

Animal testing



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When it comes to animals and their rights, there is a definite line between our needs and our taking advantage of those species that we consider inferior. As long as man has existed he has been carnivorous, and the same holds true for many other species of animals. Animals are a necessity to humans for survival, whether it be for food, clothing, etc. However, the unnecessary torture of animals through testing is not a necessity for human survival. When it comes to the needless torture of animals that we claim to benefit, the animals lives need to be taken into consideration. S. F. Sapontzis gives his theory as to why animals should not be used in testing. To start with, animals are not capable of giving their consent to be used as subjects in an experiment. Secondly, " experiments can only be performed on an individual who is willing, morally speaking. Therefore it is immoral to use animals in experiments" (Sapontzis 209). It would be great if this world where our lives were actually governed by morals. The sad truth is that we do not. Until we do, someone is going to have to stand up for the silent majority that is incapable of voicing its opinion. When there is torture and unjust treatment towards humans, people then realize that it is wrong. These people realize that it's wrong when it comes to animals as well. Henry Spira said of the animals used in experiments: " ...the victims are unable to organize in defense of their own interests" (Spira 194). When it comes to needlessly conducting experiments on animals, no one ever says anything. Humans need to stop thinking about themselves as a superior species to other animals. They have to start thinking about how we can stop the cruelty that they inflict upon animals day after day in experiment after experiment. Tom Regan, a well-known animal rights activist, wrote, " the fundamental wrong is the system that allows us to view animals as our resources, here for

<https://assignbuster.com/animal-testing/>

us- to be eaten, or surgically manipulated, or exploited for sport or money" (Regan 14). Nothing could be more true than this fact; man considers itself such a superior species that all others were put on earth for his convenience. It is this type of thinking that has gotten humans to the place where we are today. What humanity needs to do is get off its high-horse and realize that they are not the king of the jungle and we really are no better than any other animal that roams the earth. It has been suggested that we are a higher form of life than animals. Following this line of thought, according to Sapontzis, experiments should be performed on animals in order to preserve the life of man. Therefore " experiments should be performed on animals in order to protect our species and enhance our lives" (Sapontzis 209). If this is true, then humans should have the right to do whatever it takes to better our situation, including taking advantage of other life forms that we consider lower than themselves. In *Animal Revolution*, Richard Ryder writes, " Scientist frequently justify experiments upon non-humans in terms of the benefit they may bring to others" (Ryder 241). This line of thinking illustrates the idea that the sacrificing of one living thing is made in the name of science if it leads to saving of other living things. The problem with this is that animals- such as rats, mice, rabbits, even dogs- are being used to find ways to save the lives of humans. Once again, humans are placed above all other animals when it comes to superiority in life. Ryder also writes, " Experimenting on humans might well produce far more valid results than do tests on rats" (Ryder 241). If this is true, the fact that humans continue to do research on rodents is absurd. Researchers claim that tests on such animals are needed in order to protect humans in some cases, yet this makes no sense if the data has gotten from these experiments has no relevancy to

humans at all. What this amounts to is the unnecessary use and torture of innocent animals that brings about no real contribution to the scientific world or mankind either. While laboratory rats and mice do greatly differ from humans in genetic make-up, primates do not. It has been found that there are many similarities between chimps and mankind. This is why researchers consider them to make such ideal test subjects. Many primates have been used in experiments that have had overwhelming outcomes where the testing could actually be considered beneficial because of its effect on the human race. This brings us back to the theory that it is morally just if one suffers for the benefit of many. No researcher alive would ever consider using a human test subject to perform such tests that are used on the primates. This of course is because humans consider themselves superior to all others, but also because of the pain factor. No scientists or researcher would be able to stand using a six-month-old baby or a four-year-old child to test such things as deadly viruses due to the fact that the test would suffer. Primates, on the hand, most researchers feel comfortable using because " they do not feel pain." Certainly this is not true, for it has been found by scientists that primates are closely related in genetic in genetic make-up to humans and can therefore experience the same levels of pain as we do. In her essay entitled *The Monkey Wars*, Deborah Blum describes the horrible living conditions and tremendous suffering of one group of primates used in an experiment to test the rehabilitation of limbs when surgically crippled: No one bothered to bandage the monkeys' injuries properly (on the few occasions when bandages where used at all), and antibiotics were administered only once; no lacerations or self-amputation injuries were ever cleaned. Whenever a bandage was applied, it was never changed, no matter

