or morality of slavery, or women beating, or animal torture,” it would elicit outrage. It is therefore problematic of Howell to state that “whatever we feel about the ethics or morality of hunting” under the assumption that this will not. Historians must make the nonhuman animal subject, but greater caution should be taken to avoid history becoming yet another tool of anthropocentric validation.


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This book addresses the history of the animal defense movement—anticruelty, antihunting and antivivisection—in Britain in the 19th and early 20th centuries, up to the First World War. Its five main chapters describe how Christianity, politics, natural history, evolutionary theory, and literature were “mobilized” in support of animals. Chen-hui Li’s stated goal is a “true understanding of the cause.” The emphasis is therefore on how and why people did things, rather than what they did, for which one might turn to earlier historians of the anticruelty movement, such as Vyvyan, Lansbury, and Kean.

Those new to the subject may be impressed by how many reasons there were to defend animals: Christian stewardship, liberation of the oppressed, reverence for nature, recognition of kinship, and compassion for suffering to name but a few. It is not surprising then that campaigners for animals were a diverse crowd: Evangelical Christians, Tories, neo-pagans, followers of Eastern religions, naturalists, socialists, feminists, reformers, and sentimentalists all found common cause; it was “here comes everybody,” except for the majority who did not trouble themselves about animals at all. As Li points out early on, delving for the campaigners’ “real” motives can prove a distraction. It is more edifying to study how early animal defenders went about achieving their aims than to speculate about their unconscious motives for doing so. Of course, animal activism incorporated human social concerns: Suffragettes saw animals as emblems of their own disenfranchisement, while the poor feared that unchecked cruelty to animals would encourage powerful perpetrators to find human victims. Li’s conclusion (p. 334) that the animal defense movement was responsible for “significant shifts in cultural values, attitudes and practices” looks beyond the fact that few animals were actually saved as a result of early activism—indeed, vivisection and factory farming would increase exponentially in the 20th century—to its intellectual legacy; there are few arguments against cruelty that were not developed during the “first wave.”

The chapter on Christianity refreshingly accords it an honored place, though the claim that the anticruelty movement mobilized Christianity implies that its teachings were co-opted to persuade people to do the right thing, rather than the anticruelty movement having been driven by the reaction of Western Christians to the perceived rivalry of science, “a comparatively new Goddess” (p. 65).

Socialism is given the most credit among the political traditions that inspired the animal welfare movement, though secular criticisms of Christians, that the majority of them were unconcerned with animals (p. 100), was equally true of socialists. A revealing quote from John Burns exposes their concern that compassion for animals
diverted attention from the plight of the poor. Theosophy is mentioned in connection with socialism, though one might have wished for a fuller treatment of the “new age” movement for its own sake, as a counterpoint to the rights-based arguments of many radicals. As Li insightfully observes, rights won the day because they had the practical advantage of being nonnegotiable: Why carefully cultivate people’s virtue to make them act with compassion, when one can stridently demand rights? The clamor for justice rather than love (p. 123) foreshadows a legalistic approach to politics and ethics that justify some of the 20th century’s worst conflicts. Kier Hardy’s was a subtler type of socialism, inculcating compassion for animals in the hope of encouraging young people to care for humankind too. On encountering a stray dog, Kier Hardy “let his heart go out to it.” If only more politicians had done the same.

The relationship between the natural history tradition and the antiscientific movement has received less attention from historians than that of politics or religion. The burgeoning 19th-century fascination with the animal world had its roots partly in a Christian admiration for the works of the Creator and partly in transcendentalism (never explicitly mentioned, but evident between the lines): its weakness was anthropomorphism, an excess of which is as distorting as the dogma that animals can never think as we do. Nineteenth-century amateur naturalists, collectors, and hunters inspired a popular appreciation of animal lives that was stifled by the emergence of a cadre of professional biologists, who typically accorded the lives of their subject matter scant respect.

