The Ethical Case Against Animal Experiments ed. by Andrew Linzey and Clair Linzey

Daniel A. Dombrowski

Journal of Animal Ethics, Volume 9, Number 2, Fall 2019, pp. 226-228 (Review)

Published by University of Illinois Press

BOOK REVIEWS

The Ethical Case Against Animal Experiments. Edited by Andrew Linzey and Clair Linzey. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2018. 216 pp. Paperback. $29.95. ISBN: 978–0–252–08285–6.)

Daniel A. Dombrowski
Seattle University

There are two quite different parts to this book. The first part is a long essay by the editors of the book titled "Normalizing the Unthinkable." It is a report of the current views of various fellows at the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics on the topic of animal experimentation; it prepares the way for these views by detailing the history of antivivisection at Oxford University. The second part of the book consists of 11 essays by different fellows at the Oxford Centre on various topics associated with the topic of animal experimentation. The book is intended for a wide range of readers (undergraduates, graduate students, scholars, informed laypersons) from various disciplines who are interested in the topic of animal experimentation.

This manuscript makes a truly significant contribution to the field. Scientists in the field, both those who are opposed to painful or lethal animal experimentation and those who are not, are not typically exposed to sophisticated versions of philosophical and other arguments against animal experimentation, and philosophers and others in the humanities are often not exposed to the best and current information regarding what goes on in laboratories. This volume provides a valuable service to all parties involved.

The scholarship is sound. The first part of the book is very carefully researched by the Linzeys, both in terms of the history of antivivisection at Oxford and in terms of the contemporary debate regarding animal experimentation. There is nothing idiosyncratic about taking Oxford as a test case in that the historical debate there acts as a microcosm for the debate elsewhere. This first part of the book is not like anything else in the literature in that it traces the history of opposition to animal experimentation (especially 19th-century opposition at Oxford) until the present *and* it shows how this historical debate frames and informs contemporary thinking about animal experimentation.

Also in the first part of the book are detailed treatments of the scale of animal experimentation worldwide, scientific critiques of the opponents to animal experimentation, the changing ethical landscape regarding animal ethics, the nature of animal experimentation as an institutional phenomenon, the failure of control or oversight agencies, and the results of undercover investigations regarding what really occurs in animal experimentation laboratories. The counterarguments by defenders of animal experimentation are examined carefully in a lively dialectical exchange.

The various essays in the second part of the book are also well researched and involve careful argumentation. Some of these essays offer original perspectives

Journal of Animal Ethics 9 (2): 222–235

that shed new light on the topic at hand. Because the book is very well organized, there is a clear demarcation between the first and second parts of the work, so the reader is never confused regarding where one is at and where the various arguments in the second part are moving. The second part includes essays on animal experimentation in the ancient world, the issue of gender and animal experimentation, the usefulness of considering science fiction in relation to animal experimentation, the concept of alleged "necessity" in animal experimentation, utilitarian ethics and animal experimentation, social contract theory and animal experimentation, the (in)famous Harry Harlow experiments, and so forth. This wide range of essays enables the reader to see the subject matter in question from a variety of views, a reticulative vision that in itself can be liberating.

I would like to concentrate on two of the essays in the second part of the book so as to both provide historical depth to the debate and highlight one contemporary way to argue against animal experimentation.

In Simon Pulleyn's essay, "Animal Experimentation in Classical Antiquity," the author details how, in the Hippocratic Oath, "surgery," in general, was seen as an inferior sort of medicine, which would seem to bode well for animals. And Aristotle, despite the fact that he was the son of a doctor, and despite the fact that he defended meat-eating, shows no clear evidence of support for animal experimentation. However, Galen gives detailed descriptions of dissection and vivisection. Although he knows that apes are more similar to human beings than any other animals, they could and should, he thought, be cut up or drowned for scientific purposes. The moral to be drawn from this essay, as I see things, is that, despite certain animal-friendly tendencies in the ancient world, uprooting animal experimentation will be no picnic, given the fact that it has been around for at least 2,000 years. Both in Galen's day in the first century CE and in our own, scientists have been trained to be pitiless when experimenting without even the slightest hint of guilt. However, slavery was also part of the ancient world and very few, if any, reflective people today want to defend slavery. The hope is that animal experimentation will eventually go the way of slavery.

