47647/1/02whole.pdf>

Rooney, N. (2004, June). *A Conversation with Peter Singer*. Retrieved February 23, 2013, from NTHPOSITION Online Magazine:

<http://www.nthposition.com/aconversationwithpeter.php>

Sidgwick, H. (2010). *The Methods of Ethics*. Retrieved February 21, 2013, from <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/sidgmeth.pdf>

Suffering. (2008, April 2). Retrieved March 11, 2011, from New world encyclopedia: <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Suffering>

Supreme Court's judgment on Aruna Shanbaug euthanasia petition. (2009). Retrieved March 25, 2011, from IBNLive: <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/full-text-supreme-courts-judgment-on-aruna-ramachandra-euthanasia-petition/145201-53.html>

The Definition of Death. (2007, October 26). Retrieved February 8, 2013, from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/death-definition/>

Well-Being. (2001, November 6). Retrieved April 1, 2013, from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/well-being/>



Research Output

Publications

- Tanuja Kalita, *The Suffering Principle in Peter Singer's Ethics*, Philosophy for Business, issue number 64, 21st January 2011.
- V.Prabhu ;Tanuja Kalita, *Annihilating Pain: A Study of Peter Singer's Position on Voluntary Euthanasia*, 2nd Global Conference, Warsaw, Poland, May 2011. <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/prabhupaper.pdf>.
- V. Prabhu; Tanuja Kalita *Understanding the Role of 'Person' in Ethics: Buddhist and Singer Perspective*, Suvidya, Journal of Philosophy and Religion, December 2011, Vol.5, No.2, p. 97-104.
- Tanuja Kalita, *Ethics of Abortion: A Cultural Response to Peter Singer*, Manavayatan, Journal on Humanities of Centre for Studies in Humanities, January-June 2012, Vol 2, p 133-138.
- V. Prabhu; Tanuja Kalita, *Beyond Speciesism: Understanding Peter Singer's Ethics*, Proceedings of International Conference on Management, Social Sciences & Humanities, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 12-14 June, 2012, ,p.85-88.
- V.Prabhu; Tanuja Kalita, *A Response to Peter Singer's Position on Euthanasia Lokâyata*: Journal of Positive Philosophy, Sept, 2012, p 17-21.
- Tanuja Kalita, *The Concept of Person in Peter Singer's Ethics*, Philosophica, 2012, Vol 2, p. 39-43.
- V.Prabhu ; Tanuja Kalita, *Ethics and Legality of Euthanasia in Indian Context*, South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies , July- Dec 2012 , Vol 13, No 1 , p 22-25.

- V.Prabhu; Tanuja Kalita, *Preference Satisfaction in Peter Singer's Ethics*, The Discourse Oct-Dec, 2012 issue, p.20-27.

