

# Religious and Philosophical Perspectives on Animals: From Genesis to Derrida

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Western philosophical and religious attitudes toward animals typically emphasize human superiority due to cognitive and linguistic differences between the species; humans are deemed as uniquely rational,<sup>1</sup> self-conscious, and language-using: they are therefore regarded as the morally greater type. Animals are viewed as means to human ends, embodying only a property value;<sup>2</sup> the underlying notion that animals are sentient and have the ability to suffer is typically overridden. There is, however, fairly consistent mention of “humane” treatment of animals though this is usually concerned with an eventual mistreatment of humans. Though these have been the dominant Western historical views, there have been dissenting perspectives, some of which are ancient. This work will offer an overview of both focusing on those that are most representative.

## The Old Testament

In terms of the fundamental ethical relationship between humans and animals, Genesis (*Bereshit*)<sup>3</sup> 1: 26-28 has been most influential, though there is current controversy as to what the key term “dominion” (*radah* in Hebrew) might mean:

26: And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28: And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle states: “Man has rational principle... and man only (*anthrōpos de kai logō: monos gar ekhei logon*). Aristotle, *Politics*, 1332b5, trans. Benjamin Jowett in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (Random House, 1941), p. 1296.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed examination of this issue, see Gary L. Francione, *Animals, Property, and the Law*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Approximate date of authorship: 1450-1410 B.C.E.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bible: Authorized King James Version, With Apocrypha*, ed. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 2.

Jacques Derrida says this about God’s purpose in creating animals:

He has them come forward, he summons them, the animals that, according to the first narrative, he had created—and I firmly underline this factor that is fundamental to what concerns us—he summons them in order to “subject” ... them to man’s command, in order to place them under man’s “authority”.... More precisely, he has created man in his likeness *so that* man will *subject, tame, dominate, train, or domesticate* the animals born before him and assert his authority over them. God destines the animals to an experience of the power of man, *in order to see* the power of man in action, in order to see the power of man at work, in order to see man take power over all the other living beings. (Jacques

Does dominion imply benevolence or malevolence? A responsible sense of stewardship over the animal world or despotic, tyrannical rule? Generally, the latter has been historically evident, however this relationship is now under increasing theological scrutiny.<sup>5</sup> Though the Old Testament at times calls for the humane treatment of animals (Deuteronomy 5:14, 22:6-7<sup>6</sup>), interestingly, passages from Ecclesiastes (*Qoheleth*)<sup>7</sup> 3 impugn *any* notion of human superiority:

17: I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.

18: I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

19: For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all *is* vanity.<sup>8</sup>

Humans and animals are deemed a unified whole, a living continuum, all of “one breath,” and to assert human superiority is merely another act of misguided vanity.

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Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, trans. David Wills in *Critical Inquiry* 28 (Winter 2002): p. 386). This essay—and the similarly titled book—were drawn from Derrida’s 1997 ten-day conference in Cerisy on the question of “the animal.”

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Andrew Linzey, “The Place of Animals in Creation, A Christian View” in *Animal Sacrifices: Religious Perspectives on the Use of Animals in Science*, ed. Tom Regan (Temple University Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 5:14:

But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. (Carroll, op. cit., p. 224)

Deuteronomy 22:

6: If a bird’s nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be* young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young:

7: *But* thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; *that* it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days. (Ibid., p. 244)

<sup>7</sup> Approximate date of authorship: 935 B.C.E.

<sup>8</sup> Carroll, op. cit., p. 753.

## Plato (428–347 B.C.E.)

In one of his final works, the *Timaeus*, Plato offers a comprehensive description and explanation of the universe which proceeded from a rational blueprint forged by a *dēmiourgos*. Here, he describes animal creation; all are reincarnated persons who, when in human form, embodied negative intellectual and moral qualities and are thus hierarchically arranged from highest (birds) to lowest (fish):

... As for birds, as a kind they are the products of a transformation. They grow feathers instead of hair. They descended from innocent but simpleminded men, men who studied the heavenly bodies but in their naiveté believed that the most reliable proofs concerning them could be based upon visual observation. Land animals in the wild, moreover, came from men who had no tincture of philosophy and who made no study of the universe whatsoever, because they no longer made use of the revolutions in their heads but instead followed the lead of the parts of the soul that reside in the chest. As a consequence of these ways of theirs they carried their forelimbs and their heads dragging towards the ground, like towards like. The tops of their heads became elongated and took all sorts of shapes, depending on the particular way the revolutions were squeezed together from lack of use. This is the reason animals of this kind have four or more feet. The god placed a greater number of supports under the more mindless beings, so that they might be drawn more closely to the ground. As for the most mindless of these animals, the ones whose entire bodies stretch out completely along the ground, the gods made them without feet, crawling along the ground, there being no need of feet anymore.<sup>9</sup> The fourth kind of animal, the kind that lives in water, came from those men who were without question the most stupid and ignorant of all. The gods who brought about their transformation concluded that these no longer deserved to breathe pure air, because their souls were tainted with transgressions of every sort. Instead of letting them breathe rare and pure air, they shoved them into water to breathe its murky depths. This is the origin of fish, of all shellfish, and of every water-inhabiting animal. Their justly due reward for their extreme stupidity is their extreme dwelling

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<sup>9</sup> Compare this to God's treatment of the snake following Adams and Eve's disobedience in Genesis 3:14:

And the LORD God said unto the serpent,  
Because thou hast done this,  
thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field;  
upon thy belly shalt thou go,  
and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. (Ibid., p. 4)

Though the snake in Genesis was obviously devious and intelligent, the end result is similar in both depictions: the animal is—and has been—regarded with great negativity. See Derrida's remarks on the snake, per Levinas, at footnote 60.

place. These, then, are the conditions that govern, both then and now, how all the animals exchange their forms, one for the other, and in the process lose or gain intelligence or folly.<sup>10</sup>

### Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E)

In a discussion of property in the *Politics*, Aristotle regards animals as created specifically for human use (food, clothing) and that hunting them—as well as warfare with ‘ungovernable’ humans—is both natural and morally justifiable:

Property, in the sense of a bare livelihood, seems to be given by nature herself to all, both when they are first born, and when they are grown up. For some animals bring forth, together with their offspring, so much food as will last until they are able to supply themselves; of this the vermiparous or oviparous animals are an instance; and the viviparous animals have up to a certain time a supply of food for their young in themselves, which is called milk. In like manner we may infer that, after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man. And so, in one point of view, the art of war is a natural art of acquisition, for the art of acquisition includes hunting, an art which we ought to practice against wild beasts, and against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit; for war of such a kind is naturally just.<sup>11</sup>

### Plutarch (46-120 C.E.)

In his *Moralia*, the ancient Greek biographer and essayist offered an impassioned condemnation of meat-eating which not only descried its physical, mental and spiritual effects, but also its moral impact: the killing of animals will inevitably lead to the killing of humans—and war itself; animal slaughter is flatly categorized as “murder.” This perspective is markedly different than with subsequent theorists whose main emphasis is the moral treatment of humans: cruelty to animals is regarded as a stepping-stone toward violence directed at persons. Uniquely, in terms of historical attitudes, Plutarch is not just concerned with human suffering but animal suffering, *in itself*.

### Tract I.

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<sup>10</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 91d-92c, trans. Donald J. Zeyl in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John S. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), p. 1290-1291.

<sup>11</sup> McKeon, op. cit., *Politics*, 1256b, lines 7-26, pp. 1136-1137.

... You ask of me then for what reason it was that Pythagoras abstained from eating of flesh. I for my part do much admire in what humor, with what soul or reason, the first man with his mouth touched slaughter, and reached to his lips the flesh of a dead animal, and having set before people courses of ghastly corpses and ghosts, could give those parts the names of meat and victuals, that but a little before lowed, cried, moved, and saw; how his sight could endure the blood of slaughtered, flayed, and mangled bodies; how his smell could bear their scent; and how the very nastiness happened not to offend the taste, while it chewed the sores of others, and participated of the saps and juices of deadly wounds.

Crept the raw hides, and with a bellowing sound  
Roared the dead limbs; the burning entrails groaned. (Homer, *Odyssey*, XII 395)

This indeed is but a fiction and fancy; but the fare itself is truly monstrous and prodigious, — that a man should have a stomach to creatures while they yet bellow, and that he should be giving directions which of things yet alive and speaking is fittest to make food of, and ordering the several manners of the seasoning and dressing them and serving them up to tables. You ought rather, in my opinion, to have enquired who first began this practice, than who of late times left it off.

... And truly, as for those people who first ventured upon eating of flesh, it is very probable that the whole reason of their so doing was scarcity and want of other food; for it is not likely that their living together in lawless and extravagant lusts, or their growing wanton and capricious through the excessive variety of provisions then among them, brought them to such unsociable pleasures as these, against Nature. Yea, had they at this instant but their sense and voice restored to them, I am persuaded they would express themselves to this purpose:

“Oh! happy you, and highly favored of the Gods, who now live! Into what an age of the world are you fallen, who share and enjoy among you a plentiful portion of good things! What abundance of things spring up for your use! What fruitful vineyards you enjoy! What wealth you gather from the fields! What delicacies from trees and plants, which you may gather! You may glut and fill yourselves without being polluted. As for us, we fell upon the most dismal and affrighting part of time, in which we were exposed by our first production to manifold and inextricable wants and necessities. As yet the thickened air concealed the heaven from our view, and the stars were as yet confused with a disorderly huddle of fire and moisture and violent fluxions of winds. As yet the sun was not fixed to an unwandering and certain course, so as to distinguish morning and evening, nor did he bring back the seasons in order crowned with wreaths from the fruitful harvest. The land was also spoiled by the inundations of disorderly rivers; and a great part of it was deformed with sloughs, and utterly wild by reason of deep quagmires, unfertile forests, and woods. There was then

no production of tame fruits, nor any instruments of art or invention of wit. And hunger gave no time, nor did seed-time then stay for the yearly season. What wonder is it if we made use of the flesh of beasts contrary to Nature, when mud was eaten and the bark of wood, and when it was thought a happy thing to find either a sprouting grass or a root of any plant! But when they had by chance tasted of or eaten an acorn, they danced for very joy about some oak or esculus, calling it by the names of life-giver, mother, and nourisher. And this was the only festival that those times were acquainted with; upon all other occasions, all things were full of anguish and dismal sadness. But whence is it that a certain ravenousness and frenzy drives you in these happy days to pollute yourselves with blood, since you have such an abundance of things necessary for your subsistence? Why do you belie the earth as unable to maintain you? Why do you profane the lawgiver Ceres, and shame the mild and gentle Bacchus, as not furnishing you with sufficiency? Are you not ashamed to mix tame fruits with blood and slaughter? You are indeed wont to call serpents, leopards, and lions savage creatures; but yet yourselves are defiled with blood, and come nothing behind them in cruelty. What they kill is their ordinary nourishment, but what you kill is your better fare.”

... For we eat not lions and wolves by way of revenge; but we let those go, and catch the harmless and tame sort, and such as have neither stings nor teeth to bite with, and slay them; which, so may Jove help us, Nature seems to us to have produced for their beauty and comeliness only. \* [Just as if one seeing the river Nilus overflowing its banks, and thereby filling the whole country with genial and fertile moisture, should not at all admire that secret power in it that produces plants and plenteousness of most sweet and useful fruits, but beholding somewhere a crocodile swimming in it, or an asp crawling along, or mice (savage and filthy creatures), should presently affirm these to be the occasion of all that is amiss, or of any want or defect that may happen. Or as if indeed one contemplating this land or ground, how full it is of tame fruits, and how heavy with ears of corn, should afterwards espy somewhere in these same cornfields an ear of darnel or a wild vetch, and thereupon neglect to reap and gather in the corn, and fall a complaining of these. Such another thing it would be, if one—hearing the harangue of some advocate at some bar or pleading, swelling and enlarging and hastening towards the relief of some impending danger, or else, by Jupiter, in the impeaching and charging of certain audacious villanies or indictments, flowing and rolling along, and that not in a simple and poor strain, but with many sorts of passions all at once, or rather indeed with all sorts, in one and the same manner, into the many and various and differing minds of either hearers or judges that he is either to turn and change, or else, by Jupiter, to soften, appease, and quiet—should overlook all this business, and never consider or reckon upon the labor or struggle he had undergone, but pick up certain loose expressions,

which the rapid motion of the discourse had carried along with it, as by the current of its stream, and so had slipped and escaped the rest of the oration, and hereupon undervalue the orator.]

[\*“I see not how this that is included within these marks [ ] agreeth with this place, or matter in hand: I suppose therefore it is inserted heere without judgement, and taken out of some other booke.”—Holland.]

... But we are nothing put out of countenance, either by the beauteous gayety of the colors, or by the charmingness of the musical voices, or by the rare sagacity of the intellects, or by the cleanliness and neatness of diet, or by the rare discretion and prudence of these poor unfortunate animals; but for the sake of some little mouthful of flesh, we deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy. And then we fancy that the voices it utters and screams forth to us are nothing else but certain inarticulate sounds and noises, and not the several deprecations, entreaties, and pleadings of each of them, as it were saying thus to us: “I deprecate not thy necessity (if such there be), but thy wantonness. Kill me for thy feeding, but do not take me off for thy better feeding.” O horrible cruelty! It is truly an affecting sight to see the very table of rich people laid before them, who keep them cooks and caterers to furnish them with dead corpses for their daily fare; but it is yet more affecting to see it taken away, for the mammocks left are more than that which was eaten. These therefore were slain to no purpose. Others there are, who are so sparing of what is set before them that they will not suffer it to be cut or sliced; thus abstaining from them when dead, while they would not spare them when alive.

... Well then, we understand that that sort of men are used to say, that in eating of flesh they follow the conduct and direction of Nature. But that it is not natural to mankind to feed on flesh, we first of all demonstrate from the very shape and figure of the body. For a human body no ways resembles those that were born for ravenousness; it hath no hawk’s bill, no sharp talon, no roughness of teeth, no such strength of stomach or heat of digestion, as can be sufficient to convert or alter such heavy and fleshy fare. But even from hence, that is, from the smoothness of the tongue, and the slowness of the stomach to digest, Nature seems to disclaim all pretence to fleshy victuals. But if you will contend that yourself was born to an inclination to such food as you have now a mind to eat, do you then yourself kill what you would eat. But do it yourself, without the help of a chopping-knife, mallet, or axe,—as wolves, bears, and lions do, who kill and eat at once. Rend an ox with thy teeth, worry a hog with thy mouth, tear a lamb or a hare in pieces, and fall on and eat it alive as they do. But if thou hadst rather stay until what thou eatest is become dead, and if thou art loath to force a soul out of its body, why then dost thou against Nature eat an animate thing? Nay, there is nobody that is willing to eat even a lifeless and a dead thing as it is; but they boil it, and roast it, and alter it by fire

and medicines, as it were, changing and quenching the slaughtered gore with thousands of sweet sauces, that the palate being thereby deceived may admit of such uncouth fare. It was indeed a witty expression of a Lacedaemonian, who, having purchased a small fish in a certain inn, delivered it to his landlord to be dressed; and as he demanded cheese, and vinegar, and oil to make sauce, he replied, if I had had those, I would not have bought the fish. But we are grown so wanton in our bloody luxury, that we have bestowed upon flesh the name of meat (ὄψον), and then require another seasoning (ᾠψον), to this same flesh, mixing oil, wine, honey, pickle, and vinegar, with Syrian and Arabian spices, as though we really meant to embalm it after its disease. Indeed when things are dissolved and made thus tender and soft, and are as it were turned into a sort of a carrionly corruption, it must needs be a great difficulty for concoction to master them, and when it hath mastered them, they must needs cause grievous oppressions and qualmy indigestions.

... Diogenes ventured once to eat a raw pourcontrol, that he might disuse himself from meat dressed by fire; and as several priests and other people stood round him, he wrapped his head in his cassock, and so putting the fish to his mouth, he thus said unto them: It is for your sake, sirs, that I undergo this danger, and run this risk. A noble and gallant risk, by Jupiter! For far otherwise than as Pelopidas ventured his life for the liberty of the Thebans, and Harmodius and Aristogiton for that of the Athenians, did this philosopher encounter with a raw pourcontrol, to the end he might make human life more brutish. Moreover, these same flesh-eatings not only are preternatural to men's bodies, but also by clogging and cloying them, they render their very minds and intellects gross. For it is well known to most, that wine and much flesh-eating make the body indeed strong and lusty, but the mind weak and feeble. And that I may not offend the wrestlers, I will make use of examples out of my own country. The Athenians are wont to call us Boeotians gross, senseless, and stupid fellows, for no other reason but our over-much eating; and Pindar calls us also hogs, for the same reason. Menander the comedian calls us "fellows with long jaws." It is observed also that, according to the saying of Heraclitus, "the wisest soul is like a dry light" [See Mullach, *Fragm. Philos.* p. 325 (No. 73)]. Earthen jars, if you strike them, will sound; but if they be full, they perceive not the strokes that are given them. Copper vessels also that are thin communicate the sound round about them, unless some one stop and dull the ambient stroke with his fingers. Moreover, the eye, when seized with an over-great plenitude of humors, grows dim and feeble for its ordinary work. When we behold the sun through a humid air and a great quantity of gross and indigested vapors, we see it not clear and bright, but obscure and cloudy, and with glimmering beams. Just so in a muddy and clogged body, that is swagged down with heavy and unnatural nourishments; it must needs happen that the gayety and splendor of the mind be confused and dulled, and that it ramble and roll after little and

scarce discernible objects, since it wants clearness and vigor for higher things.

... But to pass by these considerations, is not accustoming one's self to mildness and a human temper of mind an admirable thing? For who could wrong or injure a man that is so sweetly and humanly disposed with respect to the ills of strangers that are not of his kind? I remember that three days ago, as I was discoursing, I made mention of a saying of Xenocrates, and how the Athenians gave judgment upon a certain person who had flayed a living ram. For my part I cannot think him a worse criminal that torments a poor creature while living, than a man that shall take away its life and murder it. But (as it seems) we are more sensible of what is done against custom than against Nature. There, however, I discoursed on these matters in a more popular style. But as for that grand and mysterious principle which (as Plato speaks) is incredible to base minds and to such as affect only mortal things, I as little care to move it in this discourse as a pilot doth a ship in a storm, or a comedian his machine while the scenes are moving; but perhaps it would not be amiss, by way of introduction and preface, to proclaim certain verses of Empedocles.... For in these, by way of allegory, he hints at men's souls, as that they are tied to mortal bodies, to be punished for murders, eating of flesh and of one another, although this doctrine seems much ancients than his time. For the fables that are storied and related about the discription of Bacchus, and the attempts of the Titans upon him, and of their tasting of his slain body, and of their several punishments and fulminations afterwards, are but a representation of the regeneration. For what in us is unreasonable, disorderly, and boisterous, being not divine but demoniac, the ancients termed Titans, that is *tormented* and *punished* (from τίω)...

## Tract II.

... Reason persuades us now to return with fresh cogitations and dispositions to what we left cold yesterday of our discourse about flesh-eating. It is indeed a hard and a difficult task to undertake (as Cato once said) to dispute with men's bellies, that have no ears; since most have already drunk that draught of custom, which is like that of Circe,

*Of groans and frauds and sorcery replete.* (Homer, *Odyssey*, X, 234)

And it is no easy task to pull out the hook of flesh-eating from the jaws of such as have gorged themselves with luxury and are (as it were) nailed down with it. It would indeed be a good action, if as the Egyptians draw out the stomach of a dead body, and cut it open and expose it to the sun, as the only cause of all its evil actions, so we could, by cutting out our gluttony and blood-shedding, purify and cleanse the remainder of our lives. For the stomach itself is not guilty of bloodshed, but is involuntarily polluted by our intemperance. But if this may not be, and we are ashamed

by reason of custom to live unblamably, let us at least sin with discretion. Let us eat flesh; but let it be for hunger and not for wantonness. Let us kill an animal; but let us do it with sorrow and pity, and not abusing and tormenting it, as many nowadays are used to do, while some run red-hot spits through the bodies of swine, that by the tincture of the quenched iron the blood may be to that degree mortified, that it may sweeten and soften the flesh in its circulation; others jump and stamp upon the udders of sows that are ready to pig, that so they may trample into one mass, (O Piacular Jupiter!) in the very pangs of delivery, blood, milk, and the corruption of the crushed and mangled young ones, and so eat the most inflamed part of the animal; others sew up the eyes of cranes and swans, and so shut them up in darkness to be fattened, and then souse up their flesh with certain monstrous mixtures and pickles.

... By all which it is most manifest, that it is not for nourishment, or want, or any necessity, but for mere gluttony, wantonness, and expensiveness, that they make a pleasure of villany. Just as it happens in persons who cannot satiate their intemperance upon women, and having made trial of every thing else and falling into vagaries, at last attempt things not to be mentioned; even so inordinateness in feeding, when it hath once passed the bounds of nature and necessity, studies at last to diversify the lusts of its intemperate appetite by cruelty and villany. For the senses, when they once quit their natural measures, sympathize with each other in their distempers, and are enticed by each other to the same consent and intemperance. Thus a distempered ear first debauched music, the soft and effeminate notes of which provoke immodest touches and lascivious tickling. These things first taught the eye not to delight in Pyrrhic dances, gesticulations of hands, or elegant pantomimes, nor in statues and fine paintings; but to reckon the slaughtering and death of mankind and wounds and duels the most sumptuous of shows and spectacles. Thus unlawful tables are accompanied with intemperate copulations, with unmusician-like balls, and theatres become monstrous through shameful songs and rehearsals; and barbarous and brutish shows are again accompanied with an unrelenting temper and savage cruelty towards mankind. Hence it was that the divine Lycurgus in his Three Books of Laws gave orders that the doors and ridges of men's houses should be made with a saw and an axe, and that no other instrument should so much as be brought to any house. Not that he did hereby intend to declare war against augers and planes and other instruments of finer work; but because he very well knew that with such tools as these you will never bring into your house a gilded couch, and that you will never attempt to bring into a slender cottage either silver tables, purple carpets, or costly stones; but that a plain supper and a homely dinner must accompany such a house, couch, table, and cup. The beginning of a vicious diet is presently followed by all sorts of luxury and expensiveness,

*Ev'n as a mare is by her thirsty colt.*

... And what meal is not expensive? That for which no animal is put to death. Shall we reckon a soul to be a small expense. I will not say perhaps of a mother, or a father, or of some friend, or child, as Empedocles did; but one participating of feeling, of seeing, of hearing, of imagination, and of intellection; which each animal hath received from Nature for the acquiring of what is agreeable to it, and the avoiding what is disagreeable. Do but consider this with yourself now, which sort of philosophers render us most tame and civil, they who bid people to feed on their children, friends, fathers, and wives, when they are dead; or Pythagoras and Empedocles, that accustom men to be just towards even the other members of the creation. You laugh at a man that will not eat a sheep: but we (they will say again) — when we see you cutting off the parts of your dead father or mother, and sending it to your absent friends, and calling upon and inviting your present friends to eat the rest freely and heartily — shall we not smile? Nay, peradventure we offend at this instant time while we touch these books, without having first cleansed our hands, eyes, feet, and ears; if it be not (by Jupiter) a sufficient purgation of them to have discoursed of these matters in potable and fresh language (as Plato speaketh), thereby washing off the brackishness of hearing. Now if a man should set these books and discourses in opposition to each other, he will find that the philosophy of the one sort suits with the Scythians, Sogdians, and Melanchlaenians, of whom Herodotus's relation is scarce believed; but the sentiments of Pythagoras and Empedocles were the laws and customs of the ancient Grecians.

