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From [The Sunday Times](#)
November 26, 2006

Father of animal activism backs monkey testing

Gareth Walsh

THE father of the modern animal rights movement has endorsed the use of monkeys in research by an Oxford professor at the centre of anti-vivisection protests.

Peter Singer, who is widely admired by activists for writing the seminal work on animal rights, says giving the primates Parkinson's disease was "justifiable" because of the benefits it subsequently brought to thousands of human patients.

His comments will come as a blow to the protest group SPEAK, which is trying to halt construction of a new animal research laboratory at Oxford.

In a documentary to be screened tomorrow on BBC2 Singer, a professor of philosophy, comes face to face with Tipu Aziz, an Oxford neurosurgeon whose research involving monkeys has helped to develop pioneering ways of treating Parkinson's disease.

During the exchange Aziz tells Singer: "I am a surgeon and also a scientist, and part of my work has been to induce parkinsonism in primates . . .

"I was one of a group internationally that showed that an area in the brain that was never associated with parkinsonism . . . was overactive, and by operating on it, reducing its activity, one can significantly — very significantly — improve Parkinson's.

"To date 40,000 people have been made better with this, and worldwide at the time I would guess only 100 monkeys were used at a few laboratories."

Singer replies: "Well, I think if you put a case like that, clearly I would have to agree that was a justifiable experiment.

"I do not think you should reproach yourself for doing it, provided — I take it you are the expert in this, not me — that there was no other way of discovering this knowledge.

"I could see that as justifiable research."

Singer, a former Oxford lecturer now working in America and Australia, paved the way for recent animal rights activism with his book *Animal Liberation*, now considered the bible of the movement.

He said last week that he stood by his comments to Aziz, provided the monkeys had been treated as well as possible.

Aziz said: "It just shows (SPEAK) haven't a case, to be honest."

But Mel Broughton, one of the leaders of the SPEAK campaign, said of Singer's justification of the Oxford experiments: "I would not accept that at all.

"(His comments) certainly do not represent the views of SPEAK, or the vast majority of people that campaign against animal research."

Monkeys, Rats and Me: Animal Testing is on BBC2 tomorrow at 9pm

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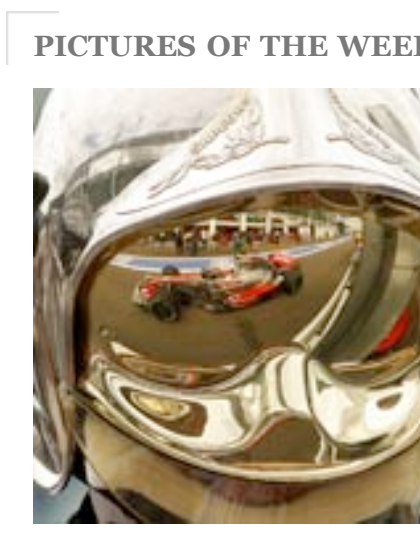
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