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## ANIMAL RIGHTS AND WELFARE

Although all the major moral philosophers in the Western tradition have had something to say about the moral status of animals, they have commented infrequently and for the most part only in brief. This tradition of neglect changed dramatically during the last quarter of the twentieth century, when dozens of works in ethical theory, hundreds of professional essays, and more than a score of academic conferences were devoted to the moral foundations of human treatment of nonhuman animals.

Two main alternatives—animal welfare and animal rights—have come to be recognized. Animal welfarists accept the permissibility of human use of nonhuman animals as a food source and in biomedical research, for example, provided such use is carried out humanely. Animal rightists, by contrast, deny the permissibility of such use, however humanely it is done.

Differ though they do, both positions have much in common. For example, both reject Descartes's view that nonhuman animals are *automata*. Those animals raised for food and hunted in the wild have a subjective presence in the world; in addition to sharing sensory capacities with human beings, they experience pleasure and pain, satisfaction and frustration, and a variety of other mental states. There is a growing consensus that many nonhuman animals have a mind that, in Charles Darwin's words, differs from the human "in degree and not in kind."

Proponents of animal welfare and animal rights have different views about the moral significance of human psychological kinship with other animals. Animal welfarists have two options. First, they can argue that we ought to treat animals humanely because this will lead us to treat one another with greater kindness and less cru-

elty. On this view we have no duties to animals, only duties involving them; and all those duties involving them turn out to be, as Kant wrote, "indirect duties to Mankind" (Immanuel Kant, "Duties to Animals," in Regan and Singer, 1991, p. 23). Theorists as diverse as Kant, St. Thomas Aquinas, and John Rawls favor an indirect-duty account of the moral status of nonhuman animals.

Second, animal welfarists can maintain that some of our duties are owed directly to animals. This is the alternative favored by utilitarians, beginning with Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill and culminating in the work of Peter Singer (1990). Animal pain and pleasure count morally in their own right, not only indirectly through the filter of the human interest in having humans treated better. The duty not to cause animals to suffer unnecessarily is a duty owed directly to animals.

Of the two options the latter seems the more reasonable. It is difficult to understand why the suffering of animals should count morally only if it leads to human suffering in the future. Imagine that a man sadistically tortures a dog and dies of a heart attack as a result of his physical exertion; what he does seems clearly wrong even though he does not live long enough to mistreat a human being. If this is true, then we have at least some direct duties to animals.

Animal welfarists who are utilitarians (Singer is the most notable example) use utilitarian theory to criticize how animals are treated in contemporary industries (animal agriculture and biomedical research, for example). For in these industries animals are made to suffer and, Singer alleges, to suffer unnecessarily.

Other animal welfarists who are utilitarians disagree. Government and industry leaders agree that some animals sometimes suffer in the course of being raised for food or used in biomedical research; but they deny that they are made to suffer unnecessarily.

Consider organ transplant research. Research on animals in this quarter involves transplanting some internal organ from one healthy animal to another; the "donor" animal, who is under anesthetic, is killed, but the "receiver" animal is permitted to recover and doubtless experiences no small amount of postoperative pain before being humanely killed.

Is the pain unnecessary? In one sense it clearly is. For since the organ was not transplanted for the good of the recipient animal, all the pain that animal experienced was unnecessary. However, this is not the real question, given the utilitarian perspective. The pain caused to this partic-

ular animal is only one part of the overall calculation that needs to be carried out. One also needs to ask about the possible benefits for humans who are in need of organ transplants, the value of the skills surgeons acquire carrying out animal organ transplants, the value of knowledge for its own sake, and so on. After these questions have been answered and the overall benefits impartially calculated, then an informed judgment can be made about whether organ transplant research involving nonhuman animals does or does not cause unnecessary suffering.

As this example illustrates, animal welfarists who are utilitarians can disagree about when animals suffer unnecessarily. As such, these animal welfarists can differ in judging whether animals are being treated humanely and, if not, how much reform is called for.

Advocates of animal rights advance a position that avoids the always daunting, frequently divisive challenge of carrying out uncertain utilitarian calculations. Central to their view is the Kantian idea that animals are never to be treated merely as a means to human ends, however good these ends might be. The acquisition of knowledge, including biological knowledge, is surely a good end, as is the promotion of human health. But the goodness of these ends does not justify the utilization of nonhuman animals as means. Thus, even if animal-model organ transplant research can be justified on utilitarian grounds, animal rights advocates would judge it immoral.

Of the two main options—animal welfare and animal rights—it is the latter that attempts to offer a basis for a radical reassessment of how animals are treated. Animal welfare, provided the calculations work out a certain way, enables one to call for reforms in human institutions that routinely utilize nonhuman animals. But animal rights, independent of such calculations, enables one to call for the abolition of all forms of institutional exploitation.