... Who then were the first authors of this opinion, that we owe no justice to dumb animals?

Who first beat out accursed steel,  
And made the lab'ring ox a knife to feel.

In the very same manner oppressors and tyrants begin first to shed blood. For example, the first man that the Athenians ever put to death was one of the basest of all knaves, whom all thought deserving of death; after him they put to death a second and a third. After this, being now accustomed to blood, they patiently saw Niceratus the son of Nicias, and their own general Theramenes, and Polemarchus the philosopher suffer death. Even so, in the beginning, some wild and mischievous beast was killed and eaten, and then some little bird or fish was entrapped. And the love of slaughter, being first experimented and exercised in these, at last passed even to the laboring ox, and the sheep that clothes us, and to the poor cock that keeps the house; until by little and little, unsatiableness being strengthened by use, men came to the slaughter of men, to bloodshed and wars. Now even if one cannot demonstrate and make out, that souls in their regenerations make a promiscuous use of all bodies, and that that which is now rational will at another time be irrational, and that again

tame which is now wild, — for that Nature changes and transmutes every thing,

*With different fleshy coats new clothing all, —*

this thing should be sufficient to change and reclaim men, that it is a savage and intemperate habit, that it brings sickness and heaviness upon the body, and that it inclines the mind the more brutishly to bloodshed and destruction, when we have once accustomed ourselves neither to entertain a guest nor keep a wedding nor to treat our friends without blood and slaughter.

... And if what is argued about the return of souls into bodies is not of force enough to beget faith, yet methinks the very uncertainty of the thing should fill us with apprehension and fear. Suppose, for instance, one should in some night-engagement run on with his drawn sword upon one that had fallen down and covered his body with his arms, and should in the mean time hear one say, that he was not very sure, but that he fancied and believed, that the party lying there was his own son, brother, father, or tent-companion; which were more advisable, think you, — to hearken to a false suggestion, and so to let go an enemy under the notion of a friend, or to slight an authority not sufficient to beget faith, and to slay a friend instead of a foe? This you will all say would be insupportable. Do but consider the famous Merope in the tragedy, who taking up a hatchet, and lifting it at her son's head, whom she took for her son's murderer, speaks thus as she was ready to give the fatal blow,

*Villain, this pious blow shall cleave thy head;* [Eurip. Cresphontes, Frag. 457]

what a bustle she raises in the whole theatre while she raises herself to give the blow, and what a fear they are all in, lest she should prevent the old man that comes to stop her hand, and should wound the youth. Now if another old man should stand by her and say, "Strike, it is thy enemy," and this, "Hold, it is thy son," which, think you, would be the greater injustice, to omit the punishing of an enemy for the sake of one's child, or to suffer one's self to be so transported with anger at an enemy as to kill one's child? Since then neither hatred nor wrath nor any revenge nor fear for ourselves carries us to the slaughter of a beast, but the poor sacrifice stands with an inclined neck, only to satisfy thy lust and pleasure, and then one philosopher stands by and tells thee, "Cut him down, it is but an unreasonable animal," and another cries, "Hold, what if there should be the soul of some kinsman or God inclosed in him"? — good Gods! is there the like danger if I refuse to eat flesh, as if I for want of faith murder my child or some other friend?

... The Stoics' way of reasoning upon this subject of flesh-eating is no way equal nor consonant with themselves. Who is this that hath so many

mouths for his belly and the kitchen? Whence comes it to pass, that they so very much womanize and reproach pleasure, as a thing that they will not allow to be either good or preferable, or so much as agreeable, and yet all on a sudden become so zealous advocates for pleasures? It were indeed but a reasonable consequence of their doctrine, that, since they banish perfumes and cakes from their banquets, they should be much more averse to blood and to flesh. But now, just as if they would reduce their philosophy to their day-books, they lessen the expenses of their suppers in certain unnecessary and needless matters, but the untamed and murderous part of their expense they nothing boggle at. “Well! What then?” say they. “We have nothing to do with brute beasts.” Nor have you any with perfumes, nor with foreign sauces, may some one answer; therefore expel these from your banquets, if you are driving out every thing that is both useless and needless.

... Let us therefore in the next place consider, whether we owe any justice to the brute beasts. Neither shall we handle this point artificially, or like subtle sophisters, but by casting our eye into our own breasts, and conversing with ourselves as men, we will weigh and examine the whole matter....<sup>12</sup>

In a humorous though prescient satire, “That Brute Beasts Make Use of Reason,” Plutarch offers a dialogue based upon the Circe episode of Homer’s *Odyssey*. Odysseus (here, Ulysses) asks Circe to change his men back from swine to human form; one of them, Gryllus, answering for all, retorts that he would much rather stay in animal form because in many ways he feels that animals are superior:

... Rather what virtues do they not partake of in a higher degree than the wisest of men? Look upon fortitude in the first place, of which you vaunt and brag to have such a terrible share, being not ashamed of the magnificent titles of Ulysses the bold and city-stormer, when indeed, like a pitiful knave as thou art, thou dost only circumvent by tricks and artifices men that understand only the simple and generous way of making war, ignorant altogether of fraud and faith-breaking, and by that means coverest thy deceit with the name of virtue, which never admits of any such coney-catching devices. But do you observe the combats and warfare of beasts, as well one against another as against yourselves, how free from craft and deceit they are, and how with an open and naked courage they defend themselves by mere strength of body; and how, neither afraid of the law that calls them forth to battle nor the severe edicts against deserters, but only out of scorn to be overcome, they fight with obstinacy to the last for conquest and victory. For they are not vanquished when their bodies are worsted, neither does despair cowardize them, but they die

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<sup>12</sup> Plutarch, “Of Eating of Flesh,” in *Plutarch’s Miscellanies and Essays*, Vol. 5. trans., ed. William W. Goodwin (Little, Brown, and Company, 1888), pp. 3-16.

upon the spot. And you shall see many times that the strength of many, while they are expiring, being retired and crowded together in some part of the body, still makes resistance against the victor, and pants and fumes till at length it fails like extinguished fire that goes out for want of fuel. But there is no crying for quarter, no begging of mercy, no acknowledgment of being beaten; nor will the lion be a slave to the lion, nor the horse to the horse, as one man is a slave to another, willingly and patiently embracing servitude, which derives its name... from that of cowardice.... On the other side, such beasts as men by nets and treacherous snares get into their power, if fully grown, rather choose to die than serve, refusing nourishment and suffering extremity of drought. But as for their young ones, — being tractable and supple by reason of their age, and fed with the deceitful mixtures and food that men provide for them, their inbred fierceness languishing through the taste of preternatural delights, — they suffer that which is called domestication, which is only an effeminating of their natural fury.

Whence it is apparent that beasts are naturally inclined to be courageous and daring, but that the martial confidence of men is preternatural. Which, most noble Ulysses, you may chiefly observe from hence; for that in beasts Nature keeps an equal balance of strength; so that the female, being but little inferior to the male, undergoes all necessary toils, and fights in defence of her young ones. And thus you hear of a certain Cromyonian sow, which, though a female, held Theseus tack, and found him work sufficient. Neither had the wisdom of that same female Sphinx that sat on Phicium, with all her riddles and enigmas, availed her, had she not far excelled the Cadmeans in strength and fortitude. Not far from whence the Telmesian fox had his den, a great propounder of questions also; not to omit the female serpent that fought with Apollo for his oracle at Delphi. Your king also took the mare Aetha from the Sicyonian, as a bribe to discharge him from going to the wars; and he did well, thereby showing how much he esteemed a valiant and generous mare above a timorous coward. You yourself have also seen female panthers and lionesses little inferior to the males in strength and courage; when your own wife, though a Lacedaemonian, when you were hectoring and blustering abroad, sat at home in the chimney-corner, not daring to do so much as the very swallows in encountering those who plagued both her and her family. Why need I still speak of the Carian and Maeonian women? Whence it is apparent that fortitude is not natural to men, for then the women would partake of the same strength with men. So that the fortitude which you exercise is only constrained by law, not natural and voluntary, but subservient to the manners of the place and enslaved to reproach, a thing made up only of glorious words and adventitious opinion. And you undergo labor and throw yourself into danger, not out of real valor and boldness, but because ye are more afraid of other things. Therefore, as among thy own companions he that first makes haste to snatch up the light

oar does it not because he contemns it, but because he is loath to be troubled with the more heavy; so he that endures a blow to avoid a wound, and defends himself against an enemy to preserve himself from wounds and death, does it not out of daring courage against the one, but out of fear of the other. Thus your fortitude is only a prudent fear; and your courage a knowing timidity, which understandingly does one thing to avoid another.

In short, if you believe yourselves superior to the beasts in fortitude, why do your poets call those that behave themselves most valiantly against their enemies wolf-breasted, lion-hearted, and compare them to wild boars; but never call the courage of lions man-like, or resemble the strength of a wild boar to that of a man? But as they call the swift wind-footed, and the beautiful Godlike-formed, hyperbolizing in their similes; so when they extol the gallantry of the stout in battle, they derive their comparisons from the superior in bravery. The reason is, because courage is as it were the tincture and edge of fortitude; which the beasts make use of unmixed in their combats, but in you being mixed with reason, like wine diluted with water, it gives way to danger and loses the opportunity. And some of you there are who deny that courage is requisite in battle, and therefore laying it aside make use of sober reason; which they do well for their preservation, but are shamefully beside the cushion, in point of strength and revenge. How absurd is it therefore for you to complain of Nature, because she did not furnish your bodies with goads and teeth and crooked claws to defend yourselves, when at the same time you would disarm the soul of her natural weapons?

... But because thou believest me to be a sophister, I shall observe a certain order in my discourse, first giving thee the definition of temperance, and then dividing desire according to the several kinds of it. Temperance then is the contracting and well governing our desires, pruning off those that are superfluous and encroaching upon our wills, and ruling those that are necessary by the standards of reason and moderation. Now in desires you observe a vast number of distinctions. For it is both natural and necessary to drink; but as for venereal desires, which derive their originals from Nature, there is a time when they may be restrained without any inconvenience; these are therefore called natural but not necessary. But there is another sort, which are neither natural nor necessary, but infused from without by vain opinion through the mistake of right and true; and it is these that want but very little of ruining all your natural desires with their number, like a multitude of foreigners outnumbering the natives and expelling them from their habitations. But the beasts, having their souls unmixed and not to be overcome by these adventitious passions, and living lives as distant from vain opinion as from the sea, are inferior to you in living elegantly and superfluously, but they are extremely wary in preserving temperance and the right government of their desires, as being neither troubled with many, nor those foreign to

their natures. And therefore formerly I was no less smitten with the glister of gold than thou art now, as believing nothing else that a man could possess to be comparable to it. Silver also and ivory inveigled me with the same desires; and he that enjoyed these things in the greatest measure seemed to be a man most happy and beloved of God, whether a Phrygian or a Carian, whether more meanly descended than Dolon or more miserable than Priam. From thenceforward being altogether swayed by my desires, I reaped no other pleasure nor delight in any other blessings of my life, with which I abounded, believing that I wanted still and missed my share of those that were the chiefest and the greatest. Therefore, I remember, when I beheld thee in Crete, at some solemnity, most pompously attired, I neither envied thy wisdom nor thy virtue; but the extraordinary fineness and exquisite workmanship of thy tunic, and the glistering of thy purple upper garment, and the beauty of the ornaments struck me with admiration. And the golden clasp, methought, was a pretty toy that had something of extraordinary graving in it; and bewitched with these baubles, I followed thee as the women did. But now being altogether estranged from those vain opinions, and having my understanding purified, I tread both gold and silver under my feet as I do the common stones; nor did I ever sleep more soundly upon thy carpets and tapestries, than now I do, rolled over head and ears in the deep and soft mud. None of those adventitious desires reside in our souls, but for the most part our manner of living is accustomed to necessary pleasures and desires; and as for those pleasures which are not necessary but only natural, we make such a use of them as is neither without order nor moderation.

... Let it be so, that nothing will serve ye but to devour whatever comes near ye, to pamper and indulge your voracious appetites. Yet where is the benefit and pleasure of all this? But such is the prudence of the beasts, as not to admit of any vain and unprofitable arts. And as for those that are necessary, they do not acquire them, as being introduced by others or taught for reward; neither do they make it their study to soder and fasten one contemplation to another, but they are supplied by their own prudence with such as are true-born and genuine. It is true, we hear the Egyptians are generally physicians. But the beasts are not only every one of them notionally endued with knowledge and art which way to cure themselves, but also to procure their food and repair their strength, to catch their prey by slight and cunning, to guard themselves from danger; neither are some of them ignorant how to teach the science of music so far as is convenient for them. For from whom did we hogs learn to run to the rivers, when we are sick, to search for crawfish? Who taught the tortoises, when they have eaten vipers, to physic themselves with organum? Who taught the Cretan goats, when shot with arrows that stick in their bodies, to betake themselves to dittany, which they have no sooner eaten, but the heads of the darts fall out of the wound? Now if you say that Nature is the schoolmistress that teaches them these things, you acknowledge the

prudence of beasts to be derived from the chiefest and wisest original of understanding; which if you think not proper to call reason and wisdom, it is time for ye to find out a more glorious and honorable name for it. Indeed by its effects it shows itself to be greater and more wonderful in power; not illiterate or without education, but instructed by itself and wanting nothing from without; not weak and imperfect, but, through the vigor and perfection of its natural virtue, supporting and cherishing that natural contribution of understanding which others attain to by instruction and education. So that, whatever men acquire and contemplate in the midst of their luxury and wantonness, those things our understanding attains to through the excellency of our apprehensions, even contrary to the nature of the body. For not to speak of whelps that learn to draw dry foot, and colts that will practise figure-dances; there are crows that will speak, and dogs that will leap through hoops as they turn around. You shall also see horses and bulls upon the theatres lie down, dance, stop, and move their bodies after such a manner as would puzzle even men to perform the same things; which, though they are of little use, yet being learned and remembered by beasts, are great arguments of their docility.

If you doubt whether we learn arts, be convinced that we teach them. For partridges teach their young ones to hide themselves by lying upon their backs just before a clod of earth, to escape the pursuit of the fowlers. And you shall observe the old storks, when their young ones first begin to take wing, what care they take to instruct them upon the tops of houses. Nightingales also teach their young ones to sing; insomuch that nightingales taken young out of the nest, and bred up by hand in cages, sing worse, as being deprived of their instructors before their time. So that after I had been a while transformed into this shape, I admired at myself, that I was so easily persuaded by idle arguments of the sophisters to believe that all other creatures were void of sense and reason except man.<sup>13</sup>

### Porphyry (233-305 C.E.)

Another unique voice from antiquity, Porphyry, a neo-Platonist philosopher and pupil of Plotinus, argued at length that animals *were* rational and eating them not only constituted barbarism but “fratricide”; he did not oppose meat-eating in the manner of the Pythagoreans who subscribed to a doctrine of metempsychosis (transmigration of the human soul into an animal body), but because animals and humans were on the same life plane in terms of “... feelings... ideas... memory (and) industry.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Plutarch, “That Brute Beasts Make Use Of Reason” in *Plutarch’s Miscellanies and Essays*, Vol. 5. trans., ed. William W. Goodwin (Little, Brown, and Company, 1888), pp. 223-227, 230-232.

<sup>14</sup> Esmé Wynne-Tyson, introduction to *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, by Porphyry, trans. Thomas Taylor, ed. Esmé Wynne-Tyson (Barnes and Noble, 1965), p. 6.

Here, using a variety of examples, Porphyry argues that animals do speak—albeit in their own language—are not “ignorant” of the human “voice,” and even use “syllogistic” reasoning:

Since... reason is twofold, one kind consisting in external speech, ... the other in the disposition of the soul, we shall begin from that which is external, and which is arranged according to the voice. But if external reason is voice, which through the tongue is significant of the internal passions of the soul, which (for this is the most common definition of it, and is not adopted by one sect [of philosophers] only, and if it is alone indicative of the conception of [internal] reason)—if this be the case, in what pertaining to this are such animals as have a voice deficient? Do they not discursively perceive the manner in which they are inwardly affected, before it is vocally enunciated by them? By a discursive perception, however, I mean the perception produced by the silent discourse which takes place in the soul. Since, therefore, that which is vocally expressed by the tongue is reason, in whatever manner it may be expressed, whether in a barbarous or a Grecian, a canine or a bovine mode, other animals also participate of it that are vocal; men, indeed, speaking conformably to the human laws [of speech], but other animals conformably to the laws which they received from the Gods and nature. But if we do not understand what they say, what is this to the purpose? For the Greeks do not understand what is said by the Indians, nor those who are educated in Attica the language of the Scythians, or Thracians, or Syrians; but the sound of the one falls on the ears of the other like the clangor of cranes, though by others their vocal sounds can be written and articulated, in the same manner as ours can by us. Nevertheless, the vocal sounds of the Syrians, for instance, or the Persians, are to us inarticulate, and cannot be expressed by writing, just as the speech of animals is unintelligible to all men. For as when we hear the Scythians speak, apprehend, by the auditory sense, a noise only and a sound, but are ignorant of the meaning of what they say, because their language appears to us to be nothing but a clangor, to have no articulation, and to employ only one sound either longer or shorter, the variety of which is not at all significant to us, but to them the vocal sounds are intelligible, and have a great difference, in the same manner as our language has to us; the like also takes place in the vocal sounds of other animals. For the several species of these understand the language which is adapted to them, but we only hear a sound, of the signification of which we are ignorant, because no one who has learnt our language, is able to teach us through ours the meaning of what is said by brutes. If, however, it is requisite to believe in the ancients, and also in those who have lived in our times, and the times of our fathers, there are some among us these who are said to have heard and to have understood the speech of animals. Thus, for instance this is narrated of Melampus<sup>15</sup> and Tiresias,<sup>16</sup> and others of

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<sup>15</sup> Mythological Greek soothsayer and healer.

<sup>16</sup> Mythological Greek clairvoyant, prophet.

the like kind; and the same thing, not much prior to our time, is related of Apollonius Tyanaeus.<sup>17</sup> For it is narrated of him, that once, when he was with his associates, a swallow happening to be present and twittering, he said, that the swallow indicated to other birds, that an ass laden with corn had fallen down before the city, and that in consequence of the fall of the ass, the corn was spread on the ground.... An associate, also, of mine informed me, that he once had a boy for a servant who understood the meaning of all the sounds of birds, and who said, that all of them were prophetic, and declarative of what would shortly happen. He added that he was deprived of this knowledge through his mother, who fearing that he would be sent to the Emperor as a gift, poured urine into his ear when he was asleep.

... It is also narrated, that some dumb animals obey their masters with more readiness than any domestic servants. Hence, a lamprey was so accustomed to the Roman Crassus,<sup>18</sup> as to come to him when he called it by its name; on which account Crassus was so affectionately disposed towards it, that he exceedingly lamented its death, though, prior to this, he had borne the loss of three of his children with moderation. Many likewise relate that the eels in Arethusa,<sup>19</sup> and the shell-fish denominated saperdae, about Maeander,<sup>20</sup> are obedient to those that call them. Is not the imagination, therefore, of an animal that speaks, the same, whether it proceeds as far as to the tongue, or does not? And if this be the case, is it not absurd to, call the voice of man alone [external] reason, but refuse thus to denominate the voice of other animals? For this is just as if crows should think that their voice alone is external reason, but that we are irrational animals, because the meaning of the sounds which we utter is not obvious to them; or as if the inhabitants of Attica should thus denominate their speech alone, and should think that those are irrational who are ignorant of the Attic tongue, though the inhabitants of Attica would sooner understand the croaking of a crow, than the language of a Syrian or a Persian. But is it not absurd to judge of rationality and irrationality from apprehending the meaning of vocal sounds, or from silence and speech? For thus some one might say, that the God who is above all things, and likewise the other Gods are not rational, because they do not speak. The Gods, however, silently indicate their will, and birds apprehend their will more rapidly than men, and when they have apprehended it, they narrate it to men as much as they are able and different birds are the messengers to men of different Gods. Thus, the eagle is the messenger of Jupiter, the hawk and the crow of Apollo, the stork of Juno, the crex and the bird of night of Minerva, the crane of Ceres, and some other bird is the messenger of some other deity.

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<sup>17</sup> Ancient Greek Neopythagorean philosopher.

<sup>18</sup> Roman general and politician.

<sup>19</sup> Greek mythological nymph.

<sup>20</sup> Famous river in Asia Minor (its windings led to the term "meander").

