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Review

Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology, ed. Andrew Linzey and Paul Barry Clarke

This book was originally published by Pluto Press in 1990, under the title *Political Theory and Animal Rights*, with a foreword by Tom Regan and an introduction by the editors that gives a brief overview of the territory that the book hopes to cover. It is a compact anthology of writings on animal rights which, as its title suggests, emphasizes historical rather than modern discussions. Despite this emphasis, the editors have included several entries from twentieth century works from authors such as John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and Mary Midgley. Particularly valuable are some contributions from a feminist perspective by authors like Rosalind Coward and Lynda Birke. It is also noteworthy that there are selections here from authors that are not always included in philosophical anthologies; Alexander Pope and Albert Schweitzer are examples.

The book is divided into three main parts, distinguished topically. Part I features selections that focus on the differences between humans and animals. It begins with an excerpt from Plato's *Timaeus* and gives a thorough historical coverage to its topic that includes selections from Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Marx, and Nietzsche. Part II is

concerned with the question of dominion and the limits of power. Like the first part, it gives a thorough historical overview of its subject, starting with Plato and Aristotle and ending with selections by Bertrand Russell, Max Horkheimer, and Rosalind Coward. Part III focuses on the issues of justice, rights, and obligations, and shows the same historical thoroughness that the other parts do, commencing with Aristotle and ending with a selection by Tom Regan.

The selections in this book are all short and to the point. It is easy to see the usefulness of this book as a text in an applied ethics course; students— even those without any background in philosophy— might read several of these brief selections to get a historical overview of the issues arising in connection with discussion of animal rights— and as mentioned earlier, the book has the advantage of also including some of the more important modern forays into the topic, so that it could function as a complete module on this important topic in applied ethics. Given its very reasonable price, it might be used in conjunction with additional texts that deal with other issues in applied ethics, e.g. environmental ethics.

However, the usefulness of this volume is not confined to the classroom. I am not aware of any other text that represents such a complete historical outline of the conversation on animal rights; thus, it provides a valuable resource for anyone interested in this subject. Someone who is interested in animal rights, and who wishes to acquire a background on the subject without devoting a great deal of time to research on the topic, will find in this book a collection of sources that she would not easily be able to find on her own. I suspect as well that some of the selections included in this book may be

unfamiliar even to someone who does research in this field. Thus, there is something here for everyone.

Dr. Linzey, who has published several volumes on animal rights and Christian theology, argues in his introduction to this new edition that a historical anthology such as this one is important for dispelling some very pernicious myths about the animal rights movement. In particular, we need to understand that concern for animals is not a “new age” phenomenon, something which represents an absurd extension of important liberation movements of the 1960’s, such as the civil rights movement (p. xxiii). This anthology effectively demonstrates that concern with animals runs throughout the history of Western philosophy. Linzey also wants to show that it is wrong to think of concern with animal rights as somehow pagan, i.e. non-Christian. While he concedes (p. xxvii) that Christian theologians (e.g. Augustine and Aquinas) have not always been sympathetic to the rights of animals, he wishes to argue that modern defenses of animal rights represent a legitimate development of our historical concern with justice generally (p. xxvii). A historical anthology like this one can help to make this clear; this volume well serves the purposes that the editors set for it.

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