BEYOND PREJUDICE

THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS

EVELYN B. PLUHAR FOREWORD BY BERNARD E. ROLLIN

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DEDICATION

For Werner—the human animal

I hold most dear

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FOREWORD

When Evelyn Pluhar first embarked on the long intellectual voyage that culminated in this excellent book, she remarked to me that she saw herself as a "second generation" thinker in the area of ethics and animals. As one of the first-generation theorists, I thought it exigent in my work to establish rationally that nonhuman animals did enjoy significant moral status, and that such inclusion within the scope of moral concern needed to be "writ large" in social ethics and social policy. Although society had long acknowledged a minimalistic concern for cruelty to animals, it was growing increasingly obvious that the amount of suffering attributable to overt, deliberate cruelty was minute in comparison to the suffering unintentionally occasioned by such unchallenged pursuits as research, testing, and high technology agriculture. In the face of the sheer enormity of animal suffering to be found in society, then, I felt it most pressing to serve as an intellectual midwife to an emerging social ethic of concern about the treatment of animals in all areas of social use, and to attempt also to mitigate some of the most egregious practices.

In this crusade, the first-generation theorists have been very successful. Public concern about animals has resulted in many positive improvements in animal treatment, from laws mandating the control of pain and suffering in animal research to the voluntary abandonment of cosmetic testing by major companies. Animals have entered the moral arena, and now it is time to address a plethora of moral questions engendered by their presence therein. Most important perhaps, and certainly most vexatious, is the question of how much animal interests ought to be valued when they are in conflict with human interests and the interests of other animals. Furthermore, and inevitably, voices are being raised against the inclusion of animals in the moral arena, and these voices demand cogent—and devastating—responses. It is therefore imperative that the theoretical basis for animal moral status continue to be developed and deepened.

These tasks fall to the second-generation theorists, of whom Evelyn Pluhar is one of the best and the brightest. Her careful, cogent, deep, and eminently readable analyses of questions that I and others were pressed by circumstances to pass over far too quickly stand as exemplars for others working in this area. And her trenchant critique of recent neo-Cartesian rejections of an augmented moral status for animals should lay these positions firmly to rest—if not forever, at least for the foreseeable future. This provocative book is a major contribution to moving forward the field of moral theory about animals in a highly intelligent way, and should catalyze much valuable dialogue.

BERNARD E. ROLLIN

PREFACE

A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

As far back as I can remember, I have been enchanted by animals. For much of my life, I have also been an unthinking consumer of their flesh and their products. In the mountains of southeastern Kentucky, where I grew up, we lived cheek by jowl with hunting dogs. (This is literally true, since at least one dog generally shared my bed.) I have seen my grandmother wring off the neck of the old laying hen who ended her days as Sunday dinner; despite my horror at her ghoulish death, I joined my family in eating her body. My father, one of the most wonderful men I have ever known, loved to hunt ducks and geese, and the walls of our home were decorated with trophy fish. I went fishing only once, as a very small child. I can remember being unwilling to impale a worm on a hook—Granny did it for me—and turning away as the small fish on the end of my line gasped and flopped in the air. This did not stop me from eating "Evelyn's fish," however, nor do I recall being upset by the corpses mounted in our living room.

At fifteen, I decided that nothing would please me as much as a career in philosophy. Imagine being able to earn one's living by reading, thinking, teaching, and writing about ultimate reality, truth, and justice! I left rural Appalachia for college in Colorado, graduating with a degree in philosophy, and went straight to graduate school at the University of Michigan. I learned a very great deal from teachers like William Alston, Richard Brandt, William Frankena, Alvin Goldman, and Jack Meiland, especially about uncovering and questioning presuppositions. We humans cling to these presuppositions, and we do not find their scrutiny a very comfortable experience. Engaging in such scrutiny despite our feelings is both the pain and the glory of philosophy. Any view worthy of one's belief, I became convinced, is a view that can be supported.

Even given my new skills and commitment to justification, however, I did not question my attitudes toward nonhuman animals. The love

I felt for my companion animals and the awe I felt toward wild animals coexisted with my patronage of Kentucky Fried Chicken and Long John Silver. I, who could never harm a rabbit, used cosmetics that ulcerated their eyes and wore a coat given to me by my mother that was trimmed with their skins. My attitudes did not begin to change until I learned about the conditions under which domestic nonhuman animals are raised for food and used to test products; the mistreatment of wild nonhuman animals by commercial trappers, hunters, and land developers resulted in further changes. The more I thought about how these actions were probably experienced by these animals, the less able I was to go on as before. I also began to doubt that "inhumane" treatment was really the problem. It was obvious to me that "humane" killing of other *humans* for food, skins, product testing, or research could not be justified: How, then, could it be right to do the same to sentient nonhumans? Further reading (see the next section) convinced me that the automatic assumption that members of other species are of little moral account in comparison to humans was just as indefensible as moral discriminations based on gender, sexual orientation, age, or race. I shared all these thoughts with my philosopher husband, Werner. We jointly concluded that major changes in our lives were in order, including rejection of the meat both of us loved to eat. We became vegetarians literally overnight. The campus picnic two days after our decision severely tested our resolve, but we did not succumb to the temptation of charcoal-grilled steaks: realizing what one would actually be eating does wonders for the appetite. When the meat section of a supermarket is perceived as a morgue, it is no hardship to focus on nonsentient produce!

A GLANCE AT MY WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LITERATURE

So, my feelings have finally changed. So has my thinking. Why, indeed, have so many of us always presupposed that maximum moral significance accrues only to creatures like ourselves? I immersed myself in the new and expanding literature on this subject, and began contributing to it. Peter Singer, Bernard Rollin, and Tom Regan have argued very persuasively that attempts to restrict maximum moral significance to humans *either* lapse into unfounded prejudice *or* imply that even many *humans* are really not morally significant after all. Neither horn of this

dilemma is particularly enticing. Other books soon began appearing. For example, Steve Sapontzis has argued for the extension of moral concern to sentient nonhumans in a rather different way from Singer, Regan, and Rollin; James Rachels has used philosophical biology to assault the presumption of human moral superiority; and Carol Adams has documented linkages between contemptuous exploitation of women and the same attitude toward nonhuman animals. After an initial period of silence, other philosophers have felt called upon to respond. Stanley Benn, Jan Narveson, Peter Carruthers, and A. I. Melden, among others, have taken issue with many of these arguments. Some have taken a different and very disturbing approach to the issue, holding that some sentient humans, for example, the very young and the mentally limited, actually have no moral right to life. R. G. Frey, for example, has argued that vivisection of some of these humans (as well as, of course, vivisection of nonhumans) would be justified, although he is far from gleeful about the prospect. One is tempted to dismiss this sort of response as the most desperate of attempts to exclude nonhuman animals from the realm of moral consideration, but such a dismissal would be unfair. Arguments deserve replies, and positions require justification.