Moreover, those among us that observe animals, and are nurtured together with them, know the meaning of their vocal sounds. The hunter, therefore, from the barking of his dog, perceives at one time, indeed, that the dog explores a hare, but at another, that the dog has found it; at one time that he pursues the game, at another that he has caught it, and at another that he is in the wrong track, through having lost the scent of it. Thus, too, the cowherd knows, at one time, indeed, that a cow is hungry, or thirsty, or weary, and at another, that she is incited to venery or seeks her calf, [from her different lowings]. A lion also manifests by his roaring that he threatens, a wolf by his howling that he is in a bad condition, and shepherds, from the bleating of sheep, know what the sheep want.

... Neither, therefore, are animals ignorant of the meaning of the voice of men, when they are angry, or speak kindly to, or call them, or pursue them, or ask them to do something, or give something to them; nor, in short, are they ignorant of any thing that is usually said to them, but are aptly obedient to it; which it would be impossible for them to do unless that which is similar to intellection energized, in consequence of being excited by its similar. The immoderation of their passions, also, is suppressed by certain modulations, and stags, bulls, and other animals, from being wild become tame. Those, too, who are decidedly of opinion that brutes are deprived of reason, yet admit that dogs have a knowledge of dialectic, and make use of the syllogism which consists of many disjunctive propositions, when, in searching for their game they happen to come to a place where there are three roads. For they thus reason, the beast has either fled through this road, or through that, or through the remaining road; but it has not fled either through this, or through that, and therefore it must have fled through the remaining third of these roads.... After which syllogistic process, they resume their pursuit in that road. It may, however, be readily said, that animals do these things naturally, because they were not taught by any one to do them; as if we also were not allotted reason by nature, though we likewise give names to things, because we are naturally adapted to do, so. Besides, if it be requisite to believe in Aristotle, animals are seen to teach their offspring not only something pertaining to other things, but also to utter vocal sounds; as the nightingale, for instance, teaches her young to sing. And as he likewise says, animals learn many things from each other, and many from men; and the truth of what he asserts is testified by all the tamers of colts, by every jockey, horseman, and charioteer, and by all hunters, herdsmen, keepers of elephants, and masters of wild beasts and birds. He, therefore, who estimates things rightly, will be led, from these instances, to ascribe intelligence to brutes; but he who is inconsiderate, and is ignorant of these things, will be induced to act rashly, through his inexhaustible avidity cooperating with him against them. For how is it possible that he should not defame and

calumniate animals, who has determined to cut them in pieces, as if they were stones?<sup>21</sup>

### St. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

The two most influential Christian theological perspectives originate with Augustine and Aquinas; both reflect the influence of Genesis and Aristotle.

Augustine, in an argument against the legitimacy of suicide, believes that humans and animals are morally distinct because God did not create a “common bond” between them; thus, human usage of animals was divinely intended:

... All the more must we realize that no man may take his own life, for in the command, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ there are no limitations; hence, no one not even the one who is commanded, is to be excepted.

Indeed, some people try to stretch the prohibition to cover beasts and cattle and make it unlawful to kill any such animals. But, then, why not include plants and anything rooted in and feeding on the soil? After all, things like this, though devoid of feeling, are said to have life and therefore can die and so be killed by violent treatment. St. Paul himself, speaking of seeds, says ‘That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die first (I *Cor*, 15:36) while the Psalmist writes: ‘And he destroyed their vineyards with hail (Ps, 77.47) Must we then when we read ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ understand that it is a crime to pull up a shrub, and foolishly subscribe to the error of the Manichaeans?

Putting this nonsense aside, we do not apply ‘Thou shall not kill’ to plants because they have no sensation; or to irrational animals that fly, swim, walk or creep because they are linked to us by no association or common bond. By the creator’s wise ordinance, they are meant for our use, dead or alive. It only remains for us to apply the commandment ‘Thou shall not kill,’ to man alone, oneself and others. And, of course, one who kills himself kills a man.<sup>22</sup>

Aquinas, in a typical manner, combines both Aristotle and the Old Testament view of dominion, though also includes a compassion proviso, but only because this will benefit humans. In terms of our cognitive capacity as “intellectual” beings, we are “instruments” unto ourselves while animals, lacking this capability, can become *our* instruments:

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<sup>21</sup> Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, trans. Thomas Taylor, ed. Esme Wynne-Tyson (Barnes and Noble, 1965), pp. 110-112, 115-116.

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, St. “The Pagan Gods and Earthly Happiness,” Book I, Chapter 20, *City of God*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, Demetrius B. Zema, Grace Monahan, Daniel Honan (Image Book, Doubleday, 1958), p. 56.

... First of all, then, the very way in which the intellectual creature was made, according as it is master of its acts, demands providential care whereby this creature may provide for itself, on its own behalf; while the way in which other things were created, things which have no dominion over their acts, shows this fact, that they are cared for, not for their own sake, but as subordinated to others. That which is moved only by another being has the formal character of an instrument, but that which acts of itself has the essential character of a principal agent. Now, an instrument is not valued for its own sake, but as useful to a principal agent. Hence it must be that all the careful work that is devoted to instruments is actually done for the sake of the agent, as for an end, but what is done for the principal agent, either by himself or by another, is for his own sake, because he is the principal agent. Therefore, intellectual creatures are so controlled by God, as objects of care for their own sakes; while other creatures are subordinated, as it were, to the rational creatures.

... Again, one who holds dominion over his own acts is free in his activity, “for the free man is he who acts for his own sake.” But one who is acted upon by another, under necessity, is subject to slavery. So, every other creature is naturally subject to slavery; only the intellectual creature is by nature free. Now, under every sort of government, provision is made for free men for their own sakes, but for slaves in such a way that they may be at the disposal of free men. And so, through divine providence provision is made for intellectual creatures on their own account, but for the remaining creatures for the sake of the intellectual ones.

... Besides, whenever things are ordered to any end, and some of these things cannot attain the end through their own efforts, they must be subordinated to things which do achieve the end and which are ordered to the end for their own sakes. Thus, for instance, the end of an army is victory, and this the soldiers may achieve through their own act of fighting; that is why only soldiers are needed for their own sake in an army. All others, who are assigned to different tasks—for instance, caring for the horses and supplying the weapons—are needed for the sake of the soldiers in the army. Now, from what has been seen earlier, it is established that God is the ultimate end of the whole of things; that an intellectual nature alone attains to Him in Himself, that is, by knowing and loving Him, as is evident from what has been said. Therefore, the intellectual nature is the only one that is required in the universe, for its own sake, while all others are for its sake.

... Moreover, in any whole the principal parts are needed in themselves in order to constitute the whole, but the other parts are for the preservation or for some betterment of the principal ones. Now, of all the parts of the universe the more noble are intellectual creatures, since they come closer to the divine likeness. Therefore, intellectual creatures are governed by

divine providence for their own sakes, while all others are for the intellectual ones.

... Furthermore, it is evident that all parts are ordered to the perfection of the whole, since a whole does not exist for the sake of its parts, but, rather, the parts are for the whole. Now, intellectual natures have a closer relationship to a whole than do other natures; indeed, each intellectual substance is, in a way, all things. For it may comprehend the entirety of being through its intellect; on the other hand, every other substance has only a particular share in being. Therefore, other substances may fittingly be providentially cared for by God for the sake of intellectual substances.

... Again, as a thing is acted upon in the course of nature, so is it disposed to action by its natural origin. Now, we see that things do go on in the course of nature in such a way that intellectual substance uses all others for itself: either for the perfecting of its understanding, since it contemplates the truth in them; or for the exercise of its power and the development of its knowledge, in the fashion of an artist who develops his artistic conception in bodily matter; or even for the support of his body which is united with the intellectual soul, as we see in the case of men. Therefore, it is clear that all things are divinely ruled by providence for the sake of intellectual substances.

... Besides, what a man desires for its own sake is something which he always desires, for that which is, because of itself, always is. On the other hand, what a man desires for the sake of something else is not necessarily always desired; rather, the duration of the desire depends on that for which it is sought. Now, the being of things flows forth from the divine will, as is shown in our earlier considerations. Therefore, those things which always exist among beings are willed by God for their own sake, while things which do not always exist are not for their own sake, but for the sake of something else. Now, intellectual substances come closest to existing always, for they are incorruptible. They are also immutable, excepting only their act of choice. Therefore, intellectual substances are governed for their own sake, in a sense, while others are for them.

... Nor is what was shown in earlier arguments opposed to this, namely, that all parts of the universe are ordered to the perfection of the whole. For all parts are ordered to the perfection of the whole, inasmuch as one is made to serve another. Thus, in the human body it is apparent that the lungs contribute to the perfection of the body by rendering service to the heart; hence, it is not contradictory for the lungs to be for the sake of the heart, and also for the sake of the whole organism. Likewise, it is not contradictory for some natures to be for the sake of the intellectual ones, and also for the sake of the perfection of the universe. For, in fact, if the

things needed for the perfection of intellectual substance were lacking, the universe would not be complete.

... Similarly, too, the foregoing is not opposed by the fact that individuals are for the sake of their proper species. Because they are ordered to their species, they possess a further ordination to intellectual nature. For a corruptible thing is not ordered to man for the sake of one individual man only, but for the sake of the whole human species. A corruptible thing could not be of use to the whole human species except by virtue of the thing's entire species. Therefore, the order whereby corruptible things are ordered to man requires the subordination of individuals to their species.

... However, we do not understand this statement, that intellectual substances are ordered for their own sake by divine providence, to mean that they are not more ultimately referred to God and to the perfection of the universe. In fact, they are said to be providentially managed for their own sake, and other things for their sake, in the sense that the goods which they receive through divine goodness are not given them for the advantage of another being, but the things given to other beings must be turned over to the use of intellectual substances in accord with divine providence.

... Hence it is said in Deuteronomy (4:19): "Lest you see the sun and the moon and the other stars, and being deceived by error, you adore and serve them, which the Lord Your God created for the service of all the nations that are under heaven"; and again in the Psalm (8:8): "You subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, moreover the beasts of the field"; and in Wisdom (12:18) it is said: "You, being Master of power, judge with tranquillity, and with great favor dispose of us."

... Through these considerations we refute the error of those who claim that it is a sin for man to kill brute animals. For animals are ordered to man's use in the natural course of things, according to divine providence. Consequently, man uses them without any injustice, either by killing them or by employing them in any other way. For this reason, God said to Noah: "As the green herbs, I have delivered all flesh to you" (Gen. 9:3).

... Indeed, if any statements are found in Sacred Scripture prohibiting the commission of an act of cruelty against brute animals, for instance, that one should not kill a bird accompanied by her young (Deut. 22:6), this is said either to turn the mind of man away from cruelty which might be used on other men, lest a person through practicing cruelty on brutes might go on to do the same to men; or because an injurious act committed on animals may lead to a temporal loss for some man, either for the agent or for another man; or there may be another interpretation of the text, as the

Apostle (1 Cor. 9:9) explains it, in terms of “not muzzling the ox that treads the corn” (Deut. 25:4).<sup>23</sup>

### Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592)

In keeping with his usual skepticism, the well-known Renaissance essayist offered a unique perspective on animal cognition in his *Apology for Raymond Sebond*.<sup>24</sup> The frequently quoted statement in animal rights literature about his cat, exemplifies a view that regards animals as not only sentient but aware in terms of their ability to communicate with humans (a perspective that will be rejected by Descartes and then become philosophically representative). Combining ecclesiastical doubt and careful observation, Montaigne titled this section of the *Apology*, “Man Is No Better Than The Animals”:

Presumption is our natural and original malady. The most vulnerable and frail of all creatures is man, and at the same time the most arrogant. He feels and sees himself lodged here, among the mire and dung of the world, nailed and riveted to the worst, the deadest, and the most stagnant part of the universe, on the lowest story of the house and the farthest from the vault of heaven, with the animals of the worst condition of the three (*editor's note: those that walk, those that fly, those that swim*); and in his imagination he goes planting himself above the circle of the moon, and the bringing the sky down beneath his feet. It is by vanity of this same imagination that he equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine characteristics, picks himself out separates from the hoard of other creatures, carves out their shares to his fellows and companions the animals, and distributes among them such portions of faculties and powers as he sees fit. How does he know, by the force of his intelligence, the secret internal stirrings of animals? By what comparison between them and us does he infer the stupidity that he attributes to them?

When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she to me?<sup>25</sup>

... This defect that hinders communication between them and us, why is it not just as much ours as theirs? It is a matter of guesswork whose fault it is

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<sup>23</sup> Aquinas, Thomas, St. “That Rational Creatures Are Governed For Their Own Sakes, While Others Are Governed In Subordination To Them” in *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Three: Providence, Part II*, Chapter 112. trans. Vernon J. Bourke (University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 115-119.

<sup>24</sup> Sebond was a 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Spanish philosopher/theologian whose *Theologia Naturalis* was translated by Montaigne from Latin to French in 1569. Sebond argues that God gave humans both faith and reason and these qualities are not irreconcilable in that humans are a “link” between the material and spiritual; this was an atypical position at the time. See De Wulf, Maurice, *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*. Translated by Ernest C. Messenger. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1952.

<sup>25</sup> “Quand je me joue à ma chatte, qui sçait si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fay d’elle.” (Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. Pierre Villey (Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), p. 438).

that we do not understand one another; for we do not understand them anymore than they do us. By the same reasoning they may consider us beasts, as we consider them.

As for speech, it is certain that if it is not natural, it is not necessary. Nevertheless, I believe that a child who had been brought up in complete solitude, remote from all association (which would be a hard experience to make), would have some sort of speech to express his And it is not credible that Nature has denied us this resource that she has given to many other animals: for what is it but speech, this faculty we see in them of complaining, rejoicing, calling to each other for help, inviting each other to love, as they do by the use of their voice? How could they not speak to one another? They certainly speak to us, we to them. In how many ways do we not speak to our dogs? And they answer us.<sup>26</sup> We talk to them in another language, with other names, to birds, hogs, oxen, horses; and we change the idiom according to the species:

So ants amidst their sable-colored band  
Greet one another, and inquire perchance  
The road each follows, and- the prize in hand.

Dante

It seem to me that Lactantius attributes to beasts not only speech but also laughter. And the difference of language that is seen between us, according to the difference of countries, is found also in animals of the same species. Aristotle cites the various calls of partridges according to the place they are situated in,

And various birds...  
Utter at different times far different cries...  
And some change with the changing of the skies  
Their raucous songs.

Lucretius

... there is no apparent reason to judge that the beasts do by natural and obligatory instinct the same things that we do by our choice and cleverness. We must infer from like results like faculties, and consequently confess that this same reason, this same method that we have for working, is also that of the animals. Why do we imagine in them this compulsion of nature, we who feel no similar effect? Besides it is more honorable and closer to divinity, to be guided and obliged to act lawfully by a natural and inevitable condition, than to act lawfully by accidental and fortuitous liberty; and safer to leave the reins of our conduct to nature than to ourselves. The vanity of our presumption makes us prefer to owe our ability to our powers than to nature's liberality; and we enrich the

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<sup>26</sup> "En combien de sortes parlons nous à nos chiens? et ils nous respondent." (Ibid., p. 458).

other animals with natural goods and renounce them in their favor, in order to honor and ennoble ourselves with goods acquire....<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Michel de Montaigne. "Apology for Raymond Sebond," in *The Complete Works of Montaigne*. trans. Donald Frame (Stanford University Press, 1957), pp. 330-331, 335-337.

Derrida regards this as a rare and exemplary anti-Cartesian perspective:

... Montaigne's cat... the one he nevertheless calls "my [pussy]cat" [*ma chatte*] in his *Apology for Raymond Sebond*. You will recognize that as one of the greatest pre- or anti-Cartesian texts on the animal.... Montaigne makes fun of "man's impudence with regard to the beasts," of the "presumption" and "imagination" shown by man when he claims to assign them or refuse them certain faculties.... Contrary to that he deems it necessary to recognize in animals a "facility" in forming letters and syllables. This capacity, Montaigne confidently assures us, "testifies that they have an inward power of reason which makes them so teachable and determined to learn".... Taking man to task for "carv[ing] out their shares to his fellows and companions the animals, and distribut[ing] among them such portions of faculties and powers as he sees fit," he asks, and the question refers from here on not to the animal but to the naïve assurance of man:

How does he know, by the force of his intelligence, the secret internal stirrings of animals? By what comparison between them and us does he infer the stupidity that he attributes to them?

When I play with my cat [*ma chatte*], who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she is to me?...

The 1595 edition adds: "We entertain each other with reciprocal monkey tricks. If I have my time to begin or to refuse, so has she hers."

The *Apology* needs to be examined very closely, especially to the extent that Montaigne doesn't just revive, in its luxuriant richness, a tradition that attributes much to the animal, beginning with a type of language. Most pertinent in this respect, marking a difference from the modern (Cartesian or post-Cartesian) form of a hegemonic tradition is the moment where Montaigne recognizes in the animal more than a right to communication, to the sign, to language as sign (something Descartes will not deny), namely, *a capacity to respond*. For example:

It is not credible that Nature has denied us this resource that she has given to many other animals: for what is it but speech, this faculty we see in them of complaining, rejoicing, calling to each other for help, inviting each other to love, as they do by the use of their voice? How could they not speak to one another? They certainly speak to us, and we to them. In how many ways do we not speak to our dogs? *And they answer us* (my italics). We talk to them in another language, with other names, than to birds, hogs, oxen, horses; and we change the idiom according to the species. (Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* op. cit., p. 375).

## Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

The most prominent contemporary view was offered by Descartes, the “father” of modern philosophy. Descartes argues that animals are incapable of language and thus rational thought itself; he characterizes them as “machines” structured by immutable laws of nature—they are driven by innate instinct alone. In a striking metaphor, he compares an animal to a clock that tells time with greater accuracy than a human but is obviously unaware of this “ability”; though animals may surpass humans in terms of certain “skills” they always remain epistemologically dumb:

... I explained all these matters in sufficient detail in the treatise I previously intended to publish. And then I showed what structure the nerves and muscles of the human body must have in order to make the animal spirits inside them strong enough to move its limbs - as when we see severed heads continue to move about and bite the earth although they are no longer alive. I also indicated what changes must occur in the brain in order to cause waking, sleep and dreams; how light, sound smells, taste, heat and the other qualities of external objects can imprint various ideas on the brain through the mediation of the senses; and how hunger, thirst, and the other internal passions can also send their ideas there. And I explained which part of the brain must be taken to be the ‘common’ sense, where these ideas are received; the memory, which preserves them; and the corporeal imagination, which can change them in various ways, form them into new ideas, and, by distributing the animal spirits to the muscles, make the parts of this body move in as many different ways as the parts of our bodies can move without being guided by the will, and in a manner which is just as appropriate to the objects of the senses and the internal passions. This will not seem at all strange to those who know how many kinds of automatons, or moving machines, the skill of man can construct with the use of very few parts, in comparison with the great multitude of bones, muscles, nerves, arteries, veins and all the other parts that are in the body of any animal. For they will regard this body as a machine which, having been made by the hand of God, is incomparably better ordered than any machine that can be devised by man, and contains in itself movements more wonderful than those in any such machine.

I made special efforts to show that if any such machines had the organs and outward shape of a monkey or of some other animal that lacks reason, we should have no means of knowing that they did not possess entirely the same nature as these animals; whereas if any such machines bore a resemblance to our bodies and imitated our actions as closely as possible for all practical purposes, we should still have two very certain means of recognizing that they were not real men. The first is that they could never use words, or put together other signs, as we do in order to declare our

thoughts to others. For we can certainly conceive of a machine so constructed that it utters words, and even utters words which correspond to bodily actions causing a change in its organs (e.g. if you touch it in one spot it asks what you want of it, if you touch it in another it cries out that you are hurting it, and so on). But it is not conceivable that such a machine should produce different arrangements of words so as to give an appropriately meaningful answer to whatever is said in its presence, as the dullest of men can do. Secondly, even though such machines might do some things as well as we do them, of perhaps even better, they would inevitably fail in others, which would reveal that they were acting not through understanding but only from the disposition of their organs. For whereas reason is a universal instrument which can be used in all kind of situations need some particular disposition for each particular action; hence it is for all practical purposes impossible for a machine to have enough different organs to make it act in all the contingencies of life in the way in which our reason makes us act.

Now in just these two ways we can also know the difference between man and beast. For it is quite remarkable that there are no men so dull-witted or stupid—and this includes even madmen—that they are incapable of arranging various words together and forming an utterance from them in order to make their thoughts understood; whereas there is no other animal, however perfect and well-endowed it may be, that can do the like. This does not happen because they lack the necessary organs; for we see that magpies and parrots can utter words as we do, and yet they cannot speak as we do: that is, they cannot show that they are thinking what they are saying. On the other hand, men born deaf and dumb, and thus deprived of speech-organs as much as the beasts or even more so, normally invent their own signs to make themselves understood by those who, being regularly in their company, have the time to learn their language. This shows not merely that the beasts have less reason than men, but that they have no reason at all.<sup>28</sup> For it patently requires very little reason to be able to speak; and since as much inequality can be observed among the animals of a given species as among human beings, and some animals are more easily trained than others, it would be incredible that superior specimen of the monkey or parrot species should not be able to speak as well as the stupidest child—or at least as well as a child with a defective brain—if their souls were not completely different in nature from ours. And we must not confuse speech with the natural movements which express passions and which can be imitated by machines as well as by animals. Nor should we think, like some of the ancients, that the beasts speak, although we do not understand their language, for if that were true, then since they have many organs that correspond to ours, they could make

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<sup>28</sup> “*Et ceci ne témoigne pas seulement que les bêtes ont moins de raison que les hommes, mais qu’elles n’en ont point du tout...*” (Rene Descartes, *Discours De La Methodé*, ed. Maurice Dorolle (Librairie Larousse, 1934), p. 58).

themselves understood by us as well as by their fellows. It is also a very remarkable fact that although many animals show more skill than we do in some of their actions, yet the same animals show none at all in many others; so what they do better does not prove that they have any intelligence, for if it did then they would have more intelligence than any of us and would excel us in everything. It proves rather that they have no intelligence at all, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs. In the same way a clock, consisting only of wheels and springs, can count the hours and measure time more accurately than we can with all our wisdom.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Rene Descartes. *Discourse on the Method*, V, in *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*. trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge University Press, 1988). pp. 43-45.

