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Eternal Treblinka

THE BOOK

Author	Charles Patterson
Publisher	Lantern Books
Published	2002
Format	Paperback, 6" x 9"
Pages	296
ISBN-10	1-930051-99-9
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(Review 4 - by Sukanya Datta, India, Asia)

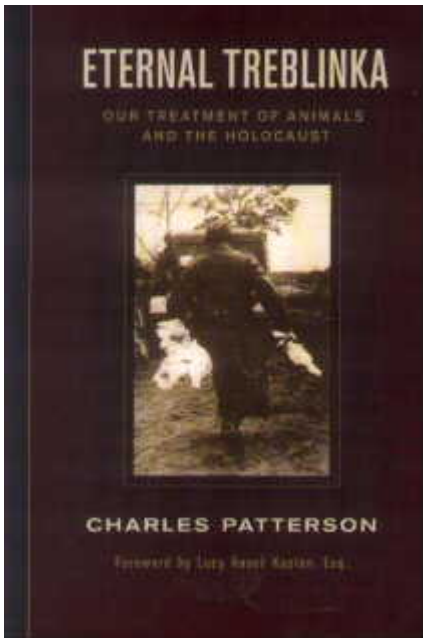
FEATURED BOOK : REVIEWS

NOT AN EASY BOOK TO IGNORE

Rating : 9.0

★★★★★★★★★☆

Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust *by* Charles Patterson, Paperback, 6" x 9"
Lantern Books, One Union Square West, Suite 201, New York, NY 10003, USA. E-mail:eternaltr@earthlink.net: Publication Date 2002. xvi+296 pages, ISBN 1-930051-99-9. Price $20.00



The Holocaust has left a deep and permanent scar on the collective psyche of humans. Much has been written about the cruelty that man has shown to man. Obviously the pain still lingers and memories cannot be wiped away by time. Even those born in lands far away and years after the Holocaust cannot claim to be untouched by it. It remains for ever the collective shame of mankind and all agree that the Holocaust should never be allowed to happen again. However, organised cruelty of the Holocaust was not an isolated event nor can we label it an aberration of history and wash our hands of it.because the cruelty continues albeit under a different garb. It would take a sensitive yet brave soul to turn the spotlight on and expose socially accepted human acts of cruelty with roots that go back millennia and that continue unabated today.

Eternal Treblinka is a book that forces one to re-evaluate one's worth as a human being. But first comes the question--What is a human being? This question seems to lead to more questions rather than to a precise answer. However, there is no doubting the fact that humans seem to think they are better at everything than the other citizens of Earth. Humans are lay sole claim to knowledge, experience, and intelligence after all they were made in the image of God! Love, fellow feeling, compassion, devotion, kindness, fairness, integrity, humour, generosity-- any desirable or appreciated quality named is appropriated and invariably labelled as a "human quality." The opposites are usually termed "inhuman." However, is this claim a true one? Can it stand up to scrutiny? A short trip down the roads of History would tempt one to answer "No."

> *...This is a book that forces one to re-evaluate one's worth as a human being...As Patterson has amply researched, ruthless cruelty has been a hallmark of the human race almost since the early days of civilization...*

As Patterson has amply researched, ruthless cruelty has been a hallmark of the human race almost since the early days of civilization. The practice of slavery is almost as old as humanity. Conquering tribes would capture enemies to be used as household servants, soldiers, artisans, and also as sacrificial offerings to tribal deities. History has recorded that during one famine, the Aztecs sacrificed over 10,000 people. In most such sacrifices it is believed the heart was torn out of the body. Most of those sacrificed were captives of war. Harsh treatment of captives and cannibalism was also the order of the day particularly as it was believed that in this way the power of the enemy

would pass into the captor. Human bloodlust has not been assuaged by the innumerable skirmishes, battles and wars that man has fought. Despite enormous intellectual strides, war crimes are still committed and there is little reason to suppose that peace and goodwill will ever find a lasting place on Earth. If anything the savagery and brutality has grown with each encounter. Genocide, use of rape as a weapon, ethnic cleansing, torture etc., are still part of the world's vocabulary. The behaviour of feudal lords, of victors, of the wealthy, towards those perceived to be 'inferior' remain unchanged despite education and the so-called advancements of science and society. Women in many parts of the world are treated at par with animals ie., are given sub-human status. If man is so inclined towards his own species what can one hope about his behaviour towards the other citizens of Planet Earth?

> *...This is not an easy book to read. It is not an easy book to ignore either. It is not the sort of book one would pick up at the airport, read cursorily and discard on arrival. On the contrary it is a book that will make the reader rethink his attitudes as a human being. It is a book that will load itself into the consciousness of the serious reader and be available for introspection...*

Immanuel Kant said, "He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals." By that token too most of mankind fails the test. The cancer of cruelty is all pervading. So inured are we to it that we often fail to recognise it for what it is. So while we fail to recognise organised cruelty to animals it is small mercy that at least the American Psychiatric Association recognises adolescent cruelty to animals as a symptom of conduct disorder. Virtually every serial killer, and most habitual violent offenders, began by torturing and killing animals. But what about the latent cruelty that we have taught ourselves to ignore? Examples would include battery-cultured poultry, slaughterhouse procedures, vivisection in the name of science, hunting for pleasure etc. Human beings castrate, geld and otherwise manipulate the breeding behaviour of many species to their own advantage. The list is endless.

Over the ages this acceptance of cruelty has blinded humans to the needlessness of the suffering inflicted. It has hardened the human heart, led to a deadening of response towards violence-even perhaps to its acceptance without protest. The unbearable reality of animal existence cannot really change until a seismic shift in the human thought process takes place. For such an age to dawn, and for man to enter a new age of moral evolution, it is necessary that the old blinkers be shed so that human anguish and animal suffering become a part of the past. Reading *Eternal Treblinka* could well be the first step towards this.

Eternal Treblinka is not an easy book to read. It is not an easy book to ignore either. It is not the sort of book one would pick up at the airport, read cursorily and discard on arrival. On the contrary it is a book that will make the reader rethink his attitudes as a human being. It is a book that will load itself into the consciousness of the serious reader and be available for introspection. The writer has blended sensitivity with serious facts and the result is sure to provoke, to stir the emotions, to incite debate and perhaps after the soul-searching is done lead to a more humane world.

-Sukanya Datta

-Sukanya Datta
Sukanya Datta is a prominent writer of Asia, having written several books on various subjects. She has been on the editorial panel of a leading science monthly of India. She has reviewed more than

one thousand books in various newspapers, magazines and journals. She can be contacted at sukanyadatta@hotmail.com

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Interview with Charles Patterson.

-Editor-in-Chief

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