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### Religion and Animals: A Changing Scene

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# Religion and Animals: A Changing Scene

# 6

CHAPTER

*Paul Waldau*

In 1903 W.E.B. Du Bois predicted, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line” (1969). One hundred years later, we can hope that the twentieth century achieved important advances for human liberation—not only racial but also sexual and political. Will that moral trajectory—the expansion of fundamental protections now easily seen as the hallmark of the last century—continue? Will the problem of the twenty-first century be the problem of the species line?

For protections to evolve to include nonhuman species, religions—through their leaders, their institutions, and above all their believers—must take seriously the important role that they have played, and certainly will continue to play, in humans’ engagement with the lives beyond our species line. Religions have such a central role in the transmission of basic images and values regarding living beings that, without their help, the problem of the species line will not be solved in this century. A central question for this century is whether influential religious institutions will continue to convey images that radically and absolutely dismiss nonhumans, or will religions offer support for the broadening movement to include nonhuman animals in humans’ moral scope.

If religions notice other species and take them seriously, ethical sensibilities regarding nonhuman animals may blossom as fully as did sensibili-

ties regarding the importance of the human individual. Various positive signs at the end of the twentieth century suggested that religions may yet play an important role in dispelling the dismissive caricatures of nonhuman animals that prevail in, for example, industrialized societies. One of these signs was that religions’ role in the origin and persistence of both negative views and positive evaluations of other animals finally was well described. Another was that many believers began the difficult task of engaging their fellow believers in dialogue regarding religions’ strengths and weaknesses in addressing the issue of the value of the nonhuman lives around them.

Where will this vital discussion go in the new century? Will it help people see the myriad ways in which religious traditions have been vitally involved in developing the often-dismissive views of nonhuman lives? Will the discussion bring to the foreground the animal-friendly features found in every code of religious ethics? Will religious leaders and scholars fully delineate the contributions of religion—both good and bad—to people’s ability to take other animals seriously? Will many religious leaders continue to claim that it is *only* human lives that *really* matter? Will religious traditions be formed not solely by theologians but also by grassroots believers attempting to commit their religion’s resources to the fullest possible recognition of ani-

mals as beings possessing integrity and value wholly independent of human needs?

However believers and their leaders answer these questions, religions will play a decisive role in humans’ encounters with the nonhuman others in and near our communities. And whatever choices any particular religious tradition and its believers make, a central problem inside and outside religion will be, without doubt, the problem of the species line.

## 1900–1950: The Dismissal of Nonhuman Lives

The science establishment of the western industrialized countries began in the early twentieth century to recognize that nonhuman primates were subject to many of the same diseases as were humans. The remarkable physical (and, it was later recognized, psychological and social) similarities of nonhuman primates to humans, however, did not lead scientists, on the whole, to recommend similar ethical protections for these evolutionary cousins.

An irony in the thoroughgoing dismissal of all nonhuman lives so characteristic of the first half of the twentieth century was that turn-of-the-century scientists had inherited a resurgent interest in the importance

and complexities of nonhuman animal lives. The 1859 publication of Darwin's pivotal *Origin of Species* had spurred much new interest in nonhuman lives. In some quarters at least, commitments to take other animals seriously flowered relative to the absolute dismissal and caricature of nonhuman lives that had prevailed in western scientific and religious circles before Darwin's groundbreaking achievement.

Curiosity about other animals' lives manifested itself in many ways, from increased observation to invasive studies such as those done in the 1870s by the British physician David Ferrier, who looked at the relationship of humans to other primates (Blum 1994). Ferrier's idea of a systematic study of primate-human relationships was to take apart the brains of nonhuman primates in order to say something about the similarity of humans to other primates. Whole lives in context, which of course must be part of any truly systematic study, also were engaged increasingly, as exemplified by R.L. Garner's study in the 1890s of free-living chimpanzees (Wrangham et al. 1994). The extensive works of George Romanes—*Mental Evolution in Animals* (1885) and *Animal Intelligence* (1886)—went through multiple editions. While often based on anecdote rather than the rigorous observation standards of late twentieth century ethology, Romanes's work and that of others reflected deep interest in the lives of the animals described and an openness to the possibility that some nonhumans were, like humans, possessed of social, cognitive, and individual complexities.

As Ferrier's work shows, by no means all of what was happening in the study of nonhuman animals at the end of the nineteenth century was of a moral or otherwise sensitive nature. Darwin's co-originator of the notion of natural selection, A.R. Wallace, shot orangutans in order to study them—and sadly this was typical of Victorian naturalists (Galdikas 1995). Such insensitivity was perhaps a harbinger of attitudes to come, for

in crucial ways and in important institutions, scientific attitudes toward other animals were about to go through a regressive narrowing in the twentieth century's first fifty years.