Here, Derrida indicts key figures in the history of philosophy as excluding animals due to an inability to “respond”—to verbally practice rational thought. However, Heidegger’s primordial, pre-metaphysical sense of language does not “respond” in the usual manner either:

All the philosophers we will investigate (from Aristotle to Lacan, and including Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas), all of them say the same thing: the animal is without language. Or more precisely unable to respond, to respond with a response that could be precisely and rigorously distinguished from a reaction, the animal is without the right and power to “respond” and hence without many other things that would be the property of man.

Men would be first and foremost those living creatures who have given themselves the word that enables them to speak of the animal with a single voice and to designate it as the single being that remains without a response, without a word with which to respond.

That wrong was committed long ago and with long-term consequences. It derives from this word or rather it comes together in this word animal that men have given themselves at the origin of humanity and that they have given themselves in order to identify themselves, in order to recognize themselves, with a view to being what they say they are, namely men, capable of replying and responding in the name of men.

... Would the language Heidegger uses, a language “without” question, without question mark, this language “before” the question, this language of the *Zusage* (acquiescence, affirmation, agreement, and so on), therefore be a language without a response? a “moment” of language that is in its essence released from all relation to an expected response? But if one links the concept of the animal, as they all do from Descartes to Heidegger, from Kant to Levinas and Lacan, to the double im-possibility, the double incapacity of question and response, is it because the “moment,” the instance and possibility of the *Zusage* belong to an “experience” of language about which one could say that, even if it is not in itself “animal,” is not lacking in the “animal”? That would be enough to destabilize a whole tradition, to deprive it of its fundamental argument. (Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, op. cit. p. 400, 407).

Heidegger’s characterizes authentic human speech as a “holding back” with “reserve”:

The structure of human speech can only be the manner (*melos*) in which the speaking of language, the peal of the stillness of the dif-ference, appropriates mortals by the command of the dif-ference.

The way in which mortals, called out of the dif-ference into the dif-ference, speak on their own part, is: by responding. Mortal speech must first of all have listened to the command, in the form of which the stillness of the dif-ference calls world and things into the rift of its onefold simplicity. Every word of mortal speech speaks out of such a listening, and as such a listening.

Mortals speak insofar as they listen. They heed the bidding call of the stillness of the dif-ference even when they do not know that call. Their listening draws from the command of the dif-ference when it brings out the sounding word. This speaking that listens and accepts is responding. Nevertheless by receiving what it says from the command of the dif-ference, mortal speech has already, in its own way followed the call. Response, as receptive listening, is at the same time a recognition that makes due acknowledgment. Mortals speak by responding to language in a twofold way, receiving replying. The mortal word speaks by cor-responding in a multiple sense.

Every authentic hearing holds back with its own saying. For hearing keeps to itself in the listening by which it remains appropriated to the peal of stillness. All responding is attuned to this restraint that reserves itself. For this reason such reserve must be concerned to be ready, in the mode of listening, for the command of the dif-ference. But the reserve must take care not just to hear the peal of stillness afterward, but to hear it even beforehand, and thus as it were to anticipate its-command.

This anticipating while holding back determines the manner in which mortals respond to the dif-ference. In this way mortals live in the speaking of language. (Martin Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*. trans. Albert Hofstadter (Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 209-210).

Derrida raised similar questions about Heidegger and the question of the animal in his 1989 work, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*:

Can one not say, then, that the whole deconstruction of ontology as it is begun in *Sein und Zeit* and insofar as it unseats, as it were, the Cartesian-Hegelian *spiritus* in the existential analytic, is here threatened in its order, its implementation, its conceptual apparatus, by what is called, so obscurely still, the animal? Compromised, rather, by a *thesis* on animality which presupposes—this is the irreducible and I believe dogmatic hypothesis of the thesis—that there is one thing, one domain, one homogenous type of entity, which is called animality *in general*, for which any example would do the job. This is a thesis which, in its *median* character, as clearly emphasized by Heidegger (the animal *between* the stone and man), remains fundamentally teleological and traditional, not to say dialectical. (Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 57).

In regard to the "median character," Derrida is referring to a 1929-1930 seminar in which Heidegger concluded this about the material, animal, and human "world":

... man is not merely a *part of the world* but is also master and servant of the world in the sense of "*having*" world. Man has world. But then what about the other beings which,

## Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

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like man, are also part of the world: the animals and plants, the material things like the stone, for example? Are they merely parts of the world, as distinct from man who in addition *has* world? Or does the animal too have world, and if so, in what way? In the same way as man, or in some other way? And how would we grasp this otherness? And what about the stone? However crudely, certain distinctions immediately manifest themselves here. We can formulate three distinctions: [1.] the stone (material object) is *worldless*; [2.] the animal is *poor in world*; [3.] man is *world-forming*. (Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 177).

In the fourth chapter of *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida offers an extended critique of this notion:

One of the most difficult places is where Heidegger having to defend the thesis that the animal is *weltarm* (*my note: world-poor*), is keen to mark that the impoverishment is not caught in a hierarchy, that it is not simply a “less.” This is very difficult to defend: why “poor” when poor means less rich, all the same? So, he says, there is no hierarchy there, no “evaluative talking” (194). Yet this impoverishment is to be determined on the basis of “deprivation,” and he develops there a whole analysis of *privation*. The animal is “deprived,” and deprivation is not simply a negative sentiment. He first said that the stone is not deprived: it doesn’t have world but it isn’t deprived; and since the stone doesn’t have world but isn’t deprived, it can’t be said that it is “poor” in world. In other words, to say that the animal is poor in world is to demonstrate that it has world. And Heidegger consistently says contradictory things, namely, that the animal has a world in the mode of “not having.” The animal is “deprived,” and this privation implies that “it is in a mood”: feeling poor “in mood” *Ar-mut* (“nämlich wie ihm dabei zu *Mute ist—Ar-mut*; p. 195), is a manner of feeling that one is, an attunement, a sentiment; the animal experiences the privation of the world. Thus no hierarchy, no teleology, neither finalism nor mechanism, and the grand tradition of the Aristotelian *steresis*, of privation. In the end, the animal is said to be “circumscribed” in this privation—and Heidegger speaks of its being “immured” (198), of “encirclement” (253), of being “absorbed,” of “captivation” (238 ff.); it is enclosed in a captivation but with the sentiment of deprivation. (Jacques Derrida, “I Don’t Know Why We Are Doing This,” in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Willis, ed. Marie-Louise-Mallet (Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 155-156).

In a later work, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” (1951), Heidegger argues that humans are unique in that only they can “die,” but nevertheless regards humans (“mortals”) as integral to the “primal oneness” of a “four-fold... the four—earth and sky, divinities and mortals—belong together in one.” “Earth” is lyrically described as “the serving bearer, blossoming and framing, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal.” (Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*. trans. Albert Hofstadter (Harper and Row, 1971), p. 149, 150). The earlier concept of the animal *weltarm* is absent; Heidegger states that to properly “dwell” (*bauen*), “mortals” have a duty to “cherish... protect... preserve and care” (Ibid., p. 147) for the four-fold. See pp. 59-62 for this Heidegger excerpt.

Hobbes' *Leviathan* greatly influenced modern political philosophy due to his idea of the "social contract." Hobbes had deep misgivings about human nature and felt that a mutually-agreed upon "contract" that reciprocally prevents harm was the solution to our innate corruptness. Notably, he calls upon a "Leviathan"—a sovereign "mortal God" who is above the law and will inspire great fear ("terror")—to enforce the contract.

In his *On the Citizen* (a precursor to *Leviathan*), animals are incapable of contracting due to their lack of language and cognitive ability:

... In the state of nature agreements made by a contract of mutual trust (by which both parties trust the other and neither makes any performance immediately) are invalid if a just cause for fear arises (\*) on either side. For most men are of evil character, bent on securing their own interest by fair means or foul; and so the man who performs his part first is laying himself open to the greed of the other party to the contract. For it is not reasonable for anyone to make performance first if it is not likely that the other will perform his part later. And it is for the fearful party to decide whether that is likely or not, as has been shown in article 9 of the last chapter. This is the situation, I say, in the state of nature. But in the civil state where there is someone to coerce both parties, whichever party is called upon by the contract to perform first should do so; since the reason why he was afraid that the other party might not perform no longer exists, as the other can be compelled.

\*Arises, etc.] *The reason is that a justifiable fear can only be planted in someone's mind, if there is a new cause for fear arising from some action or other sign from the other party that he does not intend to make performance. For a cause which was unable to impede the making of an agreement ought not to impede its performance.*

... From the fact that acceptance of the transferred right is a requirement of all gifts and, agreements, it follows that no one can make an agreement with someone who gives no sign of acceptance. That is why we cannot make agreements with animals or credit them with rights or take their rights away, because they lack language and understanding. Nor can one enter into *agreements* with the majesty of God nor be bound by a *vow* to him, except in so far as it has pleased him, through the holy scriptures, to make certain men his substitutes, with authority to review and accept such vows and agreements and to accept them as his representatives.<sup>30</sup>

In terms of the human "right" to use and even kill animals, this arrangement has its basis in the amoral 'state of nature' which precedes the social contract—an obviously tyrannical interpretation of 'dominion':

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Hobbes. *On the Citizen*. ed. and trans. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 37.

... Right over non-rational animals is acquired in the same way as over the persons of men, that is, by natural strength and powers. In the natural state, because of the war of all against all, any one may legitimately subdue or even kill Men, whenever that seems to be to his advantage; much more will this be the case against animals. That is, one may at discretion reduce to one's service any animals that can be tamed or made useful, and wage continual war against the rest as harmful, and hunt them down and kill them. Thus Dominion over animals has its origin in the right of nature not in *Divine positive right*. For if no such right had existed before the publication of holy scripture, no one could rightly have slaughtered animals for food except someone to whom this divine will had been revealed in the holy scriptures; and the condition of mankind would surely have been very hard, since the beasts could devour them in all innocence, while they could not devour the beasts. Since therefore it is by natural right that an animal kills a man, it will be by the same right that a man slaughters an animal.<sup>31</sup>

In a later work, *De Homine*, published after *Leviathan*, Hobbes is more specific about the one key distinction between humans and animals mentioned in *De Cive*: our ability to purposefully create and use language ("speech") and to grasp that it is representational:

Speech or language is the connexion of names constituted by the will of men to stand for the series of conceptions of the things about which we think. Therefore, as a name is to an idea or conception of a thing, so is speech to the discourse of the mind. And it seems to be peculiar to man. For even if some brute animals, taught by practice, grasp what we wish and command in words, they do so not through words as words, but as signs; for animals do not know that words are constituted by the will of men for the purpose of signification.

Moreover the signification that does occur when animals of the same kind call to one another, is not on that account speech, since not by their will, but out of the necessity of nature, these calls by which hope, fear, joy, and the like are signified, are forced out by the strength of these passions. And since among animals there is a limited variety of calls, by changing from one call to another, it comes about that they are warned of danger so that they may flee, are summoned to feeding, aroused to song, solicited to love; yet these calls are not speech since they are not constituted by the will of these animals, but burst forth by the strength of nature from the peculiar fears, joys, desires, and other passions of each of them; and this is not to speak, which is manifest in this, that the calls of animals of the same species are in all lands, whatsoever the same, while those of men are diverse.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

Therefore other animals also lack understanding. For understanding is a kind of imagination, but one that ariseth from the signification constituted by words.<sup>32</sup>

The practical benefits of “speech” are immense:

... First, that the power of numeral words enables man not only to count things, but also to measure them, whatsoever they may be; so with bodies (insofar as they have any dimensions), whether they be long, or long and wide, or long, wide, and thick; and similarly he can add, subtract, multiply, divide, and compare them with one another; similarly he can also subject times, motion, weight, and degrees of increase and decrease to calculation. From these things the enormous advantages of human life have far surpassed the condition of other animals. For there is no one that doth not know how much these arts are used in measuring bodies, calculating times, computing celestial motions, describing the face of the earth, navigating, erecting buildings, making engines, and in other necessary things. All of these proceed from numbering, but numbering proceeds from speech. *Secondly*, one may teach another, that is, communicate his knowledge to another, he can warn, he can advise, all these he hath from speech also; so that a good, great in itself, through communication becomes even greater. *Thirdly*, that we can command and understand commands is a benefit of speech, and truly the greatest. For without this there would be no society among men, no peace, and consequently no disciplines; but first savagery, then solitude, and for dwellings, caves. For though among certain animals there are seeming polities, these are not of sufficiently great moment for living well; hence they merit not our consideration; and they are largely found among defenseless animals, not in need of many things; in which number man is not included; for just as swords and guns, the weapons of men, surpass the weapons of brute animals (horns, teeth, and stings), so man surpasseth in rapacity and cruelty the wolves, bears, and snakes that are not rapacious unless hungry and not cruel unless provoked, whereas man is famished even by future hunger. From this, it is easily understood how much we owe to language, by which we, having been drawn together and agreeing to covenants, live securely, happily, and elegantly....<sup>33</sup>

However, there are notable “disadvantages” leading Hobbes to conclude that language-use does not necessarily imply that humans are “better” than animals, but it does afford them greater “possibilities”:

... man, alone among the animals, on account of the universal signification of names, can create general rules for himself in the art of

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, trans. Charles T. Wood, T.S.K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert; ed. Bernard Gert (Hackett Publishing Company), 1991. pp. 37-38.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

living just as in the other arts; and so he alone can devise errors and pass them on for the use of others. Therefore man errs more widely and than can other animals. Also, man if it please him (and it will please him as often as it seems to advance his plans), can teach what he knows to be false from works that he hath inherited; that is, he can lie and render the minds of men hostile to the conditions of society and peace; something that cannot happen in the societies of other animals, since they judge what things are good and bad for them by their senses, not on the basis of the complaints of others, the causes whereof, unless they be seen, they cannot understand. Moreover, it sometimes happens to those that listen to philosophers and Schoolmen that listening becomes a habit, and the words that they hear they accept rashly, even though no sense can be had from them (for such are the kind of words invented by teachers to hide their own ignorance), and they use them, believing that they are saying something when they say nothing. Finally, on account of the ease of speech, the man who truly doth not think, speaks; and what he says he believes to be true, and he can deceive himself; a beast cannot deceive itself. Therefore by speech is not made better but only given greater possibilities.<sup>34</sup>

### John Locke (1632-1704)

The founder of British Empiricism and the main architect of our conception of property rights,<sup>35</sup> Locke repeats at least some of Descartes' view about the lack of cognition in animals (they cannot form "abstract" ideas from sense perceptions, nor use language in the manner of humans), though he does not regard them as mere "machines":

... If it may be doubted Whether beasts compound and enlarge their *Ideas* that way to any degree; This, I think, I may be positive in, That the power of *Abstracting* is not at all in them; and that the having of general *Ideas* is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt Man and Brutes, and is an Excellency which the Faculties of Brutes do by no means attain to. For it is evident we observe no foot-steps in them of making use of general signs for universal *Ideas*; from which we have reason to imagine that they have not the faculty of abstracting, or making general ideas, since they have no use of Words, or any other general Signs.

... Nor can it be imputed to their want of fit Organs to frame articulate Sounds, that they have no use or knowledge of general Words; since many of them, we find, can fashion such sounds, and pronounce Words distinctly enough, but never with any such application. And, on the other side, Men who, through some defect in the organs, want words, yet fail not

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>35</sup> Again, see Gary L. Francione, *Animals, Property, and the Law*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.

to express their universal *Ideas* by signs, which serve them instead of general words, a faculty which we see Beasts come short in. And, therefore, I think, we may suppose, that it is in this that the species of *Brutes* are discriminated from Man: and it is that proper difference wherein they are wholly separated, and which at last widens to so vast a distance. For if they have any *Ideas* at all, and are not bare machines, (as some would have them,) we cannot deny them to have some Reason. It seems as evident to me, that they do some of them in certain instances reason, as that they have sense; but it is only in particular *Ideas*, just as they received them from their Senses. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, and *have not* (as I think) the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of *Abstraction*.<sup>36</sup>

In regard to our treatment of animals, Locke expressly warns against “cruelty” perpetrated by children lest they forfeit compassion and become “hardened” toward humans. Locke believes that children learn such attitudes and that they can be changed via proper moral education; once more, though, the central concern is our moral dealings with our fellow persons:

One thing I have frequently observed in children, that when they have got possession of, any poor creature, they are apt to use it ill; they often torment and treat very roughly young birds, butterflies and such other poor animals which fall into their hands, and that with a seeming kind of pleasure. This, I think, should be watched in them, and if they incline to any such cruelty, they should be taught the contrary usage. For the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts will by degrees harden their minds even towards men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind. Our practice takes notice of this in the exclusion of butchers from juries of life and death. Children should from the beginning be bred up in abhorrence of killing or tormenting any living creature and be taught not to spoil or destroy anything, unless it be for the preservation or advantage of some other that is nobler. And truly, if the preservation of all mankind as much as in him lies were everyone’s persuasion, as indeed it is everyone’s duty and the true principle to regulate our religion, politics and morality by, the world would be much quieter and better natured than it is. But to return to our present business, I cannot but commend both the kindness and prudence of a mother I knew, who was wont always to indulge her daughters when any of them desired dogs, squirrels, birds or any such things as young girls use to be delighted with; but then, when they had them, they must be sure to keep them well and look diligently after them, that they wanted nothing or were not ill used. For if they were negligent in their care of them, it was counted a great fault which often forfeited their possession, or at least they failed not

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<sup>36</sup> John Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Book II, Chapter XI, ix, x. ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 159-160.

to be rebuked for it; whereby they were early taught diligence and good nature. And indeed, I think people should be accustomed from their cradles to be tender to all sensible creatures and to spoil or waste nothing at all.

This delight they take in doing of mischief, whereby I mean spoiling of anything to no purpose, but more especially the pleasure they take to put anything in pain that is capable of it, I cannot persuade myself to be any other than a foreign and introduced disposition, a habit borrowed from custom and conversation. People teach children to strike and laugh when they hurt or see harm come to others; and they have the examples of most about them to confirm in it. All the entertainment and talk of history is of nothing almost but fighting and killing; and the honour and renown that is bestowed on conquerors (who for the most part are but the great butchers of mankind) farther mislead growing youth, who by this means come to think slaughter the laudable business of mankind and the most heroic overtures. By these steps unnatural cruelty is planted in us; and what humanity abhors, custom reconciles and recommends to us by laying it in the way to honour. Thus, by fashion and opinion that comes to be a pleasure which in itself neither is nor can be any. This ought carefully to be watched and early remedied, so as to settle and cherish the contrary and more natural temper of benignity and compassion in the room of it; but still by the same gentle methods which are to be applied to the other faults before mentioned. It may not perhaps be unseasonable here to add this farther caution, viz., that the mischiefs or harms that come by play, inadvertency or ignorance and were not known to be harms or designed for mischief's sake, though they may perhaps be sometimes of considerable damage, yet are not at all, or but very gently, to be taken notice of. For this, I think, I cannot too often inculcate, that whatever miscarriage a child is guilty of and whatever be the consequence of it, the thing to be regarded in taking notice of it is only what root it springs from and what habit it is like to establish; and to that the correction ought to be directed and the child not to suffer any punishment for any harm which may have come by his play or inadvertency. The faults to be amended lie in the mind, and if they are such as either age will cure or no ill habits will follow from, the present action, whatever displeasing circumstances it may have, is to be passed by without any animadversion.<sup>37</sup>

Politically and economically, animals, for Locke, are property objects only, and therefore can be utilized by humans for “subsistence” and “preservation.” In the *First Treatise of Government* he writes:

... God having made Man, and planted in him, as in all other Animals, a strong desire of Self-preservation, and furnished the World with things fit

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<sup>37</sup> John Locke. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. ed. F.W. Garfourth (Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1964). pp. 153-156.

for Food and Rayment and other Necessaries of Life, Subservient to his design, that Man should live and abide for some time upon the Face of the Earth, and not that so curious and wonderful a piece of Workmanship by its own Negligence, or want of Necessaries, should perish again, presently after a few moments continuance: God, I say, having made Man and the World thus, spoke to him, (that is) directed him by his Senses and Reason, as he did the inferior Animals by their Sense, and Instinct, which he had placed in them to that purpose, to the use of those things, which were serviceable for his Subsistence, and given him as means of his Preservation. And therefore I doubt not, but before these words were pronounced, 1 Gen. 28, 29. (if they must be understood Literally to have been spoken) and without any such Verbal Donation, Man had a right to a use of the Creatures, by the Will and Grant of God. For the desire, strong desire of Preserving his Life and Being having been Planted in him, as a Principle of Action by God himself, Reason, which was the Voice of God in him, could not but teach him and assure him, that pursuing that natural Inclination he had to preserve his Being, he followed the Will of his Maker, and therefore had a right to make use of those Creatures, which by his Reason or Senses he could discover would be serviceable thereunto. And thus Man's Property in the Creatures, was founded upon the right he had, to make use of those things, that were necessary or useful to his Being.

