

Afterword

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There are key books on the subject of laboratory animals that represent, for me at least, key turning points in the intertwined social processes involved in using, regulating, contesting, and understanding animals in science and society.¹ Many of these books are referenced in this edited volume, and range from French's (1975) *Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society*,² Russell and Burch's (1959) *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*,³ Kean's (1998) *Animal Rights*,⁴ and Birke, Arluke and Michael's (2007) *The Sacrifice*⁵ among others. The work of the Animal Research Nexus Programme, in *Researching Animal Research*, articulates another turning point in my mapping of the social space of laboratory animals, which includes research regarding that social space. Nexus, or connection, analytically instantiates social processes that forego polarised political conflict, and thus opens up new ways to both conduct and research animal research. I want to consider some directions that this conceptualisation of research animals opens up and makes possible for the future.

One of the findings that emerges throughout this book is that a nexus, as a site of connection, is not straightforward – analytically or in practice. Amy Hinterberger (Chapter 4, p. 114) states: 'if we can't connect, we can't care'. And I am inclined to agree with this statement. But the connections explored and enacted in this book also work to render decipherable disconnects (Gorman, Chapter 2), borderlands (Anderson and Hobson-West, Chapter 9), gaps (Message, Chapter 7), and incommensurables (Giraud, Chapter 8). These disconnections create vulnerabilities (e.g., for horseshoe crabs in Chapter 2), and reproduce hierarchies of knowledge (e.g., for

Named Veterinary Surgeons vis-à-vis the veterinary profession in Chapter 9, and for citizen scientists vis-à-vis wildlife researchers in Palmer, Chapter 10). Indeed, we see in Palmer's chapter a cautionary statement regarding the problems that may arise as the long-standing connections between Home Office inspectors and research establishments are being splintered in the name of efficiency within the UK. But incommensurables also articulate, and thus hold out for, a world in which things could be otherwise (see Giraud, Chapter 8). And so, while I am inclined to agree with Hinterberger, I am also inclined to agree with Giraud's argument that sometimes some people care by *not* connecting (see also Mackenzie, Chapter 17). Being able to hold these two possibilities together, side by side and in the context of animal research, has only become possible with the publication of this book. This allows us to begin to move out of and beyond 'the polarisation cycle', as Dennison puts it (Chapter 13, p. 321).

The disconnects that arise through a focus on connection are important because it is easy to turn a nexus into a normative project, assuming that connection is inherently good. While I, for one, would much rather see the practices of a nexus at work than a rigid hierarchy, this volume shows me that a nexus is still, nonetheless, a political project where power relations take shape. *Invisibility* is one modality through which power operates, in varying ways for different actors and across several case studies in this book. Anyone who is opposed to the use of animals in research has historically been excluded from the animal research nexus in Britain (see Myelnikov, Chapter 1; Tyson, Chapter 4; Davies, Gorman, and King, Chapter 11). Horseshoe crabs are invisible and thus vulnerable as (wild animal) 'replacements' for the use of (laboratory) rabbits in toxicity testing (see Gorman, Chapter 2). The values associated with different species are difficult to render visible in making ethical decisions regarding practices like rehoming laboratory animals (see Skidmore, Chapter 3) or including fish in the orbit of sentient species (see Message, Chapter 7). By rendering the invisible visible, the book is able to ask how animal research might be organised differently, and more justly. With Carbone (Chapter 13) we can ask: why cannot bird ringers, patient participants, and even research animals be co-authors of scientific articles?

But where invisibility renders some vulnerable, when linked to a political economic (or cultural economic) analysis, we as readers also begin to see how invisibility benefits other actors (see Peres and Roe, Chapter 12). People working in industry and in science benefit from the invisibility of the horseshoe crab (see Gorman, Chapter 2; Tyson, Chapter 4). Scientists benefit from the creation of 1.45 million mice that were bred but not used in the UK in 2018 alone. This surplus exists *because* scientists want to be able to order mice on demand, with as little as 24 hours' notice (see Peres and Roe, Chapter 12). One area that *Researching Animal Research* opens up is the need for further political economic analyses: who and what is being rendered invisible in the changing configurations of research animals, where outsourcing is creating new sites of invisibility through elongated supply chains rooted in animal life? Carbone uses the term 'alert mode' to signal the worries that these political economic readings give rise to. This term nicely articulates the affective response I had in reading these chapters, and the urgency I felt regarding the need for further research of this kind.

