

Dr. Fox Responds

I have never condoned studies of learned helplessness in animals that entail great physical and psychological trauma—such as 5 milliamperes of inescapable electrical shock repeated at intervals for several days, and I have severely criticized psychologists (Fox, 1981) for such poor experimental design and needless repetition. You clearly overlooked my stating in my editorial that

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such experiments are ethically questionable. I also find them morally repugnant and wonder about the state of mind of those doing such experiments. Even so, such research is of value (and that's why I cited Overmeier's book) in convincing those who in treating animals as unfeeling things (and treating show dogs like mere objects) can cause unnecessary suffering. Why? Because it is only objective, "controlled laboratory data" that will convince them that animals are sentient. I therefore cite such research not to give it credibility, but to further the understanding of animals by those "Cartesian mechanists" who have a limited ability to empathize, do not believe animals have emotions or a subjective world of their own (Griffin, 1981) and who can only believe "objective" data.

References

- Fox, M.W. (1981) Experimental psychology, animal rights, welfare and ethics. *Psychopharmacol Bull* 17: 80-84.
- Griffin, D.R. (1981) *The Question of Animal Awareness*. Rockefeller University Press, New York, NY.

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