... Property, whose Original is from the Right a Man has to use any of the Inferior Creatures, for the Subsistence and Comfort of his Life, is for the benefit and sole Advantage of the Proprietor, so that he may even destroy the thing, that he has Property in by his use of it, where need requires: but Government being for the Preservation of every Mans Right and Property, by preserving him from the Violence or Injury of others, is for the good of the Governed. For the Magistrates Sword being for a Terror to Evil Doers, and by that Terror to inforce Men to observe the positive Laws of the Society, made conformable to the Laws of Nature, for the public good, i.e. the good of every particular Member of that Society, as far as by common Rules, it can be provided for; the Sword is not given the Magistrate for his own good alone, for he beareth not the sword in vain."<sup>38</sup>

In the *Second Treatise*, Locke describes how animals become human property—via the labor invested:

... Thus this Law of reason makes the Deer that Indian's who hath killed it; it is allowed to be his goods, who hath bestowed his labor upon it, though before it was the common right of every one. And amongst those

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<sup>38</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government: In the Former, The False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer, And His Followers, are Detected and Overthrown. The Latter is an Essay concerning The True Original, Extent, and End of Civil-Government*. ed. Peter Laslett (New American Library, Inc. 1965), pp. 242-243, 247.

who are counted the Civiliz'd part of Mankind, who have made and multiplied positive Laws to determine *property*, this original Laws of Nature, for the *beginning of Property*, in what was before common, still takes place; and by virtue thereof, what Fish any one catches in the Ocean, that great and still remaining Common of Mankind; or what Ambergrise any one takes up here, is *by the Labour* that removes it out of that common state nature left it in, *made his Property*, who takes that pains about it. And even amongst us, the Hare that any one is Hunting, is thought his who pursues her during the Chase: for being a Beast that is still looked upon as common, and no Man's private Possession; whoever has employed so much labour about any of that kind, as to find and pursue her, has thereby removed her from the state of Nature, wherein she was common, and hath *begun a Property*.<sup>39</sup>

### Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716)

In his *New Essays on Human Understanding*, the German philosopher Leibniz responds to Locke's empiricism as presented in the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Leibniz counters Locke's claims that humans are born without knowledge—the famous *tabula rasa* or “white paper” metaphor—by arguing that the human mind was created with a host of innate ideas (“Being, Unity, Substance, Duration, Change, Action, Perception, Pleasure”<sup>40</sup>) that animals (termed “simple empirics”) lack:

... It would indeed be wrong to think that we can easily read these eternal laws of reason in the soul, as the Praetor's edict can be read on his notice-board, without effort or inquiry; but it is enough that they can be discovered within us by dint of attention: the senses give the occasion, and the results of experiments also serve to corroborate reason, somewhat as checks in arithmetic help us to avoid errors of calculation in long chains of reasoning. It is in this same respect that man's knowledge differs from that of beasts: beasts are sheer empirics and are guided entirely by instances. While men are capable of demonstrative knowledge [*\*science*], beasts, so far as one can judge, never manage to form necessary propositions, since the faculty by which they make thought sequences is something lower than the reason that occurs in men. Beasts' thought sequences are just like those of simple empirics who maintain that what has happened once will happen again in a case which is similar in the respects that they are impressed by, although that does not enable them to judge whether the same reasons are at work. That is what makes it so easy for men to ensnare beasts, and so easy for simple empirics to make mistakes. Even people made cunning by age and experience are not proof against this when they

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>40</sup> Gottfried Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge University Press, 1996), section 51.

trust too much to their past experience; as has happened to various people engaged in civil or military affairs, through their not taking sufficiently to heart that the world changes and that men become cleverer and find hundreds of new tricks – whereas the deer and hares of our time are not becoming craftier than those of long ago. The thought sequences of beasts are only a shadow of reasoning, that is, they are nothing but a connection in the imagination—a passage from one image to another; for when a new situation appears similar to its predecessor, it is expected to have the same concomitant features as before, as though things were linked [*\*liaison*] in reality just because their images are linked in the memory. It is true, moreover, that reason counsels us to expect ordinarily that what we find in the future will conform to long experience of the past; but even so, this is no necessary and infallible truth, and it can fail us when we least expect it to, if there is a change in the reasons which have been maintaining it. This is why the wisest men do not trust it so implicitly that they neglect to probe somewhat, where possible, into the reason for such regularities, in order to know when they will have to allow exceptions. For only reason is capable of establishing reliable rules, of making up the deficiencies of those which have proved unreliable by allowing exceptions to them, and lastly of finding unbreakable links in the cogency of necessary inferences. This last often provides a way of foreseeing events without having to experience sensible links between images, as beasts must. Thus what shows the existence of inner sources of necessary truths is also what distinguishes man from beast.<sup>41</sup>

### David Hume (1711-1776)

The third great British Empiricist, Hume is best known for his epistemological skepticism which he applies here to the usual views on animal reasoning. Not only does Hume argue that animals *can* reason but that they do in ways analogous to humans: both learn from basic experience. Animals, he asserts, are capable of “extraordinary instances of sagacity”:

Next to the ridicule of denying an evident truth, is that of taking much pains to defend it; and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endow'd with thought and reason as well as men. The arguments are in this case so obvious, that they never escape the most stupid and ignorant.

We are conscious, that we ourselves, in adapting means to ends, are guided by reason and design, and that 'tis not ignorantly nor casually we perform those actions, which tend to self-preservation, to the obtaining pleasure, and avoiding pain. When therefore we see other creatures, in

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., sections 50-51.

millions of instances, perform like actions, and direct them to like ends, all our principles of reason and probability carry us with an invincible force to believe the existence of a like cause. 'Tis needless in my opinion to illustrate this argument by the enumeration of particulars. The smallest attention will supply us with more than are requisite. The resemblance betwixt the actions of animals and those of men is so entire in this respect, that the very first action of the first animal we shall please to pitch on, will afford us an incontestable argument for the present doctrine.

This doctrine is as useful as it is obvious, and furnishes us with a kind of touchstone, by which we may try every system in this species of philosophy. 'Tis from the resemblance of the external actions of animals to those we ourselves perform, that we judge their internal likewise to resemble ours; and the same principle of reasoning, carry'd one step farther, will make us conclude that since our internal actions resemble each other, the causes, from which they are deriv'd, must also be resembling. When any hypothesis, therefore, is advanc'd to explain a mental operation, which is common to men and beasts, we must apply the same hypothesis to both; and as every true hypothesis will abide this trial, so I may venture to affirm, that no false one will ever be able to endure it. The common defect of those systems, which philosophers have employ'd to account for the actions of the mind, is, that they suppose such a subtlety and refinement of thought, as not only exceeds the capacity of mere animals, but even of children and the common people in our own species; who are notwithstanding susceptible of the same emotions and affections as persons of the most accomplish'd genius and understanding. Such a subtlety is a clear proof of the falshood, as the contrary simplicity of the truth, of any system.

Let us therefore put our present system concerning the nature of the understanding to this decisive trial, and see whether it will equally account for the reasonings of beasts as for these of the human species.

Here we must make a distinction betwixt those actions of animals, which are of a vulgar nature, and seem to be on a level with their common capacities, and those more extraordinary instances of sagacity, which they sometimes discover for their own preservation, and the propagation of their species. A dog, that avoids fire and precipices, that shuns strangers, and caresses his master, affords us an instance of the first kind. A bird, that chooses with such care and nicety the place and materials of her nest, and sits upon her eggs for a due time, and in a suitable season, with all the precaution that a chymist is capable of in the most delicate projection, furnishes us with a lively instance of the second.

As to the former actions, I assert they proceed from a reasoning, that is not in itself different, nor founded on different principles, from that which

appears in human nature. 'Tis necessary in the first place, that there be some impression immediately present to their memory or senses, in order to be the foundation of their judgment. From the tone of voice the dog infers his master's anger, and foresees his own punishment. From a certain sensation affecting his smell, he judges his game not to be far distant from him. Secondly, the inference he draws from the present impression is built on experience, and on his observation of the conjunction of objects in past instances. As you vary this experience, he varies his reasoning. Make a beating follow upon one sign or motion for some time, and afterwards upon another; and he will successively draw different conclusions, according to his most recent experience.

Now let any philosopher make a trial, and endeavour to explain that act of the mind, which we call belief, and give an account of the principles, from which it is deriv'd, independent of the influence of custom on the imagination, and let his hypothesis be equally applicable to beasts as to the human species; and after he has done this, I promise to embrace his opinion. But at the same time I demand as an equitable condition, that if my system be the only one, which can answer to all these terms, it may be receiv'd as entirely satisfactory and convincing. And that 'tis the only one, is evident almost without any reasoning. Beasts certainly never perceive any real connexion among objects. 'Tis therefore by experience they infer one from another. They can never by any arguments form a general conclusion, that those objects, of which they have had no experience, resemble those of which they have. 'Tis therefore by means of custom alone, that experience operates upon them. All this was sufficiently evident with respect to man. But with respect to beasts there cannot be the least suspicion of mistake; which must be own'd to be a strong confirmation, or rather an invincible proof of my system.

Nothing shews more the force of habit in reconciling us to any phenomenon, than this, that men are not astonish'd at the operations of their own reason, at the same time, that they admire the instinct of animals, and find a difficulty in explaining it, merely because it cannot be reduc'd to the very same principles. To consider the matter aright, reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations. This instinct, 'tis true, arises from past observation and experience; but can any one give the ultimate reason, why past experience and observation produces such an effect, any more than why nature alone shou'd produce it? Nature may certainly produce whatever can arise from habit: Nay, habit is nothing but one of the principles of nature, and derives all its force from that origin.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> David Hume, "Of the Reason of Animals," in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book One, Part III, Section XVI. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 176-179.

### Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

In his treatise on education, *Emile*, Rousseau repeats much of Plutarch's condemnation of meat consumption (even quoting lengthy passages) and says this in terms of the importance of diet in raising a healthy child:

One of the proofs that the taste for meat is not natural to man is the indifference that children have for that kind of food and the preference all give to vegetable foods, such as dairy products, pastry, fruits. It is, above all, important not to denature this primitive taste and make children carnivorous. If this is not for their health, it is for their character; for, however one explains the experience, it is certain that eaters of meat are in general more cruel and ferocious than other men. This is observed in all places and all times. English barbarism is known (*Rousseau note: I know that the English greatly vaunt their humanity and the good nature of nation; they call themselves "good-natured people"; but however much they may shout that, no one repeats it after them*); the Zoroastrians, on the contrary, are the gentlest of men (*Rousseau note: The Banians who abstain from all meat more strictly than the Gaures are as gentle as the Gaures are; but since their morality is less pure and their less reasonable, they are not so decent.*). All savages are cruel, and it is not their morals which cause them to be so. This cruelty comes from their food. They go to war as to the hunt and treat men like bears. Even in England butchers are not accepted as witnesses, and neither are surgeons. Great villains harden to murder by drinking blood. Homer makes the Cyclopes, of human flesh, horrible, while he makes the lotus-eaters a people so lovable that, as soon as one had any dealings with them, one even forgot one's own country to them with them.<sup>43</sup>

The focus though is much more on the child than the slaughtered animal, which is markedly different than Plutarch who realized the connection of violence first directed toward animals and then humans, but was nevertheless greatly moved by animal suffering.

### Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

The view of Kant is certainly one that favors humans but his often sensitive descriptions of animals and his call for the abolition of their use in "sport" is one that to some degree points toward contemporary attitudes.<sup>44</sup> For him, animals, since they are not rationally self-conscious, can only serve as moral "analogues" of humans; they thus

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<sup>43</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Emile or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (Basic Books, Inc. 1979), pp. 153-154. From this point, Rousseau quotes Plutarch extensively from Tract I of the essay (parts 1, 2 and 5).

<sup>44</sup> Kant also considers animal experimentation (vivisection) "cruel"—a view that would hardly be accepted today among experimenters and their defenders.

should be treated with “kindness” so as not damage our sense of compassion which could translate into misdealings with humans. However, they may be utilized as “means to an end,” though only under justifiable circumstances:

Baumgarten speaks of duties towards beings which are beneath us and beings which are above us.<sup>45</sup> But so far as animals are concerned we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. The end is man. We can ask, ‘Why do animals exist?’ but to ask ‘Why does man exist?’ is a meaningless question. Our duties toward animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity. Animal nature has analogies to human nature, and by doing our duties to animals in respect of manifestations which correspond to manifestations of human nature, we indirectly do our duty towards humanity. Thus, if a dog has served his master long and faithfully, his service, on the analogy of human service, deserves reward, and when the dog has grown too old to serve, his master ought to keep him until he dies. Such action helps to support us in our duties towards human beings, where they are bounden duties. If then any acts of animals are analogous to human acts and spring from the same principles, we have duties towards the animals because thus we cultivate the corresponding duties towards human beings. If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog, for the dog cannot judge, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practice kindness towards animals, for 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. Hogarth<sup>46</sup> depicts this in his engravings (‘The Stages of Cruelty,’ 1751). He shows how cruelty grows, and develops. He shows the child’s cruelty to animals, pinching the tail of a dog or a cat; he then depicts the grown man in his cart running over a child; and lastly the culmination of cruelty in murder. He thus brings home to us in a terrible fashion the rewards of cruelty, and this should be an impressive lesson to children. The more we come in contact with animals and observe their behavior, the more we love them, for we see how great is their care for their young. It is then difficult for us to be cruel in thought even to a wolf. Leibniz used a tiny worm for purposes, of observation, and then carefully replaced it with its leaf on the tree so that it should not come to harm through any act of his. He would have been sorry—a natural feeling for a humane man—to destroy such a creature for no reason. Tender feelings towards dumb animals develop humane feelings towards mankind. In England butchers and doctors do not sit on a jury because they are accustomed to the sight of death and hardened. Vivisectionists, who use living animals for their experiments, certainly act cruelly, although their aim is praiseworthy, and they can justify their cruelty, since animals must

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<sup>45</sup> In Alexander Baumgarten’s *Ethica Philosophica*; Baumgarten was an 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher.

<sup>46</sup> William Hogarth (1697-1794), English painter, engraver, social critic and satirist.

be regarded as man's instruments; but any such cruelty for sport cannot be justified. A master who turns out his ass or his dog because the animal can no longer earn it keep manifests a small mind. The Greeks' ideas in this respect were high-minded as can be seen from the fable of the ass and the bell, as can be seen from the fable of the ass and the bell of ingratitude.<sup>47</sup> Our duties towards animals, then, are indirect duties towards mankind.<sup>48</sup>

### Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)

The view of Bentham, the pioneering British social reformer and Utilitarian philosopher, would become a touchstone for the contemporary animal rights movement.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> English philosopher John Cottingham explains this:

Those complaining of some act of ingratitude could ring the bell to summon a court of inquiry. A weak old ass, turned out by its owner, strayed into the bell tower and began nibbling some leaves twined round the bell-rope, thus ringing the bell. Kant's stressing that the bell was rung 'by accident' is important. The ass does not feel a sense of injustice (it is not a self-conscious being) nor, according to Kant, does the owner have a direct duty towards it (since it is a mere means' not an 'end in itself'). But the accidental ringing of the bell serves to remind us of the 'analogy' between ingratitude toward animals and ingratitude towards fellow humans (towards whom we do have direct duties). (John Cottingham, "The Status of Non-human Animals, Immanuel Kant, Lectures on Ethics" in *Western Philosophy; An Anthology*, ed. John Cottingham, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 576-577).

<sup>48</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Duties Toward Animals," in *Lectures on Ethics*. trans. Louis Infield (Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 239-241.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975) marked the current theoretical beginnings of animal rights (though the argument is utilitarian and not rightist); he says this about the Bentham passage:

... Bentham points to the capacity for suffering as the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration. The capacity for suffering—or more strictly, for suffering and/or enjoyment or happiness—is not just another characteristic like the capacity for language or higher mathematics. Bentham is not saying that those who try to mark "the insuperable line" that determines whether the interests of a being should be considered happen to have chosen the wrong characteristic. By saying that we must consider the interests of all beings with the capacity for suffering or enjoyment Bentham does not arbitrarily exclude from consideration any interests at all—as those who draw the line with reference to the possession of reason or language do. The capacity for suffering and enjoyment is a *prerequisite for having interests at all*, a condition that must be satisfied before we can speak of interests in a meaningful way. It would be nonsense to say that it was not in the interests of a stone to be kicked along the road by a schoolboy. A stone does not have interests because it cannot suffer. Nothing that we can do to it could possibly make any difference to its welfare. The capacity for suffering and enjoyment is however not only necessary but also sufficient for us to say that a being has interests—at an absolute minimum, an interest in not suffering. A mouse, for example, does have an interest in not being kicked along the road, because it will suffer if it is. (Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (New York Review of Books, 1990), pp. 7-8)).

Here, the historical issues of reason, self-consciousness and the ability to verbalize are deemed irrelevant in regard to why animals should receive moral protection—the fundamental moral issue is “sentience,” their ability to suffer:

Other animals, which, on account of their interests having been neglected by the insensibility of the ancient jurists, stand degraded into the class of *things*.\*

\*Under the Gentoo (*my note: Hindu*) and Mahometan religions, the interests of the rest of the animal creation seem to have met with some attention. Why have they not universally, with as much as those of human creatures, allowance made for the difference in point of sensibility? Because the laws that are have been the work of mutual fear; a sentiment which the less rational animals have not had the same means as man has of turning to account. Why *ought* they not? No reason can be given. If the being eaten were all, there is very good reason why we should be suffered to eat such of them as we like to eat: we are the better for it, and they are never the worse. They have none of those long-protracted anticipations of

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Tom Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), another major treatise, argues for inherent moral value in animals based upon sentience; in a 1985 essay, he offers a synopsis:

... the really crucial, the basic similarity is simply this: we are each of us the experiencing subject of a life, a conscious creature having an individual welfare that has importance to us whatever our usefulness to others. We want and prefer things, believe and feel things, recall and expect things. And all these dimensions of our life, including our pleasure and pain, our enjoyment and suffering, our satisfaction and frustration, our continued existence or our untimely death—all make a difference to the quality of our life as lived, as experienced, by us as individuals. As the same is true of those animals that concern us (the ones that are eaten and trapped, for example), they too must be viewed as the experiencing subjects of a life, with inherent value of their own. (Tom Regan. “The Case for Animal Rights” in *In Defense of Animals*, ed. Peter Singer (New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1985, p. 22)).

Gary L. Francione also argues for inherent value and “equal consideration” due to animals’ interests in not suffering:

If we want to take animal interests seriously and give content to our professed rejection of the infliction of unnecessary suffering on them, we can do so in only one way: by applying *the principle of equal consideration*, or the rule that we must treat likes alike, to animals. There is nothing exotic or particularly complicated about the principle of equal consideration. Indeed, this principle is part of every moral theory and, like the humane treatment principle, is one that most of us already accept in our everyday thinking about moral issues. Applying the principle of equal consideration to animals does not mean that we are committed to the view that animals are the “same” as humans (whatever that means), or that animals are our “equals” in all respects. It means only that if humans and animals do have a similar interest, we must treat that interest in the same way unless there is a good reason for not doing so. Our conventional wisdom about animals is that they are similar to us in at least one way: they are sentient and they are the sorts of beings who, like us, have an interest in not suffering. In this sense, we are similar to each other and dissimilar to *everything* else in the universe that is not sentient. (Gary L. Francione, *Introduction to Animal Rights* (Temple University Press, 2000), pp. xxv-xxvi)).

future misery which we have. The death they suffer in our hands commonly is, and always may be, a speedier, and by that means a less painful one, than that which would await them in the inevitable course of nature. If the being killed were all, there is very good reason why we should be suffered to kill such as molest us: we should be the worse for their living, and they are never the worse for being dead. But is there any reason why we should be suffered to torment them? Not any that I can see. Are there any why we should not be suffered to torment them? Yes, several.... [Cruelty to animals]. The day has been, I grieve to say in many places it is not yet past, in which the greater part of the species, under the denomination of slaves, have been treated by the law exactly upon the same footing as, in England for example, the inferior races of animals are still. The day may come, when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum* are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? the question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Jeremy Bentham. "Of The Limits Of The Penal Branch Of Jurisprudence," § i. "Limits between private ethics and the art of legislation," IV, Chapter XVII in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals And Legislation*. ed. J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart (Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 282-283.

Derrida regards the animals' "lack" in this passage (their lack of power—their ability to suffer) as undermining the centrality of the historical 'rational animal' in that humans share this "inability":

It is in thinking of the source and ends of this compassion that about two centuries ago someone like Bentham, as is well known, proposed changing the very form of the question regarding the animal that dominated discourse within the tradition, in the language of both the most refined philosophical argument and everyday acceptance and common sense. Bentham said something like this: the question is not to know whether the animal can think, reason, or talk, something we still pretend to be asking ourselves. (From Aristotle to Descartes, from Descartes, especially, to Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan, this question determines so many others concerning *power* or *capability* [*pouvoirs*] and *attributes* [*avoirs*]: being able, having the power to give, to die, to bury one's dead, to dress, to work, to invent a technique, and so on, a power that consists in having such and such a faculty, thus such and such a power, as an essential attribute). Thus the question will not be to know whether animals are of the type *won logon echon*, whether they *can* speak or reason thanks to that *capacity* or that *attribute* implied in the *logos*, the *can-have* [*pouvoir-avoir*] of the *logos*, the

## Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

Naturalist and evolutionary theorist Darwin observed that animals were able to express “sympathy” for each another and that differences between humans and animals in terms of mental function were of “degree and not of kind...; (certain) faculties and emotions” are shared:

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aptitude for the *logos* (and logocentrism is first of all a thesis regarding the animal, the animal deprived of the *logos*, deprived of the *can-have-the-logos*: this is the thesis, position, or presupposition maintained from Aristotle to Heidegger, from Descartes to Kant, Levinas and Lacan). The *first* and *decisive* question will rather be to know whether animals *can suffer*.

“Can they suffer?” asks Bentham simply yet so profoundly.

Once its protocol is established, the form of this question changes everything. It no longer simply concerns the *logos*, the disposition and whole configuration of the *logos*, having it or not, nor does it concern more radically a *dynamis* or *hexis*, this having or manner of being, this *habitus* that one calls a faculty or “power,” this can-have or the power one possesses (as in the power to reason, to speak, and everything that that implies). The question is disturbed by a certain *passivity*. It bears witness, manifesting already, as question, the response that testifies to a sufferance, a passion, a not-being-able. The word *can* [*pouvoir*] changes sense and sign here once one asks “can they suffer?” The word wavers henceforth. As soon as such a question is posed what counts is not only the idea of a transitivity or activity (being able to speak, to reason, and so on); the important thing is rather what impels it towards self-contradiction, something we will later relate back to auto-biography. “Can they suffer?” amounts to asking “can they *not be able*?” And what of this inability [*impouvoir*]? What of the vulnerability felt on the basis of this inability? What is this nonpower at the heart of power? What is its quality or modality? How should one account for it? What right should be accorded it? To what extent does it concern us? Being able to suffer is no longer a power, it is a possibility without power, a possibility of the impossible. Mortality resides there, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, the possibility of this impossibility, the anguish of this vulnerability and the vulnerability of this anguish.

With this question—“can they suffer?”—we are not standing on the rock of indubitable certainty, the foundation of every assurance that one could, for example, look for in the *cogito, inje pense donc je suis*. But from another perspective we are here putting our trust in an instance that is just as radical, however different it may be, namely, what is undeniable. No one can deny the suffering, fear or panic, the terror or fright that humans witness in certain animals. (Descartes himself was not able to claim that animals were insensitive to suffering.) (Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, op. cit., pp. 395-396).