In the current book, I try to accomplish both aims. I address and refute as yet unanswered critiques of views that accord moral significance to nonhuman animals, drawing upon relevant philosophical and empirical evidence. Contrary to the best attempts of several fine philosophers, there is no way to avoid the conclusion that if sentient, conative humans are highly morally significant, then many nonhuman animals are so as well. Further, I argue that these humans are indeed morally significant to the full extent. I offer a justification for the view that maximum moral respect is due any being, human or nonhuman, who is capable of caring about what befalls him or her. My argument differs from those of Singer, Sapontzis, and Regan. For—I hold—despite their great contributions to the literature, they do not ultimately justify the position that all such beings are worthy of significant moral consideration.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BASIC ISSUES

Following is an overview of the basic issues involved in the debate over who counts morally and why. These issues are tremendously impor-

tant, given their implications for the treatment of both humans and nonhumans.

Two questions are fundamental to moral theory: (1) What sorts of beings are morally considerable (i.e., proper subjects of our moral concern)? and (2) Are all morally considerable beings equally morally significant (i.e., due the same degree of moral respect from us)? In fact, although answers to these questions have been presupposed for quite a long time, the questions themselves were not posed until 1978, when Kenneth Goodpaster articulated the distinction between moral considerability and moral significance. For the most part, philosophers have only recently begun to address these foundational questions. Traditionally, it has been held that *full* moral significance is reserved for the members of the human species. However, this position has been subjected to devastating criticisms in recent years. For example, it has been argued that this traditional "homocentric" view implies that being human is itself a morally relevant characteristic. This implication appears to be just as objectionable as the assumption that one's gender or race is morally relevant. (By analogy to racism and sexism, the implication has been dubbed "speciesism.") It seems that moral considerability and significance must be linked in some manner to another characteristic or family of characteristics.

According to a number of philosophers, being a *person* is that characteristic. Following in the intellectual footsteps of Immanuel Kant, ethical theorists today defend the very popular view that full moral status is reserved for highly autonomous rational beings: "persons" in the richest philosophical sense of the term. Normal adult humans all qualify as such full-fledged persons. Yet, this is not a homocentric view, since nonhuman persons, if any (possible examples are whales, dolphins, or extraterrestrials), would be accorded full moral status by it. I call this position "the full-personhood view."

The full-personhood view faces two extremely serious difficulties: (1) Humans before birth, very young children, and the temporarily mentally disabled are not full persons. Is it justifiable to regard them as having no (or a reduced) moral status? Or should the fact that they are *potential* full persons have moral weight? This is, of course, one of the central issues in the problems of abortion and nonvoluntary euthanasia. (2) Humans who are permanently mentally incapacitated are not

and can never become persons in the Kantian sense. If full personhood or at least potential full personhood is necessary for basic moral rights, none of these humans has a right to life. The implications are staggering. It would follow that human nonpersons could justifiably be confined, experimented upon, and killed just as nonhuman animals routinely are. This alone, in many eyes, is sufficient reason to reject the full-personhood view. A number of ethical theorists who are committed to that view have tried to defeat "the argument from marginal cases," as it is known in the literature, but I contend that they have failed in their attempts to do so.

Followers of the full-personhood view who cannot bring themselves to exclude human nonpersons from significant moral consideration have had to modify their position. They have developed a far more sophisticated version of speciesism than the homocentric variety mentioned earlier. They have argued that being a member of a species *typified* by full-fledged personhood is sufficient for full moral status. Thus, although full persons would still be the primary possessors of basic moral rights, in this view species norms could be used to justify the inclusion of other humans in the moral community. I argue that even this most sophisticated form of speciesism is just as unacceptable as its homocentric predecessor.

The only remaining alternative is to reject full personhood as the primary criterion of maximum moral significance. If mentally limited humans are to count as morally considerable and highly morally significant, as most of us believe they do, then we must acknowledge that many nonhumans have the same moral status. Given the appropriate theoretical basis, what characteristic or family of characteristics could support the attribution of full moral status in these cases? There are several possibilities. For example, sentience is one very plausible candidate. This would accord high moral significance to much of the animal kingdom (including humans!). Alternatively, it has been suggested that simply being alive is sufficient for moral considerability and significance. Some have gone so far as to suggest that entire ecosystems are worthy of direct moral concern. The explosion of literature in environmental ethics bears witness to the new interest in such views. What arguments can be mounted to support such positions? How is one to choose among such alternatives? My book explores radically different suggestions, and

explains how a justified, nonarbitrary position can be defended. As I earlier indicated, I conclude that any being who is able to care about what happens to him or her should be included in the realm of moral concern. Each such being, in fact, should be accorded full moral significance. Taking such a position obviously requires us to rethink our assumptions about the appropriate treatment of human and nonhuman animals.

The issues I have sketched plainly lie at the very heart of ethical theory. Moreover, far from being "merely" theoretical, they have profound implications for the ways in which we should lead our lives.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

Following is a brief sketch of the tasks undertaken in each chapter. Chapter 1, "Human 'Superiority' and the Argument from Marginal Cases," sets up the project and explores, using fresh philosophical material and current empirical findings, the many different attempts to justify a claim to human moral superiority. Homocentric appeals are shown to be resounding failures. However, the view that persons in the richest sense—autonomous moral agents or "full persons," as I call them—are the only "ends in themselves," as Kant puts it, cannot be dismissed so readily. At the end of this chapter, in response to the full-personhood view, I distinguish two forms of the famous argument from marginal cases: the categorical versus the biconditional versions. This distinction is entirely new. It sheds considerable light on the different positions that can be taken on moral considerability and significance. Clearly, advocates for the full-personhood view must respond to the argument: Can they escape the implication that humans falling short of full personhood are morally on a par with certain sentient members of exploited nonhuman species?

In chapter 2, "Responses to the Argument from Marginal Cases," I examine and refute numerous recent attempts to counter the argument in either of its two forms. I conclude that supporters of the full-personhood view cannot evade the unsavory implications their position has for the moral status of many sentient humans. They are logically required to throw out the baby with the nonhuman bath water. If they are unhappy

with this, they can, at best, try to retain the *core* of their view by replacing it with a person-centered version of speciesism. However, as I show in the next chapter, this recourse to speciesism will be to no avail.