## The Narrowing

John Watson (1913) published an essay that was to set the tone of scientific research into other animals' cognitive abilities for the next half-century. Watson's approach, which involved a denial of the mental life of other animals, was unusual in several senses. First, a denial of mental life begs obvious questions. As the Oxford historian Keith Thomas has noted, "That there are some footsteps of reason, some strictures and emissions of ratiocination in the actions of some brutes, is too vulgarly known and too commonly granted to be doubted" (1984, 124: n.8).

Second, from the scientific perspective, Watson's views, which were the foundation of behaviorism, left much to be desired. Behaviorism, which in its strictest form emphasizes the stimulus-response model and holds that all behavior is learned through either classical or operant conditioning, is very *ideological*, in the narrowest sense of that term. Many contemporary scientists hold that behaviorism involves an explanatory monism—that is, an unnecessarily narrow attempt to provide an exhaustive causal account of even the most complex living organism built arbitrarily upon stimulus-response generalizations drawn solely from an isolated part of that being's complexity. In this regard, behaviorism can in fact be unscientific, because the explanatory monism neglects a significant range of data.

Historically behaviorists drew their inspiration from the philosophical paradigm of positivism, which led it to be unnecessarily reductive. Behaviorism's explanatory monism violates both observation and such cherished methodological principles as that of parsimony. Sometimes it is simply more consistent with observation and considerations of parsimony to

explain actions of a living being by means of higher level functions than by behaviorism's simplified stimulus-response paradigm. In biology intelligence and other "higher level" cognitive functions often are far more economical as explanations than are explanations that rely on long chains of stimulus-response relations.

When the minds of other animals are ignored, it becomes easier to treat them as mere machines or inanimate things. The result of such a radical dismissal of the more complex features of other animals' lives is that humans use them as experimental tools or unfeeling resources. Such use, and in particular its problems from the standpoint of both informed, sensitive science and ethically integrated religion, is well symbolized by Tom Regan's film *We Are All Noah* (1986b), which refers to the use of thousands of nonhuman animals as experimental subjects on a boat dubbed "the Atomic Ark" in the U.S. military's 1946 Bikini Island nuclear test in the Pacific.

## The Opening

Of course not every development in science in the first half of the twentieth century reflected a dismissal of other animals from humans' ethical horizon. R.M. Yerkes published *The Great Apes* in 1927, but, when doing his research, he was astonished to find only travelers' accounts (Galdikas 1995). Garner's attempt in the 1890s to study nonhuman great apes in the field was to be the only real attempt before Nissen's attempt in 1930—which lasted all of four months (Goodall, in Wrangham 1994). Thus for Yerkes the available sources of information were travelers' tales

[S]uch as those by T.S. Savage and J. Wyman in the Ivory Coast in 1842. . . . [These] provided almost everything that was known of chimpanzee behavior in the wild (although the African peoples who lived in or near the forests could have told us more) until the flurry of field studies began after the Second World War in the early sixties

(Goodall, in Wrangham, xv).

The first successful study of a wild ape took place in Asia in the 1930s when C.R. Carpenter studied white-handed gibbons in Thailand. His work was important because Carpenter identified such crucial features of gibbon adaptation as territoriality and monogamy. But afterwards all the gibbons were shot, and it was almost thirty years until another study (that of Goodall) was launched (see Galdikas 1995).

From the late 1930s to the late 1940s, a modern version of Darwin's views, sometimes referred to as "the evolutionary synthesis," became the consensus view among established biological scientists. This development "settled numerous old arguments once and for all, and thus opened the way for a discussion of entirely new problems" (Mayr 1982, 569).

A foreshadowing of much broader concerns appeared in 1946 when the International Whaling Commission, an association of more than two hundred members from forty nations, was formed under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. Although committed not to the elimination of the killing of cetaceans but instead to the management of resources, this international effort paved the way for both conservation and abolitionist efforts that developed later in the century, such as the 1986 ban on commercial whaling.