Many animals, however, certainly sympathise with each other's distress or danger. This is the case even with birds. Captain Stansbury (13. As quoted by Mr. L.H. Morgan, 'The American Beaver,' 1868, p. 272. Capt. Stansbury also gives an interesting account of the manner in which a very young pelican, carried away by a strong stream, was guided and encouraged in its attempts to reach the shore by half a dozen old birds.) found on a salt lake in Utah an old and completely blind pelican, which was very fat, and must have been well fed for a long time by his companions. Mr. Blyth, as he informs me, saw Indian crows feeding two or three of their companions which were blind; and I have heard of an analogous case with the domestic cock. We may, if we choose, call these actions instinctive; but such cases are much too rare for the development of any special instinct. (14. As Mr. Bain states, "effective aid to a sufferer springs from sympathy proper:" 'Mental and Moral Science,' 1868, p. 245.) I have myself seen a dog, who never passed a cat who lay sick in a basket, and was a great friend of his, without giving her a few licks with his tongue, the surest sign of kind feeling in a dog.<sup>51</sup> (Part I, "The Descent or Origin of Man," Chapter III, "Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and the Lower Animals," p 77.)

Nevertheless the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind. We have seen that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention, curiosity, imitation, reason, etc., of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals. They are also capable of some inherited improvement, as we see in the domestic dog compared with the wolf or jackal. If it could be proved that certain high mental powers, such as the formation of general concepts, self-consciousness, etc., were absolutely peculiar to man, which seems extremely doubtful, it is not improbable that these qualities are merely the incidental results of other highly-advanced intellectual faculties; and these again mainly the result of the continued use of a perfect language. At what age does the new-born infant possess the power of abstraction, or become self-conscious, and reflect on its own existence? We cannot answer; nor can we answer in regard to the ascending organic scale. The half-art, half-instinct of language still bears the stamp of its gradual evolution. The ennobling belief in God is not universal with man; and the belief in spiritual agencies naturally follows from other mental powers. The moral sense perhaps affords the best and highest distinction between man and the lower animals; but I need say nothing on this head, as I have so lately endeavoured to shew that the social instincts,—the prime principle of man's moral constitution (50. 'The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius,' etc., p. 139.)—with the aid of active

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<sup>51</sup> Charles Darwin, "Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and the Lower Animals," Part I, "The Descent or Origin of Man," Chapter III, in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 77.

intellectual powers and the effects of habit, naturally lead to the golden rule, “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them likewise;” and this lies at the foundation of morality.<sup>52</sup>

### Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881)

In this passionate exhortation from *The Brother's Karamazov*, Russian novelist Dostoevsky has Father Zossima implore humans to “love... animals” and not “harass” them to be consistent with God’s “intent”; reflecting Ecclesiastes 3, humans are strongly cautioned against the “pride” of superiority as animals are “without sin” while *all* persons embody this unenviable trait:

Brothers, have no fear of men’s sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don’t harass them, don’t deprive them of their happiness, don’t work against God’s intent. Man, do not pride yourself on superiority to the animals; they are without sin, and you, with your greatness, defile the earth by your appearance on it, and leave the traces of your foulness after you—alas, it is true of almost every one of us! Love children especially, for they too are sinless like the angels; they live to soften and purify our hearts and, as it were, to guide us. Woe to him who offends a child! Father Anfim taught me to love children. The kind, silent man used often on our wanderings to spend the farthings given us on sweets and cakes for the children. He could not pass by a child without emotion. That’s the nature of the man.<sup>53</sup>

### Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Marx, the founder of modern communism, argued that the distinction between humans and animals relates to our “species-being”; persons are not aligned with their immediate environment as are animals who only act from “physical need”—humans consciously and purposefully act on behalf of their species in ways that animals do not.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>53</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, “(f) Of Masters and servants, and of Whether It Is Possible for Them To Be Brothers in the Spirit,” in Chapter 3: “Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima,” Part II, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New American Library, 1957). p. 294.

Humans, for example, can create works of art as they have an aesthetic sensibility (they can realize “laws of beauty”) which animals lack:

Man is a species-being [*ed. note: The term “species-being” (Gattungswesen) is derived from Ludwig Feuerbach’s philosophy where it is applied to man and mankind as a whole*] not only because in practice and in theory he adopts the species (his own as well as those of other things) as his object, but – and this is only another way of expressing it – also because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a *universal* and therefore a free being.

The life of the species, both in man and in animals, consists physically in the fact that man (like the animal) lives on organic nature; and the more universal man (or the animal) is, the more universal is the sphere of inorganic nature on which he lives. Just as plants, animals, stones, air, light, etc., constitute theoretically a part of human consciousness, partly as objects of natural science, partly as objects of art – his spiritual inorganic nature, spiritual nourishment which he must first prepare to make palatable and digestible – so also in the realm of practice they constitute a part of human life and human activity. Physically man lives only on these products of nature, whether they appear in the form of food, heating, clothes, a dwelling, etc. The universality of man appears in practice precisely in the universality which makes all nature his *inorganic* body – both inasmuch as nature is (1) his direct means of life, and (2) the material, the object, and the instrument of his life activity. Nature is man’s *inorganic* body—nature, that is, insofar as it is not itself human body. Man *lives* on nature—means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man’s physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.

In estranging from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active functions, his life activity, estranged labor estranges the *species* from man. It changes for him the *life of the species* into a means of individual life. First it estranges the life of the species and individual life, and secondly it makes individual life in its abstract form the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and estranged form.

For labor, *life activity*, *productive life* itself, appears to man in the first place merely as a means of satisfying a need – the need to maintain physical existence. Yet the productive life is the life of the species. It is life-engendering life. The whole character of a species, its species-character, is contained in the character of its life activity; and free, conscious activity is man’s species-character. Life itself appears only as a *means to life*.

The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is *its life activity*. Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from animal life activity. It is just because of this that he is a species-being. Or it is only because he is a species-being that he is a conscious being, i.e., that his own life is an object for him. Only because of that is his activity free activity. Estranged labor reverses the relationship, so that it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his life activity, his *essential being*, a mere means to his *existence*.

In creating a *world of objects* by his personal activity, in his *work upon* inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species-being, i.e., as a being that treats the species as his own essential being, or that treats itself as a species-being. Admittedly animals also produce. They build themselves nests, dwellings, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc. But an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, whilst man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, whilst man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. An animal produces only itself, whilst man reproduces the whole of nature. An animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, whilst man freely confronts his product. An animal forms only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is just in his work upon the objective world, therefore, that man really proves himself to be a *species-being*. This production is his active species-life. Through this production, nature appears as *his work* and his reality. The object of labor is, therefore, the *objectification of man's species-life*: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he sees himself in a world that he has created. In tearing away from man the object of his production, therefore, estranged labor tears from him his *species-life*, his real objectivity as a member of the species and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," trans. Martin Milligan in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), pp. 75-77.

## Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

The German philosopher Schopenhauer registered great concern about animals though his view is essentially welfarist: he does not oppose the use of animals for food, clothing, or labor but insists they be treated humanely. He makes emphatic mention of the need for organizations to protect animals and regards the British as pioneers therein; he also criticizes Kant for accepting the traditional view that because animals are not self-conscious, they lack moral worth:

... Nothing removes our spiteful attitude toward others so easily as adopting a point of view in which they appeal to our compassion. Parents are, as a rule, most fond of the delicate child, due to the fact that it constantly excites their compassion.

... The moral incentive advanced by me as the genuine, is further confirmed by the fact that *the animals* are also taken under its protection. In other European systems of morality they are badly provided for, which is most inexcusable. They are said to have no rights, and there is the erroneous idea that our behavior to them is without any moral significance, or, as is in the language of that morality, there are no duties to animals. All this is revoltingly crude, a barbarism of the West, the source of which is to be found in Judaism. In philosophy it rests despite all evidence to the contrary, on the assumed total difference between man and animal. We all know that such difference was expressed most definitely and strikingly by Descartes as a necessary consequence of his errors. Thus when the philosophy of Descartes, Leibniz, and Wolff built up rational psychology out of abstract concepts and constructed an immortal *anima rationalis*, the natural claims of the animal world obviously stood up against this exclusive privilege, this patent of immortality of the human species, and nature, as always on such occasions, entered her silent protest. With an uneasy intellectual conscience, the philosophers then had to try to support rational psychology by means of the empirical. They were therefore concerned to open up a vast chasm, an immeasurable gulf between man and animal in order to represent them as fundamentally different, in spite of all evidence to the contrary. Such efforts were ridiculed by Boileau:

Les animaux ont-ils des universités?  
Voit-on fleurir chez eux des quatre facultés?

“Have the animals their universities?  
Do we see the four faculties flourish with them?”  
(*Satires*, VIII, 165)

In the end animals would be quite incapable of distinguishing themselves from the external world and would have no consciousness of themselves,

no ego! To answer such absurd statements, we can point simply to the boundless egoism inherent in every animal even the smallest and lowest, which shows clearly enough how very conscious they are of their ego in face of the world or the non-ego. If any Cartesian found himself clawed by a tiger, he would become aware in the clearest possible manner of the sharp distinction such a beast draws between its ego and the non-ego. In keeping with such sophisms of philosophers, we find a popular peculiarity in many languages, especially German, of giving animals special words of their own for eating, drinking, pregnancy, parturition, dying, and their bodies, so that we need not use the same words which describe those acts among human beings: and thus we conceal under a diversity of words the perfect and complete identity of the thing. Since the ancient languages did not recognize any such duplication, but rather frankly and openly denoted the same thing by the same word, that miserable artifice is undoubtedly the work of European priests and parsons. In their profanity these men think they cannot go far enough in disavowing and reviling the eternal essence that live in all animals, and thus have laid the foundation of that harshness and cruelty to animals which is customary in Europe, but which no narrative of the Asiatic uplands can look at without righteous horror. In the English language we do not meet with this contemptible trick, doubtless because the Saxons, when they conquered England, were not yet Christians. On the other hand, we do find an analogy to in the strange fact that in English all animals are of the neuter gender and so are represented by the pronoun "it," just as if they were inanimate things. The effect of this artifice is quite revolting, especially in the case of primates, such as dogs, monkeys, and the like; it is unmistakably a priestly trick for the purpose of reducing animals to the level of things. The ancient Egyptians, whose whole life was dedicated to religious purposes, put the mummies of the ibis, crocodile, and so on, in the same vault with those of human beings. In Europe, however, it is an abomination and a crime for a faithful dog to be buried beside the resting place of his master, though at times, from a faithfulness and attachment not to be found among the human race, he there awaited his own death. Nothing leads more definitely to a recognition of the identity of the essential nature in animal and human phenomenon than a study of zoology and anatomy. What, then, are we to say when in these days (1839) a bigoted and canting zootomist 17 [Rudolph 'Wagner (1805-1864), physiologist and anthropologist, professor at Erlangen and Göttingen] has the audacity to emphasize an absolute and radical difference, between, man and animal, and goes so far as to attack and disparage honest zoologists who keep aloof from all priestly guile, toadyism, and hypocrisy, and pursue their course under the guidance of nature and truth?

One must be really quite blind...not to recognize that the essential and principal thing in the animal and man is the same, and that what distinguishes the one from the other is not to be found in the primary and

original principle, in the archæus, in the nature, in the kernel of the two phenomena, such being in both alike the *will* of the individual; but only secondary, in the intellect, in the degree of the cognitive faculty. In man this degree is incomparably higher through the addition of the faculty of *abstract* knowledge, called *reason*. Yet this superiority is traceable only to a greater cerebral development, and hence to the somatic difference of a single part, the brain, and in particular, its quantity. On the other hand, the similarity between animal and man is incomparably greater, both psychologically and somatically. And so we must remind the Western... despiser of animals and idolater of the faculty of reason that, just as he was suckled by *his* mother, so to was the dog by *his*. Even Kant fell into this mistake of his contemporaries and countrymen; this I have already censured. The morality of Christianity has no consideration for animals, a defect that is better admitted than perpetuated. This is the more surprising since, in other respects, that morality shows the closest agreement with that of Brahmanism and Buddhism, being merely less strongly expressed, and not carried through to its very end. Therefore we can scarcely doubt that, like the idea of a god become man (avatar), the Christian morality originates from India and may have come to Judæa by way of Egypt, so that Christianity would be a reflected splendor of the primordial light of India from the ruins of Egypt;... The circumstance of John the Baptist coming before us quite like an Indian sannyasi, yet clad in the skin of an animal, could be viewed as an odd *symbol* of the defect in Christian morality just censured, in spite of its otherwise close agreement with the Indian. We know, of course, that to every Hindu such a thing would be an abomination. Even the Royal Society of Calcutta received their copy of the Vedas only on their promising not to have it bound in leather, in the European style; it is therefore to be seen bound in silk in their library. Again, the Gospel story of Peter's draught of fishes, which the Savior blesses by a miracle to such an extent that the boats are overloaded with fish to the point of sinking (Luke 5:1-10), affords a similar characteristic contrast to the story of Pythagoras. Initiated as he was in the wisdom of the Egyptians, he bought up the draught from the fishermen while the net was still under water, in order to give all the captured fish their freedom (Apuleius, *De magia*, page 36 Bip.). Since compassion for animals is so intimately associated with goodness of character, it may be confidently asserted that whoever is cruel to animals cannot be a good man. This compassion also appears to have sprung from the same source as the virtue that is shown to human beings has. Thus, for example, persons with delicate feelings, on realizing that that in a bad mood, in anger, or under the influence of wine, they unnecessarily or excessively, or beyond propriety, ill-treated their dog, horse, or monkey—these people will feel the same remorse, the dissatisfaction with themselves as is felt when they feel a wrong done to human beings, where it is called the voice of reproving conscience. I recall having read of an Englishman who, while hunting in India, had shot a monkey; he could not forget the look which

the dying animal gave him, and since then had never again fired at monkeys. Similarly, William Harris, a true Nimrod, in 1836 and 1837 traveled far into the interior of Africa merely to enjoy the pleasure of hunting. In his book, published in Bombay in 1838, he describes how he shot his first elephant, a female. The next morning he went to look for the dead animal; all the other elephants had fled from the neighborhood except a young one, who had spent the night with his dead mother. Forgetting all fear, he came toward the sportsmen with the clear and liveliest evidence of inconsolable grief, and put his tiny trunk round them in order to appeal for help. Harris says he was then filled with real remorse for what he had done, and felt as if he had committed a murder. We see this English nation of fine feelings distinguished above all others by a conspicuous sympathy for animals, which appears at every opportunity a strong enough to induce the English, in spite of the “cold superstition” that otherwise degrades them, to repair by legislation the gap their religion has left in morality. For this is the very reason why in Europe and America societies for the protection of animals are needed, and they are effective only with the help of justice and the police. In Asia the religions afford sufficient protection to animals, and thus no one ever thinks of such societies. Meanwhile, in Europe a sense of the right of animals is gradually awakening, in proportion to the slow dying and disappearing of the strange notions that the animal world came into existence simply for the benefit and pleasure of man. Such notions result in animals being treated exactly like things, for they are the source of their rough and quite ruthless treatment in Europe. In the second volume of the *Parega* (177), I have shown that they are of Old Testament origin. To the glory of the English, then, let it be said that they are the first nation whose laws have quite seriously protected even the animals from cruel treatment. The ruffian must actually make amends for having committed an outrage on animals, even when they belong to him. Not content with this, the English have voluntarily formed in London a society for the protection of animals, known as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. By private means and at considerable expense, it does a great deal to counteract the tortures that are inflicted. Its emissaries are secretly on the watch to appear later and denounce the torturers of dumb, sensitive creatures, and everywhere their presence is feared.\*

[\*Footnote: How seriously the matter is taken is shown by the recent example which I quote from the *Birmingham Journal* 1839: “Arrest of a company of eighty-four promoters of dog-fights. When it became known that a dog-fight was to take place yesterday on the square in Fox Street, Birmingham, the Society of Animals Friends took precautionary measures to secure the help of the police. A strong detachment of police went to the spot, and as soon as they got there, arrested the whole company who were present. The accomplices now handcuffed in pairs, and then the whole party was made fast by a long rope running down the middle. They were thus taken off to the police station where the mayor and magistrate were in session, The two ringleaders were each fined one pound and eight shillings and sixpence costs, and in default were sentenced to fourteen days, hard labour, The rest were released.” The coxcombs whose habit is never

to miss such noble sport must have looked very embarrassed in the procession. But we find in *The Times* of April 6, 1855, on page 6, an even more striking example from recent times, and indeed the paper itself settling the matter. Thus it reports the case, brought before the courts, of the daughter of a very wealthy Scottish baronet. She had used with the greatest cruelty a cudgel and knife on her horse, and for this she had been fined five pounds. But for such a girl this was nothing, and therefore would have amounted to no punishment at all, had not *The Times* intervened with a severe and proper reprimand by giving twice in large letters the girl's Christian name and surname and adding: "We cannot help saying that a few months' imprisonment with some whippings, administered in private, but by the most muscular woman in Hampshire, would have been a much more fitting punishment for Miss N.N.A. miserable creature of this kind has forfeited all the consideration and privileges attaching to her sex, We can no longer regard her as a woman." I dedicate these newspaper reports especially to the societies against cruelty to animals which are, now being formed in Germany, so that they will see how the problem must be tackled, if they are to obtain any result. However, I fully acknowledge the praiseworthy efforts of Herr Hofrath Perner in Munich, who has devoted himself entirely to this branch of doing good and has aroused interest all over Germany.]

At steep bridges in London the society keeps a pair of horses that are attached gratis to every heavily loaded wagon. Is this not a fine thing? Does it not command our approbation, precisely as does a good deed done to human beings? In 1837, the Philanthropic Society of London on its part offered a prize of thirty pounds for the best statement of the moral reasons against torturing animals. Such, however, had to be taken mainly from Christianity, and this naturally made the problem more difficult. In 1839 the prize was awarded to Mr. Macnamara. For similar purposes there is in Philadelphia an Animals Friends' Society. T. Forster, an Englishman, dedicated to its president his book entitled *Philozoa, Moral Reflections on the Actual Condition of Animals and the Means of Improving the Same* (Brussels, 1839). The book is original and well written. As an Englishman, the author naturally attempts to make the Bible the basis of his exhortations to the humane treatment of animals, but he is always on slippery ground, so that in the end he resorts to the argument that Jesus Christ was born in a stable among oxen and asses. This was understood to mean symbolically that we had to regard animals as our brothers and treat them accordingly. All that I have mentioned here is evidence that the moral chord in question is at last beginning to vibrate even in the West. For the rest, sympathy for animals should not carry us to the length of having to abstain from animal food, like the Brahmans; for in nature the capacity for suffering keeps pace with intelligence, and thus man would suffer more by going without animal food, especially in the North, than the animal does through a quick and always unforeseen death—which should however be made easier by means of chloroform. Without animal food, the human race would not even exist in the North. By the same token, man may also have the animal to work for him; cruelty occurs only when it is subjected to undue strain.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, "The Proof Now Given Confirmed by Experience" (6-7), Chapter VIII, Part III, "The Foundation of Ethics" in *On the Basis of Morality*, trans. E.F.J. Payne. (Bobbs-Merill Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 175-182.

## Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Often regarded as the most important Continental philosopher of the twentieth-century, much of Heidegger's later thought was concerned with the ever increasing role of technology in the modern world. Here, he writes of a primal "fourfold" (*das Geviert*) of which humans ("mortals") are an integral part. The mechanistic world of rote subjects and objects is displaced by a more basic, existential awareness that regards humans as part of an encompassing whole—along with the "animal." Though Heidegger still regards humans as unique<sup>56</sup> in that he believes they alone are aware of their mortality, his critique of traditional philosophical assumptions—embodied in what he deems the menace posed by technology—marks an important historical and philosophical moment. No longer can the philosophical view that regards the natural world—and its inhabitants—as an exploitable resource maintain preeminence:

... For this reason it recedes behind the manifold ways in which dwelling is accomplished, the activities of cultivation and construction. These activities later claim the name of *bauen*, building, and with it the matter of building, exclusively for themselves. The proper sense of *bauen*, namely dwelling, falls into oblivion.

At first sight this event looks as though it were no more than a change of meaning of mere terms. In truth, however, something decisive is concealed in it, namely, dwelling is not experienced as man's Being; dwelling is never thought of as the basic character of human being.

That language in a way retracts the proper meaning of the word *bauen*, which is dwelling, is evidence of the original one of these meanings; for with the essential words of language, what they genuinely say easily falls into oblivion in favor of foreground meanings. Man has hardly yet pondered the mystery of this process. Language withdraws from man its simple and high speech. But its primal call does not thereby become incapable of speech; it merely falls silent. Man, though, fails to heed this silence.

But if we listen to what language says in the word *bauen* we hear three things:

1. Building is really dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth.
3. Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates into the building growing things and the building that erects buildings.

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<sup>56</sup> Derrida is critical of this notion—see footnotes 29 and 50.

If we give thought to this threefold fact, we obtain a clue and note the following: as long as we do not bear in mind that all building is in itself a dwelling, we cannot even adequately ask, let alone properly decide, what the building of buildings might be in its essence. We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers*. But in what does the essence of dwelling consist? Let us listen once more to what language says to us. The Old Saxon *wuon*, the Gothic *wunian*, like the old word *bauen*, mean to remain, to stay in a place. But the Gothic *wunian* says more distinctly how this remaining is experienced. *Wunian* means to be at peace brought to peace, to remain in peace. The word for peace, *Friede*, means the free, *das Frye*; and *fry* means preserved from harm and danger, preserved from something, safeguarded. To free actually means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something positive and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own essence, when we return it specifically to its essential being, when we “free” it in the proper sense of the word into a preserve of peace. To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving*. It pervades dwelling in its whole range. That range reveals itself to us as soon as we recall that human being consists in dwelling and, indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth.

But “on the Earth” already means “under the sky.” Both of these also mean “remaining under the divinities” and include a “belonging to men’s being with one another.” By a *primal* oneness, the four—earth and sky, divinities and mortals—belong together in one.

Earth is the serving bearer, blossoming and framing, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal. When we say earth, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four.