In chapter 3, "Speciesism and Full Personhood," I discuss speciesism and its relationship to racism and sexism, leading to its most plausible version: full-personhood speciesism (alluded to at the end of chapter 2). According to this version of speciesism, those who possess maximum moral significance, including what we call a right to life, are either (a) full persons or (b) members of a species *characterized by* full personhood. I then examine attempts to justify this position, exposing fatal flaws in each. I also offer my own arguments (which, I believe, are better than the ones that have been offered by speciesists themselves) in support of that position, and refute those arguments too. Speciesism, in short, does not survive this chapter. Anyone who continues to cling to the maximum moral significance of full persons but denies such significance to nonhuman animals *must* deny full moral significance to many humans as well. Anyone who *does not* want to accept that implication must give up the claim to superiority.

In chapter 4, "Utilitarianism and the Protection of Innocent Life," I discuss utilitarianism, particularly as defended by Peter Singer: this is an alternative to the full-personhood view (and the closely allied view of full-personhood speciesism). Many who *do* try to drop the claim of superiority have embraced some version of utilitarianism. I discuss the implications of utilitarian views for population policies (including contraception, abortion, and infanticide), food policies and farming methods, and research protocols. I examine perplexing attempts to compare in utilitarian terms the "value" of different lives: actual and potential lives, conscious and self-conscious lives, young and old lives, and so on. I show that, despite the most ingenious efforts that can be made by defenders of utilitarianism, this is not a view offering adequate protection for any innocent being's life, full person or otherwise.

The first few pages of chapter 5, "Justification and Judgment: Claiming and Respecting Basic Moral Rights," summarize what argumentative ground I have covered up to that point. I argue that further argumentation is needed to counter the positions of those who are not sufficiently moved by the horrific implications of the full-personhood view and utilitarianism. We must get beyond appeals to intuitions, however carefully

considered those intuitions may be. After showing that Sapontzis and Regan do not succeed in decisively refuting key alternatives to their views, I offer a new argument for the maximum moral significance of all consciously conative beings. This argument is inspired by the work of one of the most important contemporary moral theorists, Alan Gewirth. However, it goes considerably beyond his own conclusions: although Gewirth believes that nonhuman animals have some degree of moral significance, he is in fact a homocentrist. I also show that the Gewirth-inspired argument I develop does not justify extending moral standing to entities with no capacity for consciousness or conation. I point out in this final chapter that if a more inclusive, environmental, ethic were to be justified, it would have to be so on other grounds (e.g., aesthetics). Indeed, such an ethic is entirely compatible with the argument that I advance. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss the implications of my position for the treatment of morally significant beings, be they human or nonhuman, family or stranger, wild or domestic. Hunting for sport or survival, the raising of animals for food or research purposes, and the keeping and treatment of companion animals are all addressed. I explore the circumstances in which the killing of others, nonhuman or human, can be justified: not surprisingly, given the argument developed earlier in this chapter, those circumstances turn out to be rather limited. Other animals and the environment as a whole would benefit if human animals revised their attitudes and actions as suggested. We humans too would benefit in many ways if we were willing to resist prejudice in all its forms. Sometimes we would also lose, but that is the price of moral commitment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is indebted to a number of articles I have written in the past few years on the moral significance of humans and nonhumans. I want to thank the editors of the philosophical journals *Inquiry, Ethics and Animals, Between the Species, Philosophica,* and *The Journal of Agricultural Ethics* for permission to quote from my articles. For the most part, I have quoted rather little from myself. Material drawn from these articles has been thoroughly rethought and rewritten; in any case, most

of the substance of this book is new. Two exceptions are "The Sentience Defense of Homocentrism" in chapter 1, and parts of chapter 4. The former is very close, though not identical, to "Arguing Away Suffering: The Neo-Cartesian Revival," *Between the Species* 9 (1), Winter 1993, pp. 121–28, and "Reply to Harrison" in the same journal, Spring 1993, pp. 77–82. Major parts of chapter 4 are based on "Utilitarian Killing, Replacement, and Rights," *The Journal of Agricultural Ethics* 3 (2), 1990, pp. 147–71; however, many new arguments and references have been added to the original material. Finally, a small part of chapter 5, "Is Moral Agency Mandated by Reason?" is closely based on "Reason and Morality Revisited," *Between the Species* 6 (2), 1990, pp. 63–69.

I began writing this book in the spring of 1990. I want to thank colleagues at the Pennsylvania State University for naming me the 1990 Helena Rubenstein Endowed Faculty Fellow in the Humanities: this fellowship released me from teaching duties during that semester. (The irony of my title did not escape me.) Thanks to a Pennsylvania State University Research Development Grant, I received a one-course release in the spring of 1991 to pursue my work. I also thank the Institute for Arts and Humanistic Studies for a grant that partially released me from teaching during the fall of 1992. I was able to complete the bulk of my book by late 1993: I am grateful to the university and to my campus for the one-semester sabbatical leave that made this possible.

My thanks also go to many of my students, who have debated ethics with me and with each other over the past several years. I also acknowledge with pleasure the support given to my project at various stages by Harlan Miller, Steve Sapontzis, Tom Regan, and Marc Bekoff. I am especially grateful to Bernard Rollin for his careful reading of the manuscript, his excellent comments, and his encouragement. I am honored by his offer to write the foreword to my book. Above all, I owe thanks to my philosopher-spouse, Werner, for his warm support and for his willingness to take time from his own work to debate issues with me.

HUMAN "SUPERIORITY" AND THE ARGUMENT FROM MARGINAL CASES

We are moral agents. We are capable of understanding and acting upon moral principles. Unless we act under duress, we are responsible for what we do. Unlike small children and cats, we have moral obligations and can be held accountable for flouting those obligations. All moral codes are addressed to us. So are the following questions: Are we, as moral agents, all *morally considerable?* That is, are others (also moral agents) directly obligated to take our interests into account when their actions would affect us? Are we all equally morally significant, entitled to be treated as more than means to further others' purposes, or should some of us count more than others? Can any beings who are *not* moral agents be morally considerable? If such beings exist, are they equally *morally significant?* Are they as significant as we are? In short, who belongs in the moral community, and to what degree? These are all fundamental, extraordinarily important questions. They are also extraordinarily difficult to answer.

CANDIDATES FOR INCLUSION IN THE MORAL COMMUNITY

Let us begin by considering the kinds of beings who may very well qualify for moral considerability and a high degree of moral significance. They will be considered in descending order of "plausibility." Not coincidentally, we humans tend to assume that we are the paradigms of moral significance. As other beings depart in greater and greater degree from our model, most of us find it progressively more difficult to accord them our moral concern. How much of this is bias and how much is warranted will occupy many of the later pages of this book.