how filthy or soiled it became. They were left on until they deteriorated to the point where they fell off the injured limb. Old, rotted fragments of bandage were stuck to the cage floors where they collected urine and feces. The monkeys also suffered from a variety of wounds that were self-inflicted or inflicted by monkeys grabbing at them from adjoining cages. I saw discolored, exposed muscle tissue on their arms. Two monkeys had bones protruding through their flesh. Several had bitten off their own fingers and had festered stubs, which they extended towards me as I discreetly took fruit from my pockets. With these pitiful limbs they searched through the foul mess of their waste pans for something to eat (Blum 137). Deborah Blum also makes reference to the Silver Spring Monkeys when she describes the condition of one primate after he was rescued from the facility in 1981: Paul was a crab-eating macaque with a dragging left arm. The nerves from the spinal cord to the arm- the relay system from the brain- had been severed in an experiment, a study of the body's response to major nerve loss. Paul has been a chunky monkey once, weighing almost 20 pounds. But when he died, in 1989, he was down to a little over 7 pounds. This is how he died: First, he began to chew apart his nerve- dead arm. Isolated macaques do mutilate themselves and Paul lived alone. He was too crippled, too defenseless, to be housed with another animal. The chewing could go on and on. On February 16, 1989 he attacked the arm as if it was a snake, suddenly coming to coil around him. His teeth cracked the bones in his hand. " His arm looked like it had been through a meat-grinder," says Marion Ratterree, a veterinarian at the Tulane Regional Primate Research Center, where Paul was housed. The vets decided to amputate at mid-arm, severing near the elbow. They were reluctant to take off the whole arm, which required breaking apart the

shoulder socket. After surgery, Paul went back to his cage. He refused to eat. His caretakers tried to comfort him, scratching his back. They tried to tempt him with peanut butter, rice cakes, sliced banana. He just turned away. He developed a wasting, draining diarrhea that responded to no drugs.

Gangrene appeared in spreading black streaks. On July 4, Ratterree took off the rest of the arm, cracking apart the rest of the shoulder anyway. Paul kept losing weight. They tried force-feeding him with tubes into the stomach, but he continued to wither. He lost the strength to stand. He died, down on the floor of his cage, head tucked against the remaining arm, on August 26 (Blum 105- 106). There is no reason for treating a primate like Paul in those kinds of conditions. Of course, not all primates in captivity that are used in experimentation are forced to live in such deplorable conditions, but that does not mean that they do not suffer. Regardless of how they are treated, all animals used in experiments suffer to some degree, including not only primates, but rats, mice, rabbits, cats, and dogs as well. Though it would not appear that the animals used in the Draize Test suffer the same amount or to the same degree, they suffer greatly none-the-less. In his essay " Fighting to Win," Henry Spira describes this test: " You start with six albino rabbits. You take each animal and check that the eyes are in good condition. Then, holding the animal firmly, you pull the lower lid away from one eyeball so that it forms a small cup. Into this cup you drop 100 milligrams of whatever it is you want to test. You hold the rabbit's eye closed for one second and then let it go. A day later you come back and see if the lids are swollen, the iris inflamed, the cornea ulcerated, the rabbit blinded in that eye. That is the Draize Test, named after John H. Draize, a former official of the Food and Drug Administration of the United States. It is the standard test applied to

<https://assignbuster.com/animal-testing/>

every substance, from cosmetics for the suffering and death of hundreds of thousands of rabbits each year" (Spira 194). Researchers continue to claim that their experiments are benefiting humanity, but the sad truth is that most experiments really have no significant impact on the scientific world or human life other than that they interest the scientists. Other experiments that are conducted on animals that are destroyed afterwards could easily be conducted on human volunteers. " It has been estimated that between 100 million and 200 million animals die in laboratories around the world each year" (Ryder 77-78). Although it has been proven that a lot of good has come out of animal research and animal testing, this does not make up for all the pain and suffering that these animals go through without being able to consent. The truth still remains that, despite the benefits (when there are benefits), perhaps we need to contemplate the effects that our actions are having on these animals. Work Cited Blum, Deborah. *The Monkey Wars*. New York: Oxford. 1994 " Experiments on Animals." *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*. Eds. Tom Regan and Peter Singer. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. 1976 Regan, Tom. *The Case for Animal Rights*. Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1983 Ryder, Richard R. *Animal Revolution*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell. 1989 Sapontzis, S. F. *Morals, Reason, and Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple U P. 1987 " Speciesism in the Laboratory." In *Defense of Animals*." Ed. Peter Singer. Oxford: Blackwell. 1985 Spira, Henry. " Fighting To Win." In *Defense of Animals*." Ed. Peter Singer. Oxford: Blackwell. 1985