The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year’s seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether. When we say sky, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four.

The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the sway of the godhead, the god appears in his presence or withdraws into his concealment. When we speak of the divinities, we are already thinking of the other three along with them, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four.

The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies, and indeed continually, as long as he remains on earth, under the sky, before the divinities. When we speak of mortals, we are already thinking of the other three along with them, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four.

This simple oneness of the four *we call the fourfold*. Mortals *are* in the fourfold by *dwelling*. But the basic character of dwelling is to spare, to preserve. Mortals dwell in that they preserve the fourfold in its essential being, its presencing. Accordingly, the preserving that dwells is fourfold.

Mortals dwell in that they save the earth—taking the word in the old sense still known to Lessing.<sup>57</sup> Saving does not only snatch something from a danger. To save really means to set something free into its own essence. To save the earth is more than to exploit it or even wear it out. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it, which is merely one step from boundless spoliation.

Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky. They leave to the sun and the moon their journey, to the stars their courses, to the seasons their blessing and their inclemency; they do not turn night into day nor day into a harassed unrest.

Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities. In hope they hold up to the divinities what is un hoped for. They wait for intimations of their coming and do not mistake the signs of their absence. They do not make their gods for themselves and do not worship idols. In the very depth of misfortune they wait for the weal that has been withdrawn.

Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own essential nature—their being capable of death as death—into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death. To initiate mortals into the essence of death in no way means to make death, as the empty nothing, the goal. Nor does it mean to darken dwelling by blindly staring toward the end.

In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in initiating mortals, dwelling comes to pass as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold. To spare and preserve means to take under our care, to look after the fourfold in its essence. What we take under our care must be kept safe. But if dwelling preserves the fourfold, where does it keep the fourfold's essence? How do mortals make their dwelling such a preserving? Mortals would never be capable of it if dwelling were merely a staying on earth under the sky, before the divinities, among mortals.

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<sup>57</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781): German writer, philosopher, dramatist, publicist, and art critic.

Rather, dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things.

Staying with things, however, is not merely something attached to this fourfold preservation as a fifth something. On the contrary: staying with things is the only way in which the fourfold stay within the fourfold is accomplished at any time in simple unity. Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the essence of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold *only when* they themselves *as* things are let be in their essence. How does this happen? In this way, that mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow, and specially construct things that do not grow. Cultivating and construction are building in the narrower sense. *Dwelling*, inasmuch as it keeps the fourfold in things, is, as this keeping, a *building*.<sup>58</sup>

### Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995)

Another important and influential Continental philosopher, the Lithuanian born Levinas, who studied under the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl<sup>59</sup> as well as with Heidegger, is best known for an ethic of radical *alterity*: our greatest responsibility is not to ourselves but to the distinct and separate Other. The Other is transcendent and irreducible and can never be made into an object or a thing—in terms of other persons, the pathway of encounter is always the “face.”

In a 1986 interview, Levinas is questioned about the face of the animal; though he feels that the animal does exhibit one and therefore has a stake in our ethical responsibility, he asserts the “priority” of the human face to “understand the animal.” In regard to his view that the ethical commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ reveals the human face, he is asked if the animal face can also express this commandment; he responds that he “does not know”:

*Is the face a simple or a complex phenomenon? Would it be correct to define it as that aspect of a human being which escapes all efforts at comprehension and totalization, or are there other characteristic of this phenomenon which must be included in any definition or description of the face?*

The face is a fundamental event. Among the many modes of approach and diverse ways of relating to being, the action of the face is special and for this reason it is very difficult to give it an exact phenomenological description. The phenomenology of the face is very often negative.

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<sup>58</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” op. cit., pp. 148-151.

<sup>59</sup> Levinas was largely responsible for introducing Husserlian phenomenology into France; he taught at many French universities, including the Nanterre branch of the University of Paris and the Sorbonne.

What seems essential to me is, for example the manner in which Heidegger understood the *zeug*—that which comes to hand, the instrument, the thing. He understood it as irreducible proto-type. The face is similar in that it is not at all a representation, it is not a given of knowledge, nor is it a thing which comes to hand. It is an irreducible means of access, and it is in ethical terms that it can be spoken of. I have said that in my analysis of the face it is a demand; a demand, not a question. The face is a hand in search of recompense, an open hand. That is, it needs something. It is going to ask you for something. I don't know whether one can say that it is complex or simple. It is, in any case, a new way of speaking of the face.

When I said that the face is authority, that there is authority in the face, this may undoubtedly seem contradictory: it is a request and it is an authority. You have a question later on in which you ask me how it could be that if there is a commandment in the face, one can do the opposite of what the face demands. The face is not a force. It is an authority. Authority is often without force. Your question seems to be based on the idea that God commands and demands. He is extremely powerful. If you try not doing what he tells you, he will punish you. That is a very recent notion. On the contrary, the first form, the unforgettable form, in my opinion, is that, in the last analysis, he can not do anything at all. He is not a force but an authority.

*But is there something distinctive about the human face which, for example, sets it apart from that of an animal?*

One cannot entirely refuse the face of an animal. It is via the face that one understands, for example, a dog. Yet the priority here is not found in the animal, but in the human face. We understand the animal, the face of an animal, in accordance with *Dasein*. The phenomenon of the face is not in its purest form in the dog. In the dog, in the animal, there are other phenomena. For example, the force of nature is pure vitality. It is more this which characterizes the dog. But it also has a face.

There are these two strange things in the face its extreme frailty—the fact of being without means and, on the other hand, there is authority. It is as if God spoke through the face.

*... According to your analysis, the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is revealed by the human face; but is the commandment not also expressed in the face of an animal? Can an animal be considered as the other that must be welcomed? Or is it necessary to possess the possibility of speech to be a 'face' in the ethical sense?*

I cannot say at what moment you have the right to be called 'face.' The human face is completely different and only afterwards do we discover the face of an animal. I don't know if a snake has a face. I can't answer that question. A more specific analysis is needed. But there is something in our attraction to an animal.... In the dog what we like is perhaps his child-like character. As if he were strong, cheerful, powerful, full of life. On the other hand, there is also, even with regards to an animal, a pity. A dog is like a wolf that doesn't bite. There is the trace of the wolf in the dog. In any case, there is here the possibility of a specific phenomenological analysis.... Children are often loved for their animality. The child is not suspicious of anything. He jumps, he walks, he runs, he bites. It's delightful.

*If animals do not have faces in an ethical sense, do we have obligations towards them? And if so, where do they come from?*

It is clear that, without considering animals as human beings, the ethical extends to all living beings. We do not want to make an animal suffer needlessly and so on. But the prototype of this is human ethics. Vegetarianism, for example, arises from the transference to animals of the idea of suffering. The animal suffers. It is because we as human, know what suffering is that we can have this obligation. The widespread thesis that the ethical is biological amounts to saying that, ultimately, the human is only the last stage of the evolution of the animal. I would say, on the contrary, that in relation to the animal, the human is a new phenomenon. And that leads me to your question. You ask at what moment one becomes a face. I do not know at what moment the human appears, but what I want to emphasize is that the human breaks with pure being which is always a persistence in being. This is my principal thesis. A being is something that is attached to being to its own being. That is Darwin's idea. The being of animals is a struggle for life. A struggle for life without ethics. It is a question of might. Heidegger says at the beginning of *Being and Time* that *Dasein* is a being who in his being is concerned for this being itself. That's Darwin's idea: the living being struggles for life. The aim of being is being itself. However, with the appearance of the human—and this is my entire philosophy—there is something more important than my life, and that is the life of the other. That is unreasonable. Man is an unreasonable animal. Most of the time my life is dearer to me, most of the time one looks after oneself. But we cannot not admire saintliness. Not the sacred, but saintliness: that is, the person who in his being is more attached to the being of the other than to his own. I believe that it is in saintliness that the human begins; not in the accomplishment of saintliness, but in the value. It is the first value, an undeniable value. Even when someone says

something bad about saintliness, it is in the name of saintliness that he says it.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas," interview by Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, and Alison Ainley (Paris, 1986), trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (Routledge, 1988), pp. 168-169, 171-173.

As with Heidegger, Derrida is critical of this position:

(Levinas) passes in this century (as the) thinker most concerned with ethics and sanctity (but) did not make the animal anything like a focus of interrogation with his work. This silence seems to me here, at least from the point of view that counts for us, more significant than all the difference that might separate Levinas from Descartes and from Kant on the question of the subject, of ethics, and of the person.... The animal is outside of the ethical circuit... That can be a surprise, coming from a thinking that is so "obsessed" (I am purposefully using Levinas' word), so preoccupied by an obsession with the other and with his infinite alterity. If I am responsible for the other, and in the place of the other, on behalf of the other, isn't the animal more other still, more radically other, if I might put it that way, than the other in whom I recognize my brother, than the other in whom I identify my fellow or neighbor? If I have a duty [*devoir*]*—*something owed before any debt, before any right*—*toward the other, wouldn't it then also be toward the animal, which is still more other than the other human, my brother or my neighbor?

Another problematic issue is Levinas' contention that the "human face is completely different" than that of the animal:

It indeed seems to suggest that this discovery after the fact operates on the basis of an analogical transposition or anthropomorphism, which is a way of rendering it secondary if not of finding it suspect, and in any case amounts to confirming, for better or worse, that the thinking and experience of the face are originally human, that is to say fraternal. While recognizing we are not to make an animal suffer "needlessly"... Levinas insists on the originary, paradigmatic, "prototypical" character of ethics as human, the space of a relation between humans, only humans: it is for this that they are human. It is only afterward, by means of an analogical transposition, that we become sensitive to animal suffering. It is only by means of a transference, indeed, through metaphor or allegory that such suffering obligates us. Certainly the human face is and says "I am," in the end, only in front of the other and after the other, but that is always the other human, and the latter comes before an animal, which never looks at him to say "Thou shalt not kill," even if it be to say "Help, I am suffering," with the implication "like you"....

With respect to the snake reference:

The example is not chosen by chance.... For the immense allegorical or mythological weight, and to begin with, the biblical and poetic weight... makes attributing a face to this figure of temptation or evil highly improbable. That is no doubt what Levinas's rhetoric wants to convince us of, although one could be tempted, on the contrary, to see in a figure of bestial evil a still more inevitable idea of the face. Where this is evil there is face. What remains faceless is pure indifference to good and evil. In particular, in choosing the serpent Levinas can avoid lighting on more disturbing examples. He avoids still more having to answer the question concerning so many other animals—for example, the cat, the dog, the horse, the monkey, the orangutan, the chimpanzee—whom it would be difficult refuse a face and a gaze. And hence to refuse the "Thou shalt not

## Milan Kundera (1929-)

In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Czech novelist Kundera poignantly reacts to the biblical issue of dominion as well as Descartes' view that animals are machines. He also recounts the famous episode in the life of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) when the philosopher tried to prevent a horse from being beaten but then lapsed into insanity from which he would never recover:

The very beginning of Genesis tells us that God created man in order to give him dominion over fish and fowl and all creatures. Of course, Genesis was written by a man, not a horse. There is no certainty that God actually did grant man dominion over other creatures. What seems more likely, in fact, is that man invented God to sanctify the dominion that he had usurped for himself over the cow and the horse. Yes, the right to kill a deer or a cow is the only thing all of mankind can agree upon, even during the bloodiest of wars.

The reason we take that right for granted is that we stand at the top of the hierarchy. But let a third party enter the game—a visitor from another planet, for example, someone to whom God says, Thou shalt have dominion over creatures of all other stars—and all at once taking Genesis for granted becomes problematical. Perhaps a man hitched to the cart of a

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kill" that Levinas reserves for the face, for the face of the human for the human, or for God's commandment in instituting the nakedness of the human face.

This response... seems dizzyingly risky, exposed but also quite cautious. It presents itself in the first instance as a non-response. Better yet, an admission of nonresponse; a declaration of nonresponse: "I can't answer that question," he says. Declining responsibility, if one can say that. Levinas thus realizes that he can't answer. He realizes that he would very much like to respond, that no doubt he should, but he can't. He is incapable of it. Not incapable in general of responding in general, as Descartes' animal would be incapable of responding, but incapable here of responding *to* this very question and of the answering *for* this question on the animal, concerning the face of the animal: "I can't see that question" is what he says.... But this response in the form of a nonresponse is human. Quite human, all too human. No animal at all. Levinas implies, would admit in the same way to the incapacity to answer what is in sum the question of responding: for to have a face is to be able to respond or answer, by means of the "Here I am"; he responds, but by admitting that he can't respond to the question of knowing what a face is, namely, of knowing what responding is, and he can thus no longer answer for his whole discourse on the face. For declaring that he does not know where the right to be called "face" begins means confessing that one doesn't know at bottom what a face is, what the word means, what governs its usage, and that means confessing that one didn't say what responding means. Doesn't that amount, as a result, to call into question the whole legitimacy of the discourse and ethics of the "face" of the other, the legitimacy and even the sense of every proposition concerning the alterity of the other, the other as my neighbor or my brother, etc.? (Jacques Derrida, "I Don't Know Why We Are Doing This," *op. cit.*, pp. 105, 106-107, 110, 108-109).

Martian or roasted on the spit by inhabitants of the Milky Way will recall the veal cutlet he used to slice on his dinner plate and apologize (belatedly!) to the cow.<sup>61</sup>

Even though Genesis says that God gave man dominion over all animals, we can also construe it to mean that He merely entrusted them to man's care. Man was not the planet's master, merely its administrator, and therefore eventually responsible for his administration. Descartes took a decisive step forward: he made man "*maitre et proprietaire de la nature*." And surely there is a deep connection between that step and the fact that he was also the one who point-blank denied animals a soul. Man is master and proprietor, says Descartes, whereas the beast is merely an automaton, an animated machine, a *machina animata*. When an animal laments, it is not a lament; it is merely the rasp of a poorly functioning mechanism. When a wagon wheel grates, the wagon is not in pain; it simply needs oiling. Thus, we have no reason to grieve for a dog being carved up alive in the laboratory.<sup>62</sup>

True human goodness, in all its purity and freedom, can come to the fore only when its recipient has no power. Mankind's true moral test, its fundamental test (which lies deeply buried from view), consists of its attitude towards those who are at its mercy: animals. And in this respect mankind has suffered a fundamental debacle, a debacle so fundamental that all others stem from it.<sup>63</sup>

Tereza keeps appearing before my eyes. I see her sitting on the stump petting Karenin's head<sup>64</sup> and ruminating on mankind's debacles. Another image also comes to mind: Nietzsche leaving his hotel in Turin. Seeing a horse and a coachman beating it with a whip, Nietzsche went up to the horse and, before the coachman's very eyes, put his arms around the horse's neck and burst into tears.

That took place in 1889, when Nietzsche, too, had removed himself from the world of people. In other words, it was at the time when his mental illness had just erupted. But for that very reason I feel his gesture has broad implications:

Nietzsche was trying to apologize to the horse for Descartes. His lunacy (that is, his final break with mankind) began at the very moment he burst into tears over the horse.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. trans. Michael Henry Heim (Harper Collins Publishers, 1999), p. 286.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>64</sup> Tereza is one of the main female characters in the novel and is married to the main character, the physician, Tomáš; Karenin was their dog who became cancer-ridden.

<sup>65</sup> Kundera, *op. cit.*, p. 290. Nietzsche biographer Rüdiger Safranski offers this account of the breakdown:

And that is the Nietzsche I love, just as I love Tereza with the mortally ill dog resting his head in her lap. I see them one next to the other: both stepping down from the road along which mankind, the master and proprietor of nature, marches onward.

### Jacques Derrida (1930-2004)

In this wide-ranging 2001 interview, Derrida, of deconstruction fame, covers a number of significant issues related to questions of the “animal.” Labeling their current industrialized treatment as “genocidal torture,” he argues that “the relations between humans and animals *must* change. They *must*, both in the sense of an “ontological” necessity and of an “ethical” duty.” He is also critical of the “rights” view which he believes reaffirms the problematic Cartesian subject: “...to confer or to recognize rights for “animals” is a surreptitious or implicit way of confirming a certain interpretation of the human subject, which itself will have been the very lever of the worst violence carried out against nonhuman living beings.” An ethic of “maximum respect,” he feels, is more appropriate:

Elisabeth Roudinesco: Among the aberrations of contemporary scientism, there is a particularly striking one that mixes a utilitarian and cognitivist perspective, a juridical ideal, and an ecological (or “deep ecological”) goal. I’m thinking of the “Darwinian” project conceived by Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri that would involve not protecting animals against violence by instituting animal rights, but rather granting human rights to “nonhuman great apes. Their reasoning, which seems aberrant to me, is based on the idea that, on the one hand, great apes are endowed with cognitive structures enabling them to learn language in the same way as humans, and on the other hand, they are more “human” than those humans suffering from madness, senility, or organic illnesses that would deprive them of their reason.

The authors of this project thus trace a dubious border between the human and the nonhuman by relegating the mentally handicapped to a biological

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On January 3, 1889, just after Nietzsche left his (Turin) apartment, he caught sight of a carriage driver beating his horse on the Piazza Carlo Alberta. Nietzsche, weeping threw himself around the horse’s neck to protect it. He collapsed in compassion with the horse. A few days’ later, Franz Overbeck came to collect his mentally deranged friend. Nietzsche lived on for one more decade. (Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, trans. Shelley Frisch (W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), p. 316.

This last decade of Nietzsche’s life is movingly recounted by a number of friends and admirers in the final three chapters of Sander Gilman’s *Conversations with Nietzsche* (*Conversations with Nietzsche*, ed. Sander L. Gilman, trans. David J. Parent (Oxford University Press, 1987)).

species no longer belonging to the human kingdom, while also placing the great apes within another biological species integrated into the human but superior to that of felines, for example, or to other animals, whether they're mammals or not. Consequently, the two authors condemn article 3 of the Nuremberg tribunal code demanding that every new therapeutic or experimental treatment be preceded by tests on animals. You have been interested in the question of animality for a long time; I'd like to hear your opinion on these questions.

Jacques Derrida: The "question of animality" is not one question among others of course. I have long considered it to be decisive (as one says), in itself and for its strategic value; and that's because, while it is difficult and enigmatic in itself, it also represents the limit upon which all the great questions are formed and determined, as well as all the concepts that attempt to delimit what is "proper to man," the essence and future of humanity; ethics, politics, law, "human rights," "crimes against humanity," "genocide," etc.

Wherever something like "the animal" is named, the gravest, most resistant, also the most naive and the most self-interested presuppositions dominate what is called human culture (and not only Western culture); in any case they dominate the philosophical discourse that has been prevalent for centuries. In all my texts one finds explicit indications of the active conviction that I have always held in this regard. Beginning with *Of Grammatology*, the elaboration of a new concept of the *trace* had to be extended to the entire field of the living, or rather to the life/death relation, beyond the anthropological limits of "spoken" language (or "written" language, in the ordinary sense), beyond the phonocentrism or the logocentrism that always trusts in a simple and oppositional limit between Man and the Animal. At the time I stressed that the "concepts of writing, trace, gramma or grapheme" exceeded the opposition "human/nonhuman." All the deconstructive gestures I have attempted to perform on philosophical texts, Heidegger's in particular, consist in questioning the self-interested misrecognition of what is called the Animal in general, and the way in which these texts interpret the border between Man and the Animal. In the most recent texts I have published on this subject, I am suspicious of the appellation "Animal" in the singular, as if there were simply Man and the Animal, as if the homogeneous concept THE Animal could be extended universally to all nonhuman forms of living beings.

Without being able to go into great detail here, it seems to me that the way in which philosophy, on the whole but particularly since Descartes, has treated the question of THE (so-called) animal is a major sign of its logocentrism and of a deconstructible limitation. We are dealing here with a tradition that was not homogeneous, to be sure, but hegemonic, and that in fact proffered the discourse of hegemony, of mastery itself. But what

resists this prevalent tradition is quite simply the fact that there is a multiplicity of living beings, a multiplicity of animals, some of which do not fall within what this grand discourse on the Animal claims to attribute to them or recognize in them. Man is one of them, and an irreducibly singular one, of course, as we know, but it is not the case that it is Man *versus* THE Animal.

On the other hand, even though great violence has forever been practiced against animals—we already find traces of it in biblical texts that I have studied elsewhere from this point of view—I try to show what is specifically modern in this violence, and the “philosophical” axiom—or symptom—of the discourse that supports it and attempts to legitimate it. This industrial, scientific, technical violence will not be tolerated for very much longer, neither *de facto* nor *de jure*. It will find itself more and more discredited. The relations between humans and animals *must* change. They *must*, both in the sense of an “ontological” necessity and of an “ethical” duty. I place these words in quotation marks because this change will have to affect the very sense and value of these concepts (the ontological and the ethical). That is why, although their discourse often seems to me poorly articulated or philosophically inconsistent, I am on principle sympathetic with those who, it seems to me, are in the right and have good reasons to rise up against the way animals are treated: in industrial production, in slaughter, in consumption, in experimentation.

To characterize this treatment, I would not use the word “cruelty,” despite the temptation. It’s a confused, obscure, overdetermined word. At bottom, whether it’s a matter of blood (*cruar*) or not (*Grausamkeit*), cruelty, “making suffer” or “letting suffer” for pleasure—this too, as a relation to the law, would be what is proper to man. (Regarding the right to punish or the death penalty, this word is used in an extremely confused way. Elsewhere I study the history and the “logic” of the lexicon of “cruelty.” A psychoanalytic reading would be useful here, and a reading of the psychoanalytic use of the word, in Freud in particular. However one characterizes it, the violence inflicted on animals will not fail to have profound reverberations (conscious and unconscious) on the image humans have of themselves. This violence, I believe, will become less and less tolerable. I will also not use the word “rights,” but that is where the question becomes complicated. There have been, before the arguments you mentioned, numerous declarations of animal rights.

E.R.: What are the terms used in thinking about animal rights?

J.D.: It is too often the case—and I believe this is a fault or a weakness—that a certain concept of the juridical, that of human rights, is reproduced or extended to animals. This leads to naive positions that one can sympathize with but that are untenable. A certain concept of the human

subject, of post-Cartesian human subjectivity, is for the moment at the foundation of the concept of human rights – for which I have the greatest respect but which, as the product of a history and of a complex set of performatives, must be relentlessly analyzed, reelaborated, developed, and enriched (historicity and perfectibility are in fact essential to it).