Full-Fledged Persons

Normal adult human beings are obvious examples of full-fledged persons (or, as I shall usually call them, "full persons"). It will not have escaped the reader's notice that we ourselves are being described here! We have the intelligence, rationality, creativity, and communication skills required for moral agency. None but full persons can engage in debate about moral considerability and significance. A fully developed person is, in Paul Taylor's words, "a center of autonomous choice and valuation."[1] This high degree of autonomy makes it possible for such a being to forge a life plan and to interrelate that plan with the plans of others. If anyone is morally considerable and deserving of a right to life, we believe, such a person is. Many would add that thwarting such an (innocent) being's basic interests *may* be the only way for a sane, mature specimen of personhood to lose any moral significance.

Persons Lower on the Autonomy Scale

We do not normally restrict the concept of personhood to highly autonomous, mature beings. A good friend once shared his delight with my husband and me about the fact that his one-year-old daughter Katie had become "a little person." At first, he smiled, she was "all brain stem." Another friend beamed about how much fun it was to be with her toddler daughter: "Now Valerie's a person!" Anyone who has spent any length of time with small children in their second year of life can see that they have distinct "personalities," wants, goals, and even plans to achieve those goals (e.g., assembling corn chips in a row on the floor to play with; checking every glass with liquid in it in order to get a taste, then disgustedly tossing displeasing beverages on the floor, etc.). Those who know certain nonhuman animals "personally" commonly say the same about them. For example, our family boxer would whine while resting his muzzle on one's lap when he wanted to be fed. If we children didn't get the hint, he would take a hand gently in his massive jaws and lead his (by then) soggy-lapped victim directly to the refrigerator. We all took it for granted that Tiger was a person, although some philosophers and scientists would find this claim controversial at best.

Joel Feinberg characterizes this less restrictive concept of personhood as follows: "In the commonsense way of thinking, persons are those beings who, among other things, are conscious, have a concept and awareness of themselves, are capable of experiencing emotions, can plan ahead, can act on their plans, and can feel pleasure and pain."[2] Feinberg adds that these traits *in combination* are not obviously present in humans until they are over one year of age.[3]

Tom Regan's category of "subjects-of-a-life" is the same as Feinberg's "commonsense personhood": "Individuals are subjects-of-a-life if they have beliefs and desires; perception, memory, and a sense of the future, including their own future; an emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference- and welfare-interests; the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychophysical identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experient[i]al [lives] fare well or ill for them, logically independently of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object[s] of anyone else's interests."[4] Regan believes that all normally developed mammals over one year of age qualify as subjects-of-lives (commonsense persons).[5]

'Person,' however, is a notoriously slippery term with more than one meaning. Some simply equate 'person' with 'human being,' calling even a just-fertilized human egg a 'person.' Those who do not want to do this but share the same concept will deny that the fertilized egg is a human being, whereupon their opponents accuse them of biological illiteracy (many are the ways of muddying the abortion controversy's argumentative waters). Others simply use 'person' in an honorific way, meaning by it no more or less than 'deserving of basic moral rights.' Most of us, however, think of personhood in more descriptive terms, in the way which links 'person' to 'personality.' In this sense, it is an open question whether a dog, cat, ape, or human baby can be a person, let alone a being deserving moral consideration.[6]

Commonsensical though the commonsense concept of person may be, a number of contemporary philosophers reject it. For example, Paul Taylor,[7] H. J. McCloskey,[8] and Ernest Partridge[9] all restrict the concept of person to the group I have identified as *full-fledged* persons. Only the highly autonomous and linguistically sophisticated, who are capable of moral agency and able to act on principle, are awarded the accolade of "person." In my writing during the last few years on the

subject of moral considerability, I have myself wavered on how high a standard to set for personhood.[10] I have since decided that this is not a merely terminological issue. The insistence that only relatively mature, highly autonomous beings can be persons suggests that all others, including four-year-old humans, are blanks, as lacking in "personality" as fertilized eggs. Calling the children "pre-persons" helps not at all: the same designation can be used for fertilized eggs. Calling them "near persons" is a bit better, but it still suggests that they will soon lose their "blankness" and become individuals (in more than the genetic sense). This seems outrageously unfair, not the least because the qualities so highly developed in the mature person did not spring full-blown into existence on that individual's eighteenth birthday. Those qualities had been present to a lesser but increasing degree for many years before.

Moral agency, for example, is a late stage in a complex, years-long process of moral development. The process begins in early childhood, according to psychologists who study this phenomenon.[11] Similarly, the ability to plan one's life many years in advance has its roots in the ability to make plans to achieve short-term goals. This ability manifests itself very early indeed, as any parent can tell you. Tom Regan calls the ability to act so as to satisfy preferences "preference autonomy."[12] Of course, eighteen-month-old Alex, who spies a bowl of peanuts on a high table, drags a nearby chair close to the table, climbs on the chair, then grabs the bowl of peanuts supposedly placed out of his reach, or the chimp who does the same to reach a tantalizing bunch of bananas, is not highly autonomous. Nevertheless, he has, even if to a primitive degree, the ability that is so much more highly developed in human adults (we drive to the grocery store to get the nuts, put them high on a shelf to discourage excess snacking, then climb on a stool at 4:00 A.M. to grab the darned things).

The more inclusive, "commonsense" sense of 'person' allows for these degree differences in autonomy and moral development. It remains to be seen whether those who are not, and perhaps never will be, full-fledged persons can be maximally morally significant. At least, however, our way of describing them does not load the deck against them by suggesting that they are less than individuals.

Self-Conscious Beings Who Have Little or No Autonomy

Can beings with awareness of themselves fail to be persons or subjects-of-lives? Yes, if their ability to act (even with the most sophisticated mechanical aids) is severely diminished or nonexistent. Such beings may be either physically or mentally incapable of goal-directed action, and their sense of self may be rudimentary at best. Severely damaged humans or extremely young humans might qualify for inclusion in this category. Although at one point Regan claims that such humans are subjects-of-lives,[13] they are not, since they fail to satisfy (at the very least) his action requirement. However, they do have a *welfare:* their lives "fare well or ill for them logically independently" of the interest others have—or do not have—in them. Their lives matter *to them.* For this reason, many (although not all!) believe them to be morally considerable.

Merely Conscious Beings

Can beings be aware, in some sense, of their surroundings, but have no awareness whatever of *themselves?* Drawing on recent work by psychologist T. Natsoulis, ethologist Donald Griffin distinguishes between "perceptual consciousness" (being aware) and "reflective consciousness" (being aware that one is having a given experience).[14] This distinction seems natural and philosophically familiar, but those of us capable of thinking about such matters normally experience both types of consciousness, even if not always simultaneously. We have a difficult time conceiving of a consciousness that is *exclusively* perceptual. How is one to imagine a life that drifts from moment to moment with no hint of knowledge that anything is happening *to it?* How could beings with no sense (however undeveloped) of identity over time ever have preferences? How could their lives matter *to them?* Some believe that many nonhuman animals, even highly developed animals like dogs and cats, fall into this category.[15] If they are correct, the ordinary experiences of those of us who think we know such nonhuman animals well are riddled by misinterpretation. Many, many humans would also lack self-consciousness in that case.

