

# Reader: Vegetarianism, anti-vivisection both stem from a compassionate choice

Scott Harrah, in both his review of the "Animal Liberation" LP (Daily Nebraskan, Oct. 29) and his recent column (DN, Nov. 2), tries to separate the arguments for vegetarianism from the arguments against vivisection. His fatalist attitude assumes that animals must suffer for the benefit of human-

vague questions for justification. There are two ideas to consider here. The abolition of all medical experimentation upon animals I do not think is currently feasible. However, it is imperative that humans adopt a forward-looking mindset and begin developing alternatives to the use of animals in medical research.

In schools and labs, models, charts and computer designs have begun replacing the use of animals, but further progress is needed. In fact, animal experimentation is not infallible, as no animal has bodily processes similar to those of humans.

Flenac, Opren, Osmosin, Zomac and Eraldin are among the drugs that were withdrawn from the market after causing serious illness and death among humans after having been declared safe after animal experimentation ("Cured to Death," Melvill and Johnson). A more familiar example involves the thousands of so-called Thalidomide babies. Thalidomide was administered to pregnant women after extensive animal testing. Although declared safe based on that research, the use of Thalidomide resulted in thousands of deformed babies until the drug was recalled. As a whole, then, vivisection is neither dependable nor necessary.

The other aspect of vivisection involves the cosmetic industry, which regularly blinds, maims and kills. Harrah follows the industry's justification, claiming that if we do not harm all these animals, humans who use cosmetics will suffer. Surely computer designs and other alternatives based on existing animal research could be developed. In the meantime, current means of duplicative testing need to be eliminated.

The industry currently depends upon the Draize and LD-50 tests in the development of new products. Both tests are appalling and unreliable. Giving some hope for the future, the EPA now discourages the use of the LD-50 test and relies on computer

analyses of chemical structure. New methods such as the "up-down limit test" and in vitro testing have given scientists "a precision totally adequate to our purposes," according to a Procter and Gamble Co. toxicologist quoted in Newsweek. As new, reliable methods are developed, should we not adopt them and spare animals needless suffering?

Concerning vegetarianism, Harrah writes, "Cattle, pork, and poultry are all raised to be slaughtered and consumed by humans, we've been eating animals since prehistoric times." The existence of an ethically inferior lifestyle does not justify the lifestyle itself. Not too many years ago in this country, slaves were bred and sold for whatever ends suited white people. White people, who considered themselves "superior," saying that "it has always been this way, so it must be right" is simply ridiculous.

Humans have progressed to a point where we are capable of exercising moral judgment in a changing world. In this, we are facilitated by the ever-advancing realm of technology. Technology has brought humanity to a point where we need to re-evaluate our moral choices. Human life need no longer depend on animal life for sustenance. On a global scale, humanity could benefit tremendously from the gradual transition into a vegetarian diet. Moreover, technology has brought humanity the ability to end or greatly reduce the use of animals in medical and cosmetic testing. Thus humanity now has the ability to reject the fatalistic notion that animals must suffer for the benefit of humans. Think of how the animals feel.

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## Guest Opinion

In doing so, he misses the entire point of animal rights activists who feel that animals should not be used/abused in any way by humans. This includes using them for food, as subjects in experiments and for luxury garments such as furs. Harrah claims that vegetarianism and anti-vivisectionist sentiments "are hardly cogent doppelgangers," basing this on the claims that "vegetarianism is a personal choice" and that vivisection is "traditional and necessary."

Tradition should never be used to justify the status quo. As to the necessity of vivisection, that shall be covered later in this letter. However, the crux of the matter is that vegetarian and anti-vivisectionist sentiments are indeed linked. A person who puts some value on the life of an animal recognizes the links between all forms of what he/she sees as the exploitation of animals. If vegetarianism is a personal choice, then the respect of animal life as a whole is also a personal choice — one based on compassion. And it is because animals have no choice in their use by humans that humans should exercise that choice. If we are truly "superior" to animals, should we not demonstrate that superiority by respecting animal life?

Vivisection can be divided into two realms — medical and cosmetic testing. In neither case can it be seen as "necessary."

Regarding medical experimentation, Harrah defers to traditional and

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