The second essay is by Carlos Frederico Ramos de Jesus and deals with "A Rawlsian Case against Animal Experimentation." Here we are confronted with a basic question in moral theory: Where does moral obligation come from? Increasingly, reflective individuals are skeptical of the claim that it comes from divine commands, yet many thinkers are also skeptical of the claim that it is merely a social convention based on historical accident. One primary alternative is to think of moral obligation as a conclusion that would be reached by reasonable people when they are thinking reasonably (i.e., when they are deliberating in a fair decision-making procedure, as in Rawls's original position behind a veil of ignorance). It is this decision-making procedure that Ramos de Jesus defends.

Ramos de Jesus is astute to rely on Donald Vandeveer's revised version of Rawls's original position in that, in a fair decision-making procedure, we would deliberate regarding the concept of justice while imagining ourselves ignorant not only of our race, class, religious background, and gender, but also regarding our species membership. This would ensure that we will only adopt principles of justice that are fair to members of species other than our own. Even if nonhuman animals cannot be moral agents, they are clearly moral patients or moral beneficiaries in this revised and improved original position. That is, animal experimentation

would not survive in a fair decision-making procedure such that the long tradition going back to Galen should (and perhaps will) come to an end.

Animals and the Economy. By Steven McMullen. (London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Palgrave Macmillan Animal Ethics Series. 216 + x pp. Hardback. $100. ISBN 978–1–137–43473–9.)

Thomas I. White
Loyola Marymount University

The Palgrave Macmillan Animal Ethics Series is a pioneering effort by Palgrave Macmillan and the Ferrater Mora Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics to expand the range of intellectual perspectives that address issues of animal ethics. Historically, philosophers and theologians were the main voices in the field, but the Oxford Centre has aggressively encouraged scholars from the social sciences to apply their expertise and make animal ethics a truly multidisciplinary field. One result of that effort, Steven McMullen's *Animals and the Economy*, is one of the few examples of research in animal ethics done by an economist.

McMullen's book is based on two questions: "Why do so many animals live such short lives in terrible conditions?" and "What could realistically be done to change their lives?"

His answer to the first points to fundamental, systemic ethical weaknesses in the structure of contemporary market economics. He writes that even though

> animals have ethically relevant interests, and humans have a corresponding moral obligation to consider those interests when making decisions . . . current economic thinking marginalizes the interests of animals, usually leaving them outside the realm of consideration. This is not just a problem with the way we think about economics. Our economy is also built in a way that systematically marginalizes the interests of animals. (pp. 2–3)

This weakness is exacerbated by the fact that "even human interests in animal flourishing are marginalized" (p. 3). Consumers who desire animal-friendly products, producers who wish to build a more humane system, and researchers who want to move away from animal experimentation are consistently stymied by "systemic constraints [that] limit the expression of some preferences and encourage others," (p. 3) and produce a situation in which "many animals live lives that are clearly worse than their counterparts only 100 years ago" (p. 4). Accordingly, his suggestions for remedying the situation ultimately focus on systemic elements.

Following an introductory first chapter, McMullen describes the central problem in "The Place of Animals in the Economy" (Chapter 2). From a traditional economic perspective, animals are viewed in terms of their exchange value, not their inherent dignity. As "The Ethical Logic of Economics" (Chapter 3) explains, "It is the *structure of the economy* [emphasis added] that determines animal treatment in the commercial world" (p. 28). And because "economic logic is anthropocentric and consequentialist . . . only consequences that are easily valued in market terms are given consideration" (p. 31). Given these weaknesses, McMullen recommends "a new economic toolset" for economists. This would help economists to see animals as agents, whose interests are an intrinsic good.

Discussions of the place of consumers (Chapter 4, "Giving Consumers What They Want," and Chapter 5, "Ethical Consumer Action"), producers (Chapter 6, "Competition and Moral Complicity," and Chapter 7, "Regulating Animal Use"), and those en-