On the other hand, Bernard Rollin has recently argued[16] that beings

who could never be more than "merely" conscious, if they somehow came into existence, would have died off exceedingly quickly indeed (unless, presumably, cared for by those blessed with self-consciousness and preference autonomy). Natural selection would make very short work of them. If nonhuman animals truly were machines made of flesh, "hard-wired," as it were, to go through invariant sequences of behavior given certain environmental "triggers," perhaps they could survive even though "merely" conscious. However, those who closely study their behavior, as Rollin documents, cannot plausibly reduce it to a stimulus-response model. In a fascinating, positive argument for the contention that nonhuman (and human!) animals cannot have evolved as "merely" conscious beings, Rollin takes a leaf from Immanuel Kant, of all people. (This is a highly ironic move, since Kant took for granted that nonhuman animals have no mental lives.) In order for one to *experience,* as opposed to simply undergoing an onslaught of discrete sensations, one must synthesize one's sensory input. However, in order to do that, one must have an underlying sense of self. Without a "transcendental unity of apperception" (to give the sense of self its full Kantian title), one could never experience nor, a fortiori, learn from experience. In other words: "What this means is that in order for a being to have unified experience of objects in relations, it must be the same consciousness which experiences the beginning of an event [as experiences] the end, or the top of an object and its bottom . . . if it were not the same you that viewed the top of a tall building as the bottom and the middle, there could be no experience of 'the tall building.' But this same point must hold true for animals too; they must be able to realize that an event is happening to them in order to learn from it."[17]

We can summarize this argument as follows:

1. In order to learn from an event, one must recognize that the event is happening to one.
2. In order to recognize that an event is happening to one, one must be self-conscious.
3. Nonhuman animals learn from events.
4. *Therefore,* nonhuman animals cannot be "merely" conscious: they must be self-conscious.

A critic of this argument would probably not challenge the second premise. So long as 'self-conscious' is understood to imply no more than

'self-aware,' regardless of how peripheral that awareness may be, it is difficult to see how premise 2 could be false. Jean-Paul Sartre uses a stunning metaphor to describe the self-awareness most of us experience at every conscious moment;[18] it is a "horizon" bordering our awareness of the world, always there, seldom in focus, a boundary turning sensory chaos into lived experience. We need not mumble to ourselves, "Gee, I'm having an experience right this very minute!" in order to be self-conscious, nor do we need to do this to know that something is happening to us. No, a critic of the argument is more likely to attack the third or first premise.

Attacking the third premise, that is, denying that any nonhuman animals can learn from events, would be a singularly unpromising approach for a critic to take. I will have more to say about this later, but for now let us only pause to note that even psychologists who express very low opinions about the mental abilities of their nonhuman research "models" take for granted that those "models" can learn from events such as random electric shocks, food rewards, maternal deprivation, and more.

An attack on premise 1 inspired by recent developments in computer technology seems to be more promising. It can be pointed out that computers can "learn" from events, but they are assuredly not self-conscious. (Even the most ardent supporters of "artificial intelligence" do not claim that we have succeeded in creating self-conscious machines.) Might not some humans and perhaps all nonhumans be in the same boat? If so, the first premise of the neo-Kantian argument above is false.

I do not find this to be a convincing reply. There is a reason for our persistent use of quotation marks in discussion of the "mental" abilities of computers. The reason is that no one claims that we have succeeded in creating a *conscious* machine. Marvin Minsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who has devoted his life to the "artificial intelligence" field, does not hesitate to admit this.[19] They can be programmed to do amazing feats, but they are phenomenologically aware of nothing. Hence, they "see," but they do not *see;* they "learn," but they do not (yet!) *learn*. Hence, what they can be brought to do is not a challenge to premise 1 above. (As Rollin points out in *The Unheeded Cry,* some psychologists have used quotation marks when referring to nonhuman "experiences" as well. He argues convincingly that those who have done this have accepted the thoroughly discredited ideologies of logical positivism and behaviorism. We have the same excellent reason

to believe that dogs are conscious as we have to believe that babies are.[20] By the same token, if "artificial intelligence" experts ever do succeed in creating genuine intelligence, we ought to drop our quotation marks in descriptions of computer activity.)

Rollin's neo-Kantian argument has not been discredited. However, it does not follow from it that no being could be "merely" conscious. I do not think that Rollin would deny that there could be humans who are so profoundly brain damaged or so extremely young that only the simplest kind of awareness would be possible for them. The same holds for non-humans. Of course, it is highly unlikely that such beings could survive without assistance from those who are better mentally and physically equipped: without that help, they would be "naturally selected out" in no time. It seems to me that it would also be possible for a relatively primitive organism to survive without having to organize sensations into perceptions, but this is an empirical question that others must try to settle. For our purposes, it is sufficient to say that "merely" conscious beings may very well exist. Would they be morally considerable? Many would deny it. Not surprisingly, the further we depart from our own characteristics, the less likely we are to extend our moral concern.

Living Beings with No Capacity for Consciousness

This is even more evident when we consider the next possible candidate for moral concern. Beings with *no* capacity for consciousness are not sentient. They can neither be aware of nor care about anything that happens to them, although they can live, flourish, deteriorate, and die. We may feel (justifiably or not) moral concern for humans who fall into this class, such as the irreversibly comatose, anencephalic babies born only with brain stems, and the brain-dead. However, many have no such moral feelings toward plants, sponges, or bacteria, who are quite far removed from the human form although much more apt to flourish in favorable conditions than the sad cases mentioned above. There are exceptions to the common notion that any human being counts more than any other living being, however. The view that all living beings are morally considerable has actually been accepted by some religions, most notably the Eastern religions of (strict) Buddhism and Jainism.[21] Some

recent figures in environmental ethics strongly defend "biocentrism," which holds that all living beings are morally considerable. One environmental ethicist, Paul Taylor, even holds that all living beings, from bacteria to humans, are equally morally significant.[22] There may well be a legitimate moral distinction between the human and nonhuman cases, or it may be that all alike are deserving—or undeserving—of moral concern.

Natural Objects or Systems

Some environmental ethicists include natural objects or systems in the realm of the morally considerable. Many would agree with J. Baird Callicott's statement that "The land ethic may seem fatally promiscuous in its inclusion of 'soils, waters, plants, and animals,' individually and collectively,"[23] although Callicott does not believe this to be the case. It is difficult enough for most people to accord moral concern to living, nonsentient beings, but it is harder still to gather deserts, rivers, rock formations, and swamps into the moral community. We can and often do cherish these wild objects and systems, but it is not clear that we have obligations to them. With natural objects and systems, we are about as far as we can get from the autonomous human paradigms of moral considerability and significance.

