

DETECTING BIAS

Directions: Read the commentary below and answer the questions that follow.

Think about your answers to these questions before you begin reading. How do you feel about heart and liver transplants? If you died, would you want to donate your organs to let someone else live? What do you think about doctors killing animals for medical experiments?

The Man with the Baboon Liver

Recently, doctors in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, **transplanted**¹ the liver of a baboon into the body of a dying man who had **hepatitis**². This surgery offers new hope to thousands of people who are suffering from liver disease.

Yet some people think the surgery was a mistake. Animal rights activists protested the transplant because the baboon had to be killed so that its healthy liver could be used. “Did the baboon consent?” read one sign. The protesters said it was wrong for humans to use other species for body parts. But this is a questions of the greater good. The man who received the baboon liver would almost certainly have died sooner.

There is a shortage of suitable human livers for transplant. Also, with a human liver, the hepatitis might come back. The man would have gone through the pain of the operation for nothing. Baboons do not get hepatitis. So using a baboon liver greatly increased the patient’s chances of survival.

The doctor who performed the surgery said, “We all love animals. But our passion and our commitment is to human beings.” Perhaps the protesters should think about that. Would they fell the same if the patient were their brother? This baboon was raised in a medical lab. Donating its liver was the whole purpose of its life.

Our society has become mature and caring enough so that some states have passed laws that ban killing animals for sport alone. Surely all these animal lives saved more than balance out the loss of one animal.

-Marcus Kendall

¹transplanted: Transferred an organ from one individual to another.

²hepatitis: Inflammation of the liver.

True or False (Circle one)

- T F The writer thinks a human life is more valuable than an animal one.
- T F A liver transplant from a human donor would have worked just as well.
- T F The protesters don’t think animals should be used for spare parts.
- T F The writer thinks society has gotten crueller to animals in recent years.
- T F The doctor who transplanted the liver hates animals.