However these matters are resolved, one should note the major contribution philosophers have made in placing the “animal question” before a wider audience. Despite their philosophical differences, none of the philosophers participating in the debate is satisfied with how animals are treated by the major animal user industries. This consensus has meant that those who manage these industries have had to respond to new forms of moral criticism. Collectively, these philosophers have been and will continue to be a powerful voice calling for better treatment of animals.

In addition, the interest philosophers have shown in the “animal question” has spilled over into other disci-

plines, including sociology, history, anthropology, and law. The latter is of particular interest. Whereas thirty years ago not a single law school in America offered courses on animals and the law, upwards of thirty do so today. The evidence suggests that a new field of inquiry, Human and Animal Studies, is in the offing.

*See also* Darwin, Charles Robert; Descartes, René; Speciesism; Utilitarianism.

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## ANIMAL SOUL

See *Animal Mind*

## ANIMISM

See *Macrocism and Microcism; Panpsychism*

## ANNET, PETER

(1693–1769)

Peter Annet, an English freethinker and deist, was by profession a schoolmaster. He lost his employment in 1744 because of his outspoken attacks on certain Christian apologists. A debater at the Robin Hood Society (named after a public house where the meetings were held), he soon became a popular lecturer. The first published result was a pamphlet of 1739, titled *Judging for Ourselves: Or Free Thinking, the Great Duty of Religion. Display'd in Two Lectures, deliver'd at Plaisterers Hall*, "By P. A. Minister of the Gospel. With A Serious Poem address'd to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield." The tone of the work is indicated by the statement: "If the Scriptures are Truth, they will bear Examination; if they are not, let 'em go." This was followed by several tracts directly attacking Thomas Sherlock, bishop of London: *The Resurrection of Jesus Considered: In Answer To the Tryal of the Witnesses* "By a Moral Philosopher," which ran through three editions in 1744; *The Resurrection Reconsidered* (1744); *The Sequel of the Resurrection of Jesus Considered* (1745); and *The Resurrection Defenders stript of all Defence* (1745).

In *Social Bliss Considered* (1749) Annet, like John Milton before him, advocated the liberty of divorce. He answered Gilbert West's *Observations on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1747) in *Supernaturals Examined* (1747) and George Lyttleton's *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul in a Letter to Gilbert West* (1747) in *The History and Character of St. Paul Examined* (1748). Arguing that all miracles are incredible, Annet proceeded to attack Old Testament history in his journal, *The Free Enquirer* (9 numbers, October 17, 1761–December 12, 1761). For this work he was accused of blasphemous libel before Lord Mansfield in the Court of King's Bench in the Michaelmas term of 1762. There is some evidence that Lord Mansfield, urged on by Bishop Warburton and others, used Annet as a scapegoat after a fruitless attempt had been made to suppress the publication of David Hume's *Four Dissertations* of 1757.

Annet pleaded guilty to the charge. "In consideration of which, and of his poverty, of his having confessed his errors in an affidavit, and of his being seventy years old, and some symptoms of wildness that appeared on his inspection in Court; the Court declared they had mitigated their intended sentence to the following, viz., to be imprisoned in Newgate for a month; to stand twice in the pillory [Charing Cross and the Royal Exchange] with a paper on his forehead, inscribed Blasphemy; to be sent to the house of correction [Bridewell] to hard labour for a year; to pay a fine of 6s.8d.; and to find security, himself to 100 £ and two sureties in 50 £. each, for his good behaviour during life." Having survived this "mitigated," charitable, and humane punishment based on the iniquitous Blasphemy Act of 1698, Annet returned to schoolmastering. Archbishop Secker is said to have so far relented as to afford aid to the culprit until his death in 1769. In 1766 Annet issued *A Collection of Tracts of a Certain Free Enquirer noted by his sufferings for his opinions*, a work containing all of the tracts mentioned above.

Annet was long thought to have been the author of *The History of the Man after God's Own Heart* (1761), in which the writer took exception to a parallel drawn by a divine between George II and King David. The anonymous writer argued that such a comparison was an insult to the late king. Recent scholarship has proved that the real author was John Noorthouck, a respected member of the Stationers' Company.

Among his accomplishments, Annet was the inventor of a system of shorthand. Unlike most of the leading English deists, Annet had relatively little formal education and spoke and wrote plainly and forcefully directly to the masses. He was the last to suffer physical punishment for his heterodox religious opinions.

See also Deism; Hume, David; Milton, John.

**See also** Deism; Hume, David; Milton, John.

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There is no collected edition of Annet's works, and the texts mentioned in the article are extremely rare. A useful article, however, regarding the authorship of *The History of the Man after God's Own Heart*, is the anonymous "John Noorthouck, 'The Man after God's Own Heart,'" in *Times Literary Supplement* (August 25, 1945): 408.