Confusing These Views on Candidates for Moral Considerability

Plainly, many who are willing to countenance the moral considerability of all sentient beings balk at the prospect of including viruses, crabgrass, soils, and mountain ranges. Some firm opponents of the extension of serious moral concern to nonhuman sentient beings make use of this in their attacks on "animal rights." For example, in an editorial entitled "Animal Rights Nonsense,"[24] in the prestigious science journal *Nature*, defenders of animal rights are accused of being committed to the absurdity of "bacteria rights." Oddly, the editorial goes on to give the obvious rebuttal to this charge—namely that the movement *Nature* attacks draws the moral line at *sentient* beings—only to triumphantly

assert: "At last, the *reductio ad absurdum* takes hold. They have been caught. But there is little satisfaction to be gained in skewering the animal rightists on their failure to stand up for bacteria."[25]

Philosopher A. I. Melden does somewhat better in his attack on animal moral considerability views than the piece of puzzling illogic above, but he too tries to associate these views with those commonly found less plausible. In his chapter entitled "Animal Rights?" in *Rights in Moral Lives*,[26] he begins correctly by saying that animal rights views base their rights claims on sentience.[27] In short order, however, the view is next characterized as one that requires us to grant rights to "any living creature."[28] Next we find him discussing "the view that animals, plants, etc. have moral rights" as well as "inanimate entities."[29] If Melden cannot be said to have committed the straw person fallacy in this chapter, he certainly can be accused of engaging in the "straw entity" fallacy! He quite naturally has an easier time dismissing views his readers are apt to find very implausible than he would in refuting his alleged target. In fact, he explicitly refuses to discuss that target's central contentions: "I shall not review here a variety of other considerations—such as the fact that animals have needs, desires, or interests—that have been adduced as grounds for the ascription of rights."[30] This sort of treatment of the issue is surely unfair to all of the views that depart progressively further from traditional beliefs.

Which of the candidates for moral considerability and significance discussed in this section has a chance of being justified? Let us now turn to some standard responses to the question of who counts morally, bearing in mind the sorts of beings we have just sketched.

FREQUENTLY HELD VIEWS ON WHO COUNTS MORALLY: HOMOCENTRISM

When philosopher Alan Gewirth claims that all basic moral rights are *human*, and that "for human rights to be had one must only be human,"[31] he is expressing the frequently accepted view of *homocentrism*. According to this literally human-centered view, all and only human beings can be maximally morally significant. Some would go even further, claiming that all and only human beings are worthy of any

moral concern whatever, as St. Thomas Aquinas did. The eminent medieval synthesizer of Aristotle and the Scriptures assumed that humans alone were created rational, in the image of God, and that all other "nonrational" beings were fashioned purely for our use.[32] "Hence," he proclaimed, "it is no wrong for man to make use of them, either by killing or in any other way whatever."[33] Hunters and trappers who defend themselves against charges of cruelty by proclaiming "Animals were made for us to use!" are taking the same line of thought. The type of homocentrism most often expressed, however, is more moderate: we wrong nonhumans by "excessive" cruelty and killing, but their lives count for far less than ours, and there is no wrong in killing them for sport, food, clothing, product testing, or experimentation.

From the human point of view, homocentrism obviously has its merits. Indeed, compared to views (depressingly and disgracefully prevalent even now) that only humans of the "appropriate" race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic group, or political affiliation are maximally morally significant, homocentrism shines as a beacon of enlightenment. Nevertheless, it does not withstand careful scrutiny. Homocentrists are unable to explain why all and only human beings can be significant members of the moral community.

The Theological Defense of Homocentrism

Homocentrists frequently appeal to theology to support their view. As we saw, Aquinas was convinced that all other creatures were designed purely for human use. Humans alone, he held, are worthy of moral concern because they alone, as "intellectual creatures," resemble God.[34] One commonly hears less sophisticated versions of the theological argument: for example, "Only humans have souls," "God gave us these critters to eat and wear," and so on. Homocentrists who appeal to theology, however, run into multiple difficulties. Since religious traditions disagree on the value of nonhuman life, religious homocentrists must show that their views are "better" than, for instance, Buddhism or Jainism. Any "authorities" they quote are sure to be challenged by those who do not share their assumptions, including the "authority" of Holy Scripture. I have discussed this issue with theists who treat selected passages from

the Bible as their ultimate trump cards in an argument: "Surely," they insist, "you aren't doubting God's word!" They are confident that an all-perfect being would never lead us astray. Unfortunately for their argument, they are unable to provide any convincing grounds for their claim of Scriptural infallibility. They are nonplussed when asked why one should believe the Scriptural passage of their choice expresses God's word. One of the few who even tried to answer the question thought he had won the argument for sure: "Of course the Bible is the inspired word of God! It says so right here in 2 Peter 1:21!" In short order, the circularity of this reasoning became painfully evident. (It is not just the untutored who make this mistake. Charles C. Ryrie, a doctor of theology and of philosophy and a highly regarded biblical scholar, wrote in an appendix to his annotated Old and New Testaments that the Bible, although occasionally historically inaccurate, expresses the infallible Word of God with regard to all important matters. Why? Because "The Lord" says so Himself in a number of passages in the New Testament!)[35] Homocentrists who base their claims on religion also find themselves unable to make any headway with atheists and agnostics. Much more can be said about the futility of a theological defense of homocentrism, but since others have already written much of value on this subject,[36] I will now turn to other defenses.

I will consider the following claims: (1) only humans can be sentient or conscious; (2) only humans are capable of intelligence, creativity, purposeful communication, and autonomy; and (3) only humans are capable of moral agency. Paradoxically, although the first claim seems the least likely, it will require the most space to explore and refute: it has recently gained sophisticated new defenders. I will then give briefer responses to the remaining claims. (Of necessity, my discussions of these three defenses of homocentrism will overlap.)

The Sentience Defense of Homocentrism

If sentience is restricted to humans, nonhumans would be no more deserving of moral consideration than bacteria. Unless a case could be made for the moral considerability of nonsentient beings in the environment, they would be due no consideration at all. Humans, on the

other hand, would be prima facie excellent candidates for moral considerability—the only candidates, it would seem.

