

sustained in current times, in my view this can only occur in situations where the animal involved is present in significant numbers and can be killed in a humane manner.

In the more philosophical parts of the book, I felt that too much time was spent on theoretical justifications of the current practices of zoos in situations where they do not provide particularly stimulating environments for their animals. There were also many instances where the reader was being asked to discount the inhumane practices of zoos in the past on the basis that 'things have changed' but insufficient attention was paid to outlining just how the situation

has changed. The book might also have benefited from a greater animal focus. That might sound strange for a book on zoos and animal rights but much of the discussion of animals dealt with them in terms of their value to humans rather than their more intrinsic worth as part of the diversity of life.

Overall, *Zoos and Animal Rights* is a book worth reading for those of us with a strong interest in our fellow creatures. The book also provides an excellent bibliography for anyone interested in thinking further about these issues.

**JEFF GIDDINGS**

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## The Ethics and Politics of Human Experimentation

*by Paul M. McNeill; Cambridge University Press; 315 pp; \$49.95 hard cover.*

By far the majority of experimentation that is carried out on human beings today will do no harm to its subjects and will further advance our knowledge of medicine. However, recent examples of large scale unethical and/or negligent medical research are not hard to find.

From 1966 through to the mid-1970s the National Women's Hospital in Auckland approved a study in which women diagnosed with cervical cancer were left untreated in order to observe whether or not their condition would develop into invasive cancer. The women were never told of their condition nor that they were subjects of medical research.

Many of these women were repeatedly brought back to the hospital for observation during the course of the experiment. The subsequent spread of the cancer killed many of them. Perhaps surprisingly, this experiment was not the work of some 'mad doctor' or rogue department, but was overseen and approved by the National Women's Hospital Ethical Committee. How can any ethical review committee approve such a study? Why did it take so long for the experiment to be halted? Could it happen again?

In *The Ethics and Politics of Human Experimentation*, Dr McNeill argues that ethical research depends on the adequacy of review by committee. The book draws examples of unethical experimentation from history (including German and Japanese war crimes) and more recent incidents, to show that ethical review committees, as currently constituted are inadequately prepared to

protect the interests of the subjects of human experimentation. He further urges that committees will not find an equitable balance between the interests of medical researchers and the interests of the subjects until there is greater representation of the subjects on committees.

Dr McNeill proposes a new model for committee review in which there are 'at least as many subject representatives as representatives of science'. Whilst few ethical review committees work this way, he points out that occupational health and safety committees have used this model across a broad range of industries in many countries including the United States, Canada, Britain and Australia.

Dr McNeill also examines the attitude of the law to the notion of consent and to the difference between treatment and experimentation and finds that there is a need to reconcile the apparent conflict between the law and medical practice. He suggests that there is a role for legislation in securing the rights of both subjects and committee members.

This book will be read by members of ethical review committees, medical professionals, lawyers, community health workers and increasingly, using Dr McNeill's model, people such as myself who merely have an interest in the role of ethics in society and may one day be asked to represent human subjects of medical experimentation.

**DAMIEN HOGAN**

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## Developments in Australian Politics

*Edited by Judith Brett, James Gillespie and Murray Goot; Macmillan Education Australia Pty Ltd, 1994; 446 pp; \$36.95, soft-cover.*

A good politics text provides its reader with detail, depth, analysis and a survey of the subject in context. The editors of *Developments in Australian Politics* have achieved this standard with a book which is intended not only as a text for politics and public policy students but also 'to be of interest to a variety of non-student readers'.

*Developments in Australian Politics* is a collection of essays aimed at providing a contemporary perspective on Australia's political institutions, public policies, political ideas and values. Integral to this survey is a discussion of Australia's political transformation during the 1980s which saw, among other things, an inward-looking and protected economy transform into a cosmopolitan society facing the challenges of international competition. For many people this transformation has been exciting and has led to increased opportunities, but for others it has brought unemployment and fear that traditional Australian social values have been lost forever.

To provide a comprehensive examination of this transformation the editors have included essays which examine Australia's political structures, organisations, parties, social and economic policy. Accordingly, *Developments in Australian Politics* is structured in two parts. Part one focuses on Australia's political foundations, forms and structures. From a legal view point, it contains the most interesting and important contribution to this volume.

The essay by Professor Anthony Blackshield examines the concepts of parliamentary sovereignty, appropriate and proportionate laws, judicial power and implied rights in the context of recent High Court decisions. In particular, Blackshield focuses on the way the High Court has transformed itself from a bastion of conservatism to an instigator of fundamental change. This transformation is explained with particular reference to the Court's judgments in *Mabo*, *Nationwide News* and *Australian Capital Television*.