Li’s reading of Darwin confusingly begins with Peter Singer’s anachronistic interpretation of On the Origin of Species as a clarion call against speciesism, but one has to start somewhere, and the ramifications of the theory of natural selection are so bewilderingly complex that its impact on animals remains hard to assess. Darwinism was more warmly received than is commonly believed (hierarchical structures and gradual improvement were Victorian values par excellence), but nature’s profligate waste of lives to ensure survival of the fittest was scarcely an incentive for humans to care for every sparrow. Before long, vivisectionists had recruited Darwin as a figurehead, and he privately supported their cause. Both camps could mobilize traditions, and Darwin’s “big book,” like the Bible, was grist to the mills of those both for and against vivisection.

Literature is the one area where the animal protection movement decisively won the battle: One would struggle to find a celebrated novel or poem that advocated cruelty to animals. The antis had an easier task, and sentimental, anthropomorphic texts such as Black Beauty became best sellers. Scientists and medical vivisectionists were consigned to literary villainhood, though the noble determination of these “mad scientists” to drag a reluctant world into a utopian future would prove to have an attraction of its own.

Anyone committed to animal welfare can profitably engage with its history through this scholarly and wide-ranging account of the movement’s pioneers. What emerges is not a coherent program, but a convergence of ideas from many sources that led disparate groups to agitate for the same thing. If there is a lesson for the nonhistorian, it is that animal defenders do not all defend animals for the same reason, nor do they need to. That people of different faiths, vocations, and political persuasions can find common cause strengthens the movement, because it is not predicated on a single ethical, political, or religious understanding. None has a monopoly on animal welfare, but all have something to say.

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Kai Horsthemke’s book is an in-depth examination of the influence of moral status and ethical treatment of other-than-human animals with the purpose of making the case that the “differences between humans and other animals are differences in degree, not in kind” (p. 3), and therefore other-than-human animals should be given greater moral standing within educational theory, philosophy of education, and pedagogical strategies. It is in and of itself an extensive review of the literature and a continuation of Horsthemke’s animal-related scholarly interests and publications, as he has also written The Moral Status and Rights of Animals (2010) and on humane education, environmental education, and animal liberation, for example.

As a research fellow and professor of philosophy, Horsthemke presents his arguments and objectives from the lens of his discipline denoting the four-fold overarching objectives of his work: (a) fill the gap left by educational philosophers, scholars of moral education, and environmental education in which other-than-human animals have historically been given limited attention; (b) present a “philosophical normative approach to applying animal ethics, let alone animal rights theory, in educational contexts” (p. xiv); (c) put forward a description of and argument for animal rights education; and (d) provide pedagogical and curricula suggestions for various audiences concerned about improving the attitudes and behaviors toward other-than-human animals. The author makes the argument that this is necessary not only for the benefit of other-than-human animals, but for humans and the planet due to their interconnectedness, and he begins by examining nonanthropocentric views of animals. Review of this book indicates a thorough accomplishment of these four objectives.

In Part 1, Horsthemke highlights a number of moral anthropocentric and speciesist theories and ideologies in order to demonstrate how those theories are deficient in their consideration of animals while also presenting various theories and ideologies that support the growing evidence and understanding of the sentience and intrinsic value of other-than-human animals. Horsthemke continues his argument in Part 2 by including the ethical treatment and moral status of animals by presenting various educational and pedagogical approaches as a means to generate change for other-than-human animals who have historically been given limited moral and ethical consideration as well as a lack of concern for their own interests. He presents an exploration of moral education and animals (Chapter 4) as well as educational theories and pedagogies, including in the chapters “Environmental Education and Education for Sustainability, Biophilia and Ecophilia” (Chapter 5), “Humane Education and Theriophilia” (Chapter 6), “Philosophical Posthumanism, Critical Pedagogy, and Ecopedagogy” (Chapter 7), “Critical Animal Studies and Animal Standpoint Theory” (Chapter 8), and “Vegan Studies” (Chapter 9). The educational theories presented afford educators such as teacher-scholars in higher education the opportunity to consider future research and scholarly opportunities for integration into the classroom.

Throughout examination of these theories, the author provides recommendations for theriocentric (animal-centered) educa-