At first blush, this particular defense of homocentrism does not seem very promising. Generally, people who have had the opportunity to observe nonhuman animals, especially vertebrates, for any length of time take for granted that these beings are conscious and capable of suffering. If we are pressed to give a rational defense of our assumption that nonhumans can be sentient, we can have no better start than the inductive argument from analogy to other minds. Beings who are neurologically highly similar to me, who respond in complex, creative ways to stimuli that elicit similar responses in me, are probably conscious just as I am. This is an extraordinarily strong inductive argument, fulfilling all criteria for good two-case analogical reasoning, licensing one to infer that another, be the other human or nonhuman, is not merely a cleverly contrived "machine."[37] Those who are skeptical about induction as such are, of course, not persuaded by the argument, but they also cannot be persuaded about the existence of their own bodies, let alone anyone else's. Short of solipsism, one seems not to be irrational in putting one's confidence in the argument from analogy.

René Descartes, of course, had doubts about the extension of this argument to nonhumans: "This argument, which is very obvious, has taken possession of the minds of all men from their earliest age. But there are other arguments, stronger and more numerous, but not so obvious to everyone, which strongly urge the opposite. One is that it is more probable that worms and flies and caterpillars move mechanically than that they all have immortal souls."[38]

Philosophically, Descartes's counter to the argument from analogy is not plausible for many reasons,[39] including the fact that it is wedded to a version of mind-body dualism fraught with well-known difficulties. *Scientifically,* Descartes's counter (i.e., the machine model of nonhumans) has done considerably less well than the argument from analogy, which has grown even stronger since his day. The argument has been buttressed by centuries of observation, much of it done at great cost to nonhuman animals, that reveal complex, detailed similarities between human and nonhuman vertebrate nervous systems. We know that many nonhuman animals have the same pain mechanisms as we do, and their behaviors are consistent with this fact. Even some invertebrates appear

to have some parts of this mechanism.[40] Moreover, as Bernard Rollin[41] and James Rachels[42] have argued, we fly in the face of the superbly confirmed theory of evolution if we assume that consciousness is a uniquely human trait. Logic, science, and common sense all point to the existence of nonhuman animal suffering.

Nevertheless, as Rollin (a professor of physiology and biophysics as well as a professor of philosophy) has painstakingly documented, some scientists even to this day persist in denying that animals can experience pain, relying implicitly on the philosophically long-discredited views of logical positivism and behaviorism. He is cautiously optimistic about the fact that it is becoming scientifically respectable once more to attribute conscious states to nonhumans in the social and natural sciences.[43] Ironically, if two current philosophers, Peter Harrison[44] and Peter Carruthers,[45] writing independently, are taken seriously, scientists might as well return to the practice of nailing research animals to boards for vivisection without benefit of anesthesia. Descartes's views are with us again, albeit in contemporary dress.

Now, quite a few of us regard it as screamingly obvious that nonhuman animals can suffer. Could any marginally reasonable homocentrist take arguments to the contrary at all seriously? Is critiquing such arguments merely a matter of (you should excuse the expression) beating a dead horse? The history of philosophy and science indicates that it is not. Philosophers have been enormously influential in shaping attitudes toward nonhuman animals. Descartes, a scientific experimentalist whose own interest in the issue of nonhuman animal treatment was not purely philosophical, had a profound effect on the practice of vivisection. Long before anesthesia became available, experimenters taking apart yelping animals in laboratories laughed at the sounds, comparing them to clocks striking the hour.[46] (Rachels notes that some researchers must have found all the noise distracting, however, finding it prudent to sever the animals' vocal cords. Some clocks do need to be muffled.)[47] Later, two hundred years after Descartes's death, Claude Bernard, a pioneer in experimental physiology, routinely vivisected complex animals, speaking of them in these terms: "It is necessary, so to speak, to take an organism to pieces in successive stages, in the same way that one dismantles a machine, in order to recognize and to study its working parts."[48] Although anesthesia was in practice then, Bernard never used

it, any more than he would have tried to use it on a timepiece. (His wife and daughters found themselves unable to share his views; they originated the first European antivivisection society after coming home one day to discover that Bernard had vivisected the family dog.)[49] Even now, as Rollin reports, the occasional veterinarian (of all people) will publicly proclaim that anesthesia in operations on animals is merely a method of "chemical restraint," having nothing whatever to do with pain relief.[50]

As mentioned before, the philosophical movement of logical positivism has also had its influence on science: any discussion of conscious states in nonhumans (or, for that matter, humans) was ruled out as meaningless because such claims cannot be tested by observations. All claims about values fell by the wayside as well, reducing any ethical dilemmas a researcher might have to emotional, rationally irresolvable matters of taste. This view is no longer taken seriously by philosophers—for one thing, logical positivism cannot pass its own criterion of meaningfulness—but its influence can still be seen in psychology, biology, and physics. In short, philosophical views do matter in the conduct of science, particularly when these views have implications that some scientists find attractive. (They are hardly unique in this regard, to be sure.)

Some homocentrists will be pleased by Harrison's and Carruthers's contention that nonhuman animal suffering is fundamentally a myth. The two philosophers' arguments come at a time when many research scientists are mounting a counterattack on those who charge that their work with nonhumans is unethical. The articles in which their views were first presented appeared in journals of philosophy with very high reputations (indeed, Carruthers's piece was published by the journal with the top reputation in analytic philosophy in the world), and their influence is already spreading. Harrison's article has recently been excerpted in a popular anthology on nonhuman animal research.[51] Carruthers has expanded his views on nonhuman animals to book-length form (referring to his subjects as 'animals' rather than 'brutes'),[52] and he has begun to give invited lectures on the subject to varied audiences.[53] Defenders of factory farming, commercial hunting and trapping, and the use of nonhuman animals in product testing will likely also see these essays as contributions to their counterattacks. Both philosophers explicitly draw the obvious ethical consequences of their conclusions,

Harrison only briefly—"Such causes as animal liberation may have to be rethought"[54]—and Carruthers at greater length. He expresses indignation at the charge that factory farming involves animal cruelty, terming this attack "morally objectionable" and going so far as to declare that we have a "moral imperative" to cease feeling sympathy for nonhuman animals.[55] In his 1992 book, he attacks not only "animal liberation" efforts but also any concern with *animal welfare,* judging even moderate concern to be "an irrelevance to be opposed rather than encouraged."[56] In addition to factory farming, Carruthers fully supports all manner of experimentation upon nonhuman animals, including testing of products acknowledged to be "trivial" (e.g., a new mascara blend). Carruthers, like many supporters of the commercial and academic use of nonhuman animals, refers to those who oppose these human enterprises as "animal lovers."[57] This phrase as commonly used is intended to have a patronizing, offensive ring ("brute lovers" would perhaps be worse). One cannot help but be reminded of the (alas, still sometimes used) epithet, "nigger lover," also employed to dismiss allegedly sentimental foolishness.