In the 1950s and 1960s, there were significant developments in various life sciences regarding a fuller engagement with other animals on the basis of their realities. Some of these developments came at the prompting of various ethical traditions (though in virtually every case an ethical tradition *outside* religion). Many came from a reassertion of basic scientific values, such as the importance of humble, patient empirical observation. In the early 1960s, careful fieldwork was commenced (Kortlandt in eastern Zaire; Goodall in Gombe, Tanzania; Itani and others in Kabogo, Tanzania; and Nishida in what is now Mahale Mountains National Park, Tanzania). Undoubtedly the most important sci-

entific study for the subsequent tradition of careful observation was that of Jane Goodall on the chimpanzees of Gombe. Begun in 1960 this effort continues today (see van Lawick-Goodall 1971). Through a series of National Geographic television specials, Goodall's work, though initially controversial, stimulated a new generation to pursue careful, observation-based studies of animals of all kinds. Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard, referring to Goodall as "one of the intellectual heroes of this century" (1995, 23), described her study as "one of the Western world's great scientific achievements" (in Miller 1995).

The fundamental change from the first half of the century to the second half also is epitomized by the change in thinking known as the "Cognitive Revolution." In this recent revolution in psychology, information processing has been emphasized and the behaviorists' exclusive focus on conditioning through stimulus-response models has been de-emphasized (see Gardner 1985; Griffin 1992).

Because of this revolution, there is a much richer evaluation of the mechanisms of any animal, human or otherwise, that are involved in modification of behavior during growth and after experience, as well as the relationships among cognition, learning and development, information processing, representation, imitation, and problem solving generally.

This important change has not solved all problems. According to Griffin, there remains a reluctance to attribute subjective states to nonhuman animals: "This antipathy to consideration of consciousness threatens to become a sort of self-inflicted paralysis of inquiry, and obsolete hindrance to scientific investigation" (1992, viii).

Yet the bottom line is that science now has delivered evidence that *some* nonhuman animals' cognitive abilities are far richer than ever imagined in the western scientific establishment and, arguably, in the theological and philosophical establishments as well.

## Religion and Other Animals

In neither 1900 nor 1950 would religious believers in North America, Europe, and other parts of the industrialized, "developed" world have been well described as "concerned" about the earth's nonhuman animals. Some believers were compassionate, no doubt, but institutions and religious rhetoric were, on the whole, insensitive to nonhuman animals' interests. Indeed, the vast majority of religious believers were not only unconcerned but also ignorant and blind insofar as nonhuman animals were concerned.<sup>1</sup>

In the succeeding half-century, however, developments within specific religious traditions have revealed that religious traditions offer many perspectives, ethical values, and other resources for engaging all animals, human and otherwise, far more sensitively than occurred in the first half of the twentieth century. In the world of academic study of religion, the "Caucus on Religion, Animals, and Ethics" first met in 1998 and has been formalized by the American Academy of Religion. In 1999 the Center for Respect of Life and Environment (affiliated with The Humane Society of the United States) sponsored a major conference of international scholars at Harvard University. This conference was part of the follow-up to the groundbreaking series of ten conferences organized by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim that established the now flourishing field of religion and ecology.

These developments, along with the seminal theological work of Linzey (1987, 1994b), Cohn-Sherbok (1997, with Linzey), and Masri (1987, 1989), have led to the emergence of a group of scholars who now pursue the new field of religion and animals systematically for the first time in history.

Thus in the last fifty years the state of animals in religion has, at least in some respects, changed significantly. The radical change from the first half of the twentieth century to the sec-

ond half, described more specifically below, stimulates many to speculate on what additional changes may be seen in both the new century and, indeed, in this new millennium.

## Pre-1950 Religion and Animals

In 1888 the influential Catholic theologian Joseph Rickaby summed up a view that in many different ways has dominated the Christian tradition on the issue of the moral status of non-human animals:

Brutes are as *things* in our regard: so far as they are useful for us, they exist for us, not for themselves; and we do right in using them unsparingly for our need and convenience, though not for our wantonness (1988, 250).

While neither Christianity nor the other Abrahamic traditions (Judaism and Islam) are exhaustively represented by such a bald assertion (as will be shown by what follows), the underlying mentality that nonhuman animals are on the earth for humans' use is representative in two respects of the ways in which most religious believers in these traditions viewed nonhuman animals before the mid-point of the twentieth century.

First and foremost such a claim is grounded in what often is referred to as an instrumentalist view, which holds that other animals can, unlike humans, be used in good conscience for an individual human's own benefit.<sup>2</sup> Second, as Rickaby's quote reflects, there was a limiting factor, namely the injunction not to act "cruelly" or "wantonly." Such a concern reflects, no doubt, the deep concern of some Jews, Muslims, and Christians for the welfare and lives of non-human animals. Interestingly, however, in the Christian tradition some very prominent official objections to acts of wanton cruelty did not argue that the problem was the ensuing harm to nonhuman animals. Rather,

cruel acts were wrong because they might lead weak-minded humans to harm other