BOOK REVIEWS

THE OLD BROWN DOG: WOMEN, WORKERS AND VIVISECTION IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

by Coral Lansbury

University of Wisconsin Press, 1985
114 North Murray Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53715

$23.50

No one can work for animal rights for very long before being asked, "Why do you spend your time fighting for animals when there is so much human suffering in the world?" One is rarely afforded adequate time to respond that suffering is suffering and oppression is oppression, no matter who inflicts it and who receives it. The animal movement has tended to stand alone for the most part, unable to forge strong connections with the other social movements of our time. Members of the movement who have bemoaned the fractured nature of its constituency and the slow broadening of its base of support should take heart from Coral Lansbury's remarkable study of a rare coalition of forces against vivisection.

The central figure of the book is a statue erected by a group of Edwardian anti-vivisectionist women in memory of a brown dog who had illegally been subjected to multiple surgical procedures at University College, London. (See "In Memory of the Brown Terrier Dog," page 10.) When the statue was taken down, the reaction of anti-vivisectionists could have been predicted. But in the riots that followed, they were joined by suffragettes, socialists and trade unionists. The focus of *The Old Brown Dog* is the tide of social factors that brought together groups that often viewed each other with suspicion, ridicule or resentment, and led them to stand shoulder-to-shoulder against the Edwardian medical establishment. This thoughtful book presents an analysis of the "symbolic value which the animal victim held for those who perceived themselves to be the human victims of the oppressions of both class and gender."

Ms. Lansbury finds a wealth of support in Victorian and Edwardian literature for her premise that "Women were the most fervent supporters of anti-vivisection, not simply for reasons of humanity but because the vivisected animal stood for the vivisected woman . . ." It was common practice at the time to use poor women, often in charity hospitals, as teaching subjects for medical students.

The relationship between the new socialist adherents, the suffragettes and the anti-vivisectionists was complicated and often hostile. Although they had many common areas of suffering, trade unionists who fought appalling working conditions mistrusted and resented many of the early feminists, who were regarded as middle-class women with the leisure time to campaign for the right to vote while working-class women fought for everyday survival. However, the working people shared one dreadful fate with the animals that anti-vivisectionists sought to protect: both might be used as experimental subjects or for dissection after death.

Families who scraped for sufficient food nevertheless contributed regularly to funeral societies, not only to give final dignity to a squalid life, but also to prevent their bodies from being handed over to doctors. "The working class firmly believed that surgeons were vivisecting dogs, cats, and rabbits because they could not vivisect human beings." The spectre of grave-robbing also hung heavily, and, as Ms. Lansbury notes, "Many hospitals in working class areas became declared anti-vivisection institutions: the Battersea General—the 'Old Anti' as is was affectionately known to the residents—was the last of its kind in England," offering medical treatment to local working class patients at low rates.

The Old Brown Dog explores the nature of the Edwardian medical profession and the complex reasons for the opposition of so many diverse groups to the removal of a memorial to one victim of vivisection. The different segments of society which fought for the Old Brown Dog did so because they saw in it a reflection of their own plight; the emotion that it invoked led them to set aside their traditional hostility and suspicion for one remarkable period. ■■

Anna Francione

Ed. Note: Anna Francione and her husband, Gary, are Philadelphia activists.

MATERNAL DEPRIVATION EXPERIMENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY: A CRITIQUE OF ANIMAL MODELS*

by Martin L. Stephens, Ph.D.

As a change of pace, I shall attempt here to advise you when *not* to read this monograph. Do *not* read it right after a large meal. Do *not* read it after euthanizing your best client's favorite old pal. Do *not* read it aloud to the children. Do *not* read it at a local VMA meeting. And by all means, do *not* read it after saving those kittens abandoned in a snow storm in the Kroger parking lot. In fact, I cannot think of an appropriate time to read it.

Published as a joint publication of the American, National, and New England Anti-Vivisection Societies, this monograph would not otherwise have seen the light of day. The psychology profession has prevented dissemination of this information in its principal professional journals. It becomes evident, while reading, just exactly why this is so. The information obviously is an indictment of years of costly research which has had the effect of being profoundly injurious to over 7,000 animals, at a cost of over $57 million of mostly federal (taxpayer) monies.

While reading, I became alternately upset, depressed, and sickened at the enormity of the waste in animal lives and taxpayer money. Once over, this monograph was enough to strengthen my belief that alternatives must be developed wherever possible for experimentation. As the author documents, there has been very little theoretical "payoff" from maternal deprivation studies. Many of the particular conclusions are not generalizable from monkey to monkey, let alone from monkey to human. The main reason many researchers used animals seems to do more with the negative ethics of using humans in experiments, rather than with the suitability of animals. This implies that what cannot be done to humans is all right to do to animals.

The author points out, in a scientific manner, those key issues involving animal research: "1) the nature and extent of suffering inflicted on the animals, 2) the extent of unnecessary duplication of experiments, 3) the cost of the research to taxpayers, 4) the potential benefits to humans derived from the research, and 5) the potential alternatives to using animals in research." He then documents each experiment performed, dissects the experiment down to each particular key issue, and rebuts/justifies the experiment on its own merits. Unfortunately, only one of over 150 experiments comes even close to justification.

Be forewarned—you'll need a strong stomach to get through this monograph. But all concerned veterinarians/animal welfarists should read it. ■■

Jill Ellen Frucci, DVM*

HEART RESEARCH ON ANIMALS: A CRITIQUE OF ANIMAL MODELS OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE*

by Brandon Reines, DVM

Brandon Reines recently graduated from the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. This monograph was written both to criticize animal models currently used and to detail those advances in heart research which are due directly to animal experimentation and those which are due to clinical investigation. The author poses two questions to answer in writing this monograph. 1) Has animal experimentation led to significant advances against human cardiovascular disease? 2) Do animal models of hypertension, stroke, or coronary artery disease closely simulate those diseases in the human patient?

At the start of this review, let me state one fact emphatically: Most advances against heart disease have NOT been achieved through animal experimentation. Now, read on for details of experimental results and their actual impact upon current therapeutical modalities. Concerning hypertension, the results do *not* justify the statement that animal experiments have given significant results. Most of the drugs used to treat hypertension in humans were discovered from their effects upon human patients. Concerning stroke, animal models are too imprecise to draw conclusions. Inherently, animals and humans do not have similar cardiovascular systems. Concerning coronary artery disease, animals do not suffer from coronary artery disease. It seems to be a disease of humans only.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation may be one of the very few techniques developed on animal models which was transposed successfully to humans (after extensive practice on cadavers). The author goes so far as to cover step by step the phases of open heart surgery and heart transplantation and to show that animal experimentation has contributed either insignificantly or not at all. He concludes by throwing out to the reader the challenge to discontinue using animal models and to begin to apply mathematical models. ■■

Jill Ellen Frucci, DVM*

***Copies of these publications can be obtained from AA-VS. See page 20 and inside back cover for details and order form.**

****Editor of *Journals*, American Animal Hospital Association**

(Ed. Note: These reviews appeared in the October 1986 *Trends*, a publication of the American Animal Hospital Association. *Trends* is read by over 10,000 small animal practitioners.)