This position is quite consistent with the view that nonhuman animals are automata. It would indeed be absurdly misguided to devote time and energy to the equivalent of "typewriter rights." It is interesting that Carruthers devotes nearly 90 percent of his book, as opposed to his original article, to argumentation for dismissal of nonhuman moral standing *even if they could suffer.* He is much less successful here in drawing the conclusion that follows so evidently from the denial of nonhuman conscious experience. Briefly, he chooses a version of "contractualism" which excludes anyone who is not a highly autonomous rational agent from moral considerability. He argues that *such a theory is the most morally acceptable* because it coheres with the following allegedly "deeply embedded" attitude: "We find it intuitively abhorrent that the lives or sufferings of animals should be weighed against the lives or sufferings of human beings."[58] He then judges to be morally acceptable the view that nonhumans should continue to be used for product testing or the churning out of Chicken McNuggets, and so on, *even if the animals suffer and the products are trivial,* since important human interests in making a living and generating profits are at stake.[59] Why is such a view morally acceptable? Quite straightforwardly, because it follows from his version of contractualism, "the most acceptable framework

for moral theory."[60] The reader will remember that the chief argument for the alleged moral acceptability of that framework was its coherence with the attitude that animal interests do not count in comparison with human interests—the very assumption made by the view above. As Steve Sapontzis has pointed out, we have here an example of "one of the tidiest circular arguments in the history of philosophy."[61]

If Harrison's or Carruthers's arguments against the possibility of nonhuman animal suffering succeed, however, the ethical implications are relatively clear without the "assistance" of any circular arguments. As we shall see, however, homocentrists who embrace this sort of argumentation do so at their own peril: *Very young and seriously mentally defective humans are denied sentience along with nonhumans.*[62] (I will return to this key point later.)

Thus, it is important on all counts to respond in as much detail as necessary to such philosophical argumentation. It is especially important that the response be rationally defensible. Otherwise, one is apt to be dismissed as a purely emotional anthropomorphic fantasizer (a.k.a. an "animal lover") when, for example, one objects to the rubbing of noxious substances into the eyes of immobilized, unanesthetized rabbits. I will argue that reason, not just emotion, severely undermines the denial of nonhuman animal suffering. Most of my time will be spent on Harrison's piece. Carruthers's article has already been ably attacked by philosophers Edward Johnson[63] and William Robinson,[64] so I will mostly confine myself to additional important problems with it. At the end of this discussion, it should be clear that these defenses of the nonhuman animal-as-machine model are no more successful than the one René Descartes proposed in the mid-seventeenth century. Homocentrists do their view no favors if they pursue this line of argumentation.

Harrison's Attack on Nonhuman Animal Suffering: The Theological Context

Peter Harrison tries to turn the supporting evidence for the argument from analogy on its head. He argues that evolutionary theory actually undercuts the assumption that nonhumans can experience pain. He denies the relevance of the copiously documented similarities between human and nonhuman animals. Overall, he claims to be defending Des-

cartes's conclusion without embracing the well-known difficulties of Descartes's metaphysics.

Harrison's overriding, explicit purpose in defending his thesis is theological. He believes that, while it is easy enough, allegedly, to reconcile human pain with the existence of a perfect God—such experiences are the price of free will and build character—nonhuman suffering (he assumes) cannot be explained in this way. Rejecting as "ad hoc" the theodicy proposing that fallen angels rather than God are responsible for natural evils, including nonhuman animal suffering,[65] Harrison embraces a version of Descartes's theodicy. According to that view, nonhuman animals are said to lack awareness of anything, including stimuli we find to be painful; thus, no experiences of theirs can be used as ammunition for the problem of evil. They are mindless bodies; humans are minds linked to bodies in this life. While accepting Descartes's conclusion, Harrison partially rejects the dualistic interactionism underpinning that conclusion. Apparently agreeing with Descartes's early critics that a nonphysical substance (mind) and a physical substance (body) could not directly affect each other, he amends the Cartesian position as Malebranche did, by proposing the theory of "occasionalism": "To work properly it [the Cartesian position] must assume God's activity in human beings, correlating bodily events (the flame burns my hand) with mental states (I feel pain). This 'occasionalism' is admittedly also ad hoc and mythological, but less so than attributing earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, disease and animal pain to demonic activity."[66]

In short, according to this view the flame that burns the hand, leading to nerve impulses that eventually reach the cortex, is not the cause of the pain: *God* sees to it that this "nonphysical" experience results. (Thus, ironically, part of the solution offered to the problem of evil is the proposal that the Almighty *directly* causes suffering!) Nonhuman animal suffering is literally explained away. (As we shall see, Harrison also must deny the existence of genuine suffering in very young children—a decided theological bonus). For those who do not share Harrison's religious presuppositions, it is important to note that the argumentation he goes on to give for his denial of nonhuman suffering can be cast in purely secular terms (in fact, the version of the article that has recently been anthologized is identical to the original *except* for Harrison's mentions of religion; all of these have been surgically excised).[67] In what

follows, Harrison's theological views will be mentioned only when this is needed to shed light on his argument. My criticisms also do not presuppose the correctness of any one mind/body theory. (*Dualistic* mind/body theories interpret the mind as a nonphysical mental substance or states allied in some manner with physical bodies during life. Dualistic theories are quite varied: *Cartesian dualism,* often called "interactionism," holds that mind and body causally affect each other during life; *parallelistic* theories hold that nonphysical mental states and physical states are correlated but deny that any interaction occurs; *double aspect* theories maintain that nonphysical mental states and physical states are separate properties of the same substance; *occasionalism*—Harrison's view—holds that only God, not bodily states, can cause a mental state; *epiphenomenalism* proposes that mental states are causally inefficacious nonphysical by-products of a physical body; and *hypophenomenalism* maintains the opposite. *Materialistic* or *physicalistic* theories typically identify mental states with neural states.)

The argument Harrison gives to convince us that nonhuman animals are automata is, he warns us, not a "strict" argument against the existence of nonhuman animal pain, due to the fact that pain is essentially private,[68] but he does claim to make a plausible case for his contention. Let us now turn to his argument.

Harrison I: Why Nonhuman Animal Pain Does Not Exist

Harrison's argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Many kinds of pain could have no evolutionary value for nonhuman animals; quite the contrary. This includes frustration, anxiety, grief, and severe debilitating pain.
2. We know humans experience such pains (or that *we* do, at any rate!); we survive them because we are insulated by our cultures from the effects of natural selection.
3. Other, lesser pains would have no evolutionary value to nonhuman animals either, because:
   a. Nonhuman animals can make no choices. Survival-enhancing behavior can be determined without the "superfluous" experience of pain, as studies of reflex actions show.