Such an approach would extend the theme of *subjugation* that also cuts across many of the chapters of the book, and similarly expresses the power relations that are necessarily at play. Kirk (Chapter 5) shows how 'the laboratory animal' and 'the animal technician' are both mutually constituted subjects of the twentieth century, inventions of a 'modern' science that was rooted in objectivity and the subjugation of feelings like love. This configuration made animal care a career in science, but it also emplaced any conflict that love and use give rise to onto the animal technician as a person who is called upon to subjugate their emotions (see Greenhough and Roe, Chapter 6; Message, Chapter 7; Dennison, Chapter 13). This is a conflict that veterinarians also experience (see Tremoleda and Kerton, Chapter 8; Dennison, Chapter 13), but that takes on a further regulatory dimension, as shown by Anderson and Hobson-West (Chapter 9). While a culture of care is being developed within laboratory animal facilities to address this as a site of workplace stress (Chapter 6; Chapter 8), we as readers can also become concerned about the conditions of not only the horseshoe crabs but also those workers who remove their blood in Gorman's case study. As some forms of subjugations are rendered

visible, there is the need to ask what other sites of subjugation are taking place.

The question of how to hold the *fraught conversations* that such issues necessarily give rise to – where people won't agree with one another but can be open to one another's perspectives – is a key question that arises across this book (see Kirk, Chapter 4; Greenhough & Roe Chapter 6; Greenhough, Chapter 8; Davies, Gorman, and King, Chapter 11; Dennison, Chapter 13; Lear, Chapter 17). This question takes on a specific kind of meaning in the context of Myelnikov's opening analysis of The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), where compromise and consensus required the systematic exclusion of certain voices. But the public representation of certain groups – veterinarians in Anderson and Hobson-West (Chapter 9), patients in Davies, Gorman, and King (Chapter 11) – can work to silence experiences and ambivalences in less systematic ways. Meanwhile, the notion of a nexus itself can work to exclude those actors who worry about becoming compromised should they become part of the research animal nexus, which can include both veterinarians (see Myelnikov, Chapter 1) and abolitionists (see Giraud, Chapter 8). In reading this book, it became clear to me that rendering the animal research nexus visible, and making heterogeneous voices legible, requires a move away from the consensus approach, rooted in control, that has long been a hallmark of the British approach to research animals. But what might these new forums for discussion look like?

This book usefully ends by answering precisely this question, with three case studies in doing experimental work as part of the social sciences. The Mouse Exchange, labelling medicines project, and *Vector* project are all experiments in making new kinds of socialities. The authors respectively foreground embodiment (Roe, Peres, and Crudgington, Chapter 14), dissensus (McGlacken and Hobson-West, Chapter 15), and deep play (Crudgington, Scott, Thorpe, and Fleming, Chapter 16), which contrast with more established practices in the public understanding of science. The authors thus move away from the logic of control, and risk letting people who are outside of the research animal nexus speak (see Lear, Chapter 17). In the process, the question shifts from ferretting out unheard and invisible but nonetheless present and existing

perspectives, to instead create new conditions through which new things might be sayable and said. After reading these chapters, I felt that we could all, with Mackenzie, ask: ‘Can I be honest?’

To conclude, *Researching Animal Research* makes it possible to understand the polarised debates regarding animal research as a structure that shapes but does not determine the research animal nexus. This makes it possible to articulate contradictory and heterodox thoughts and experiences. For example, patient participants in Davies, Gorman, and King (Chapter 11) can be more than their embodied diagnosis. Sociologists can be more than an academic researcher (see Hobson-West, Chapter 13). And in the process, the theme of connection in this book becomes a practice not only of the authors but also of its readers.

Kirk closes his commentary to the first section (Chapter 4, pp. 116–117) by stating: ‘if I was asked to identify a single theme that characterises this volume, I would choose connections. How different elements relate, become entangled, and reshape each other to drive historical change in what we refer to as the “animal research nexus”’. This book marks out a fundamental shift in the animal research nexus, wherein the polarisation of vivisection versus anti-vivisection was complicated by the enrolment and invention of a greater number of actors. But *Researching Animal Research* is entangled as well, reshaping that which it has studied and inviting us as readers to also ask how things might be otherwise as part of historical trajectories. The book allows readers to ask: what new worldly imaginations become possible by considering our own research animal nexus, through the lens of the case studies and commentaries that connect this book?

Notes

- 1 I am a sociologist – a discipline that is concerned with inequalities and that conducts empirical research in order to understand how inequalities operate and are reproduced over time. In my research, I have explored how inequalities operate with regards to animals in ways that intersect with humans. This has included zoo animals and laboratory animals. I do not start with a position regarding the use of animals in these

institutional settings, but rather seek to understand how animals are used in bioscience and biomedicine in ways that reproduce inequalities between humans and animals and between differently positioned humans. For example, not all humans benefit from the knowledge or pharmaceuticals produced with laboratory animals.

- 2 Richard D. French, *Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).
- 3 William Moy Stratton Russell and Rex Leonard Burch, *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique* (London: Methuen, 1959).
- 4 Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998).
- 5 Lynda I. A. Birke et al., *The Sacrifice: How Scientific Experiments Transform Animals and People* (Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2007).