Now, when it comes to the relation to “the Animal,” this Cartesian legacy determines all of modernity. The Cartesian theory assumes, for animal language, a system of signs without response: *reactions* but no *response*. Kant, Levinas, Lacan, Heidegger (much like the cognitivists) hold a position in this regard almost identical to Descartes’. They distinguish *reaction* from *response*, with everything that depends on this distinction, which is almost limitless. With regard to the essential and to what counts on a practical level, this legacy whatever the differences may be, governs modern thought concerning the relation of humans to animals. The modern concept of rights depends massively on this Cartesian moment of the *cogito*, of subjectivity, freedom, sovereignty, etc. Descartes’ “text” is of course not the cause of this large structure, but it “represents” it in a powerful systematicity of the symptom. Consequently, to confer or to recognize rights for “animals” is a surreptitious or implicit way of confirming a certain interpretation of the human subject, which itself will have been the very lever of the worst violence carried out against nonhuman living beings.

The axiom of the repressive gesture against animals, in its philosophical form, remains Cartesian, from Kant to Heidegger, Levinas, or Lacan, whatever the differences between these discourses. A certain philosophy of right and of human rights depends on this axiom. Consequently, to want absolutely to grant, not to animals but to a certain category of animals, rights equivalent to human rights would be a disastrous contradiction. It would reproduce the philosophical and juridical machine thanks to which the exploitation of animal material for food, work, experimentation, etc., has been practiced (and tyrannically so, that is, through an abuse of power).

A transformation is therefore necessary and inevitable, for reasons that are both conscious and unconscious. Slow, laborious, sometimes gradual, sometimes accelerated, the mutation of relations between humans and animals will not necessarily or solely take the form of a charter, a declaration of rights, or a tribunal governed by a legislator. I do not believe in the miracle of legislation. Besides, there is already a law, more or less empirical, and that’s better than nothing. But it does not prevent the slaughtering, or the “techno-scientific” pathologies of the market or of industrial production.

Of course there are irreducible differences, uncrossable borders between so many species of living beings. Who can deny this without pushing blindness to the point of stupidity [*bêtise*]? But there is not only one border, unified and indivisible, between Man and the Animal.

E.R.: But where and how would you cross the limit? Would it not be necessary to look again at the notion of a divide between nature and culture, on which anthropology is based?

J.D.: That's the least that can be said. There are a great number of different structures in the animal world. Between the protozoon, the fly, the bee, the dog, the horse, the limits multiply, particularly in terms of "symbolic" organization encoding or the practice of signs. If I am unsatisfied with the notion of a border between two homogeneous species, man on one side and the animal on the other, it is not in order to claim, stupidly, that there is no limit between "animals" and "man"; it is because I maintain that there is more than one limit, that there are many limits. There is not one opposition between man and non-man; there are, between different organizational structures of the living being, many fractures, heterogeneities, differential structures.

The gap between the "higher primates" and man is in any case abyssal, but this is also true for the gap between the "higher primates" and other animals. This is something undeniably obvious to common sense—but while tremendous progress is being made in primatology, this progress is not receiving the attention it deserves. It describes, in a direct and sometimes astounding way, extremely refined forms of symbolic organization: work of mourning and of burial, family structures, avoidance if not prohibition of incest, etc. (But "prohibition" itself, for man, forbids without always preventing, such that the opposition between avoidance and interdiction still remains problematic.)

All this is very complicated—it is co-implication itself. I do not say that we must renounce identifying a "proper of man," but one could demonstrate (I am working on this elsewhere, particularly in my teaching) that none of the traits by which the most authorized philosophy or culture has thought it possible to recognize this "proper of man"—none of them is, in all rigor, the exclusive reserve of what we humans call human. Either because some animals also possess such traits, or because man does not possess them as surely as is claimed (an argument I used against Heidegger, particularly in *Aporias*, with regard to the experience of death, of language, or of the relation to being *as such*). That said, once again, I have *sympathy* (and I insist on this word) for those who revolt: against the war declared on so many animals, against the genocidal torture inflicted on them often in a way that is fundamentally perverse, that is, by raising en masse, in a hyperindustrialized fashion, herds that are to be massively

exterminated for alleged human needs; not to mention the hundreds of species that disappear each year from the face of the earth through the fault of humans who, when they don't kill enough, let them die—supposing that the law could ever be assured of any reliable difference between *killing* and *letting die*.

My sympathy therefore goes out, certainly, to those who themselves feel a sympathy, who feel themselves in compassionate and living sympathy with these living beings. But I will never renounce, and I don't believe it is necessary to renounce, *analyzing* (I mean this in all its senses, including the psychoanalytic sense) the two fundamental attitudes. I cannot provide such an analysis here in a brief improvisation. But I do not believe in absolute “vegetarianism,” nor in the ethical purity of its intentions—nor even that it is rigorously tenable, without a compromise or without a symbolic substitution. I would go so far as to claim that, in a more or less refined, subtle, sublime form, a certain cannibalism remains unsurpassable. And of course, to respond to your question, I regard it as ridiculous and heinous to place certain animals above handicapped humans in some new hierarchy.

E.R.: What strikes me about such an excessive claim is that it would establish a sort of division between what would be human and what would be nonhuman. To bring great apes into the order of human rights, it would be necessary to exclude the mentally ill.

J.D.: Do they really say that?

E.R.: Yes, even if the word “exclusion” is never pronounced. But the reasoning that aims to extend human rights to include great apes presupposes this notion of separation, limit, division, which leads in the end to a rejection. The entire rhetoric depends on a claim, both “cognitive” and “utilitarian,” of an alleged passage from the human to the nonhuman that would be linked to the existence of neurological or cerebrally degenerative illnesses.

J.D.: It amounts to reintroducing, in effect, a properly racial and “geneticist” hierarchy. This is precisely the sort of thing that our vigilance must never overlook.

E.R.: But how do you reconcile a concern for being compassionate toward animals with the necessity for humans to eat meat?

J.D.: It is not enough to stop eating meat in order to become a non-carnivore. The unconscious carnivorous process has many other resources, and I do not believe in the existence of the non-carnivore in general. Even in the case of someone who believes he can limit himself to bread and

wine. (I confront this question more effectively, I believe, when I speak of the necessary deconstruction of “carno-phallogocentrism”). Even if we didn’t already know this since long ago, at least for two thousand years, psychoanalysis would teach us that “vegetarians,” like everyone else, can also incorporate, symbolically, something living, something of flesh and blood—of man and of God. Atheists, too, still like to “eat the other.” At least if they love, for it is the very temptation of love. A thought here for Kleist’s *Penthesilea*. She was one of the major figures of a seminar I gave a few years ago on that very subject: “Eating the other.”

E.R.: Just as, from a psychoanalytic point of view, the terror of ingesting animality can be the symptom of a hatred for the living taken to the point of murder. Hitler was a vegetarian.

J.D.: Some people have dared to base some of their arguments on this famous vegetarianism of Hitler—arguments against vegetarianism and against those who are friends to animals. Luc Ferry, for example. This caricature of an indictment goes more or less like this: “Oh, you’re forgetting that the Nazis, and Hitler in particular, were in a way zoophiles!” So loving animals means hating or humiliating humans! Compassion for animals doesn’t exclude Nazi cruelty; it’s even its first symptom!” The argument strikes me as crudely fallacious. Who can take this parody of a syllogism seriously even for a second? And where would it lead us? To redouble our cruelty to animals in order to prove our irreproachable humanism? Elisabeth de Fontenay recalled that among the philosophers of the time who called for a reconsideration of our treatment of the “animal question,” quite a number of them were Jews. In her rich and beautiful preface to Plutarch’s *Trois traités pour les animaux* (in Amyot’s translation), she is not content to recall, after Hannah Arendt, that Kant was Eichmann’s favorite author. She gives a direct response to those who denounce any questioning of the humanist axiomatics on animals as an “irresponsible deconstruction.”

For my part, in the still unpublished past of my lecture at Cérisy (“*L’animal que je suis*”) [“The Animal That I Am”], I closely analyze a text by Adorno (without necessarily subscribing to every part of it) that claims to decipher in the Kantian notions of human autonomy, dignity (*Würde*), and self-destination or moral self-determination (*Selbstbestimmung*) not only a project of mastery and sovereignty (*Herrschaft*) over nature but a veritable hostility, a cruel hatred “directed against animals” (*Sie richtet sich gegen die Tiere*). The “insult” (*schimpfen*) against animals (“Animal!”), or against man as an animal, would thus be a distinctive trait of “authentic idealism.”

Adorno goes very far in this direction. He dares to compare the virtual role played by animals in an idealist system to the role played by the Jews in a

fascist system. According to this logic, now well known, and which often does seem to impose itself very convincingly, we would associate the figures of the animal and the Jew with those of woman and the child, or even of the handicapped in general.

E.R.: One of the major features of racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism has always been to assign an inferior status to someone in order to exclude him (or her) from the human, to stigmatize him by virtue of physical traits that would place him within the world of animality. Hence, indeed, the idea that Jews are more “feminine” than non-Jews, that women are more “animal” than men, and finally that blacks are even more “bestly” than all the others. The idea that the handicapped person is “inferior” to animals falls directly into these sorts of considerations.

It seems to me that there will never be an end to the destructive drive, because, as Freud stresses, it is inherent to man. Certainly, we must have prohibitions—without them no civilization is possible. But even as we fight against violence, it is necessary to acknowledge that there will never be an end to it. The prohibition against killing animals seems to me impossible to put into practice in our societies, and in any case it’s not desirable. Generally speaking, it seems to me that the excess of prohibitions of every kind often generates forms of violence no one expected.

J.D.: No doubt it will always be necessary to kill animals. And probably humans too! Even after the universal abolition of the death penalty, if we ever get there!

E.R.: But it’s not the same thing. Can one put someone who kills animals on the same level as someone who murders humans? And more generally, can one consider that a zoophile (in the sexological sense) ought to be punished by the law in the same way as a pedophile or a rapist? There is a law that punishes the mistreatment of animals, and French law even recognizes the notion of a “juridical personality” for domestic animals or animals held in captivity, which means that they could have rights and be defended in cases of abandonment. But I’m not sure one can punish a human for sexual acts committed against animals. Is there mistreatment of animals in *all* cases of zoophilia? How can the animal express the violence done to it in such cases?

J.D.: Kant insists that we find a means of applying the *lex talionis* (a categorical imperative of the right to punish, according to him, and of any right to punish that is rational and intelligible *a priori*) to those guilty of “bestiality,” no less than to those who rape or practice pederasty. We are studying these texts very closely in my seminar on the death penalty. This doesn’t mean that one ought to consider the animal a victim. The animal,

for its part, is not wronged, even if human dignity is not unscathed by sexual commerce with such an “animal.” The latter is not a subject of law (nor therefore of power) who could protest against a “wrong” done to it and occupy the place of a plaintiff in a trial.

There is however a sentence from Jeremy Bentham that I like to cite, which is something like: “The question is not: can they speak? but can they suffer?” Because, yes, we know this, and no one would dare to doubt it. Animals suffer; they manifest their suffering. We cannot imagine that an animal doesn’t suffer when it is subjected to laboratory experimentation or even to circus training. When one sees an incalculable number of calves, raised on hormones and stuffed into a truck, on their way from the stable straight to the slaughterhouse, how can we not imagine that they suffer? We know what animal suffering is, we feel it ourselves. Moreover, with industrial slaughter, these animals are suffering in much larger numbers than before.

E.R.: You agree with Elisabeth de Fontenay. But how is it possible to reconcile this desire to reduce animal suffering with the necessity for industrial organization in raising and slaughtering animals, which makes it possible to prevent so many humans from starving?

J.D.: A large-scale disorganization-reorganization of the human earth is under way. One can expect the best and the worst from it, of course. But, without offering praise for some elementary vegetarianism, one can recall that the consumption of meat has never been a biological necessity. One eats meat not simply because one needs protein—and protein can be found elsewhere. In the consumption of meat, just as in the death penalty, in fact, there is a sacrificial structure, and therefore a “cultural” phenomenon linked to archaic structures that persist and that must be analyzed. No doubt we will never stop eating meat—or, as I suggested a moment ago, some equivalent – a substitute for some carnate thing. But perhaps qualitative conditions will be changed, together with quantity, the evaluation of quantity, as well as the general organization of the field of food and nourishment. On the scale of the centuries to come, I believe there will be veritable mutations in our experience of animality and in our social bond with other animals.

ER.: Do you think there is an excess?

J.D.: You were saying that excessive and hyperbolic prohibition produces symptoms. Likewise, I believe that the spectacle man creates for himself in his treatment of animals will become intolerable. All the debates we are speaking of are telltale signs of this. It’s no longer tolerable. If you were actually placed every day before the spectacle of this industrial slaughter, what would you do?

E.R.: I wouldn't eat meat anymore, or I would live somewhere else. But I prefer not to see it, even though I know that this intolerable thing exists. I don't think that the visibility of a situation allows one to know it better. Knowing is not the same as looking.

J.D.: But if, every day, there passed before your eyes, slowly, without giving you time to be distracted, a truck filled with calves leaving the stable on its way to the slaughterhouse, would you be unable to eat meat for a long time?

E.R.: I would move away. But really, sometimes I believe that, in order to understand a situation better and to have the necessary distance, it is best not to be an eyewitness to it. And then, let's not forget that gastronomy is an integral part of culture. Could the French culinary tradition do without meat?

J.D.: There are other resources available for our gastronomic refinement. Industrial meat is not the last word in gastronomy. Besides, more and more—you are aware of this debate—certain people prefer beasts raised in certain conditions said to be more “natural,” on certain types of fields, etc. Therefore, it will indeed be necessary, in the name of the very gastronomy you're speaking of, to transform practices and “mentalities.”

E.R.: José Bové's struggle against “bad American food” and against McDonald's in particular, is perhaps a first sign of this change. Likewise, the problem of “mad cow” will have to lead to some inevitable transformations.

J.D.: Don't ask me to subscribe unconditionally to what is being done or will be done in this domain, but the signs do count. They remind us that a mutation is under way.

E.R.: To return to the question of animality, I remain attached to the idea of a certain division between the animal and the human. Even if among the great apes there are symbolic practices, rituals, attitudes indicating the avoidance of incest—all of which is very fascinating—it seems to me that the discontinuity remains and that it has to do with language conceptualization. All these differences, I think, ought to be recalled, even if, as Elisabeth de Fontenay argues, when it comes to animals, we can “assume that they have worlds that may intersect and overlap with the human world.” What do you think about this?

J.D.: I spoke not only of *one* division, but of several divisions in the major modes defining “animal” cultures. Far from erasing limits, I recalled them and insisted on differences and heterogeneities. There is a question of

temporal and historical scale in the duration of these phenomena, and this must be taken into account. Like you, I believe that there is a radical discontinuity between what one calls animals—primates in particular—and man. But this discontinuity cannot make us forget that between different animal species and types of social organizations of living beings there are other discontinuities.

In the current transformation of the law, even as the general axiomatics of human rights are retained, progress can be made in establishing relations between humans and animals that would move in the direction of maximum respect. In this regard, the evaluation can only be *economic* (strategy, dosage, measurement, the best compromise). I'm not saying that we must not in any way interfere with animal life; I'm saying that we must not invoke the violence among animals, in the jungle or elsewhere, as a pretext for giving ourselves over to the worst kinds of violence, that is, the purely instrumental, industrial, chemico-genetic treatment of living beings. Whether this treatment is carried out for the production of food or in the form of experimentation, it is necessary to set up rules so that one cannot do just whatever one pleases with nonhuman living beings.

It will therefore be necessary to reduce, little by little, the conditions of violence and cruelty toward animals, and, to that end, to modify, on a large historical scale, the conditions of breeding, slaughter, treatment en masse, and of what I hesitate (only in order not to abuse the inevitable associations) to call a *genocide*, in a situation where, in fact, the word would not be so inappropriate.

When I spoke on this question in the United States, at the law school of a Jewish university, I used this word *genocide* to designate the operation consisting, in certain cases, in gathering together hundreds of thousands of beasts every day, sending them to the slaughterhouse, and killing them en masse after having fattened them with hormones. This earned me an indignant reply. One person said that he did not accept my use of the word genocide: "We know what genocide is." Let's withdraw the word then. But you see very well what I'm talking about.

Over a more or less long term, it would be necessary to limit this violence as much as possible, if only because of the image of man that it reflects back to him. This is not the only or the best reason, but it will have to count as well. This transformation will no doubt take centuries, but, I repeat, I do not believe that we can continue to treat animals as we do today. All the current debates indicate a growing unease concerning this question within industrial European society.

For the moment, we ought to limit ourselves to working out the rules of law [*droit*] such as they exist. But it will eventually be necessary to

reconsider the history of this law and to understand that although animals cannot be placed under concepts like citizen, consciousness linked with speech, subject, etc., they are not for all that without a “right.” It’s the very concept of right that will have to be “rethought.” In general, in the European philosophical tradition, there is no conception of a (finite) subject of law [*droit*] who is not a subject of duty (Kant sees only two exceptions to this law [*loi*]: God, whose rights are without duty, and slaves, who have duties but no rights). It is once again a matter of the inherited concepts of the subject, the political subject, the citizen, the sovereign self-determination of the subject of law...

ER.: And of consciousness.

J.D.: And of responsibility, speech, and freedom. All these concepts (which traditionally define what is “proper to man”) are constitutive of juridical discourse.

ER.: Therefore they cannot be applied to animals.

J.D.: One cannot expect “animals” to be able to enter into an expressly juridical contract in which they would have duties, in an exchange of recognized rights. It is within this philosophico-juridical space that the modern violence against animals is practiced, a violence that is at once contemporary with and indissociable from the discourse of human rights. I respect this discourse up to a certain point, but I want to reserve the right, precisely, to interrogate its history, its presuppositions, its evolution, its perfectibility. In this sense, it is preferable not to introduce this problematic concerning the relations between humans and animals into the *existing* juridical framework.

That is why, however much sympathy I may have for a declaration of animal rights that would protect them from human violence, I don’t think this is a good solution. Rather, I believe in a slow and progressive approach. It is necessary to do what one can, today, to limit this violence, and it is in this sense that deconstruction is engaged: not to destroy the axiomatics of this (formal and juridical) solution, nor to discredit it, but to reconsider the history of law and of the concept of right.

E.R.: It seems to me that some progress is being made. I’m thinking in particular of the struggle against hunting and for the preservation of species.

J.D.: That struggle is a minor one. I have no taste for hunting for that kind of hunting, nor for bullfighting, but I recognize that, from a quantitative point of view, it’s nothing compared to the violence of the slaughterhouses and the poultry farms.

ER.: You're against bullfighting?

J.D.: Yes, or very mistrustful in any case, in terms of the desires that play into it and the forms these desires take.

E.R.: And yet bullfighting inspired some very beautiful literary texts (those of Michel Leiris in particular). The bullfighter risks his life in the arena. The principle of bullfighting involves a struggle to the death, a contest, equal between man and animal, a sort of remainder from the age of chivalry. It's the opposite of hunting or slaughtering animals. I don't think one ought to forbid all violent and high-risk practices.

J.D.: I didn't say that I was against Leiris's texts, but that I am against the cult or the culture of bullfighting and other similar things. Besides, I can like or admire particular texts by Leiris without ceasing to ask questions about the desire or the experience of Leiris himself, etc. Following that logic, under the pretext that forbidding violence can lead, through a perverse effect, to the emergence of other more serious violence, one risks giving free rein to all kinds of violence and then folding one's arms. I could give you many very troubling examples. Should we refrain from condemning or denouncing racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, or sexist violence under the pretext that if they are "repressed" here or there, they risk a greater resurgence elsewhere? I'm not saying that your argument is without value, but one cannot use it in a systematic way without the risk of being paralyzed regarding any sort of prohibition.

ER.: I am always worried that we are moving toward the construction of a sanitized society, without passions, without conflicts, without insults or verbal violence, without any risk of death, without cruelty. When one claims to be eradicating something on one side, there is the risk of its resurgence where it isn't expected.

JD.: I think I can understand and share your worry. It leaves intact the responsibility that must be taken concerning the calculation of risks. What sort of violence can or ought one tolerate, or even cultivate, in order to avoid what you call a "sanitized society," that is, if I understand correctly, a dead or sterilized society?

ER.: It occurs to me for example that the right to verbal insult is fundamental, and that a difference must be maintained between what one can say, even publicly, and what one can write. On the other hand, although I think that laws against defamation, racism, anti-Semitism, violation of privacy, etc., are absolutely necessary—they exist in any case, and in France I find them to be good—it is always necessary to try to allow, to the greatest possible degree, the expression of insults and verbal

violence. Think of blasphemy, for example, or pornography. It is necessary both to make sure that restrictive laws are respected and to guarantee the widest possible freedom of expression.

J.D.: I agree. But it is necessary to limit as much as possible the censorship effect produced by legal prohibitions, and to prefer analysis, discussion, and counteroffensive critique. Public space ought to remain as open as possible to freedom of expression. I, too, dislike the image of an “organic,” sanitized, antiseptic, sterilized society. That is why I have begun to say that, in any case, there is and will be cruelty, among living beings, among men.

E.R.: And you think that the more limits there are, the better?

J.D.: In this area as in others, the only response is *economic*: up to a certain point, there is always a measure, a better measure to take. I don't want to forbid everything, but I also don't want to forbid nothing. I certainly cannot eradicate or extirpate the roots of violence against animals, abuse and insults, racism, anti-Semitism, etc., but, under the pretext that I cannot eradicate them, I don't want to allow them to develop unchecked. Therefore, according to the historical situation, it is necessary to invent the least bad solution. The difficulty of ethical responsibility is that the response cannot be formulated as a “yes or no”; that would be too simple. It is necessary to give a singular response, within a given context, and to take the risk of a decision by enduring the undecidable. In every case, there are two contradictory imperatives.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, “Violence Against Animals,” in *For What Tomorrow...A Dialogue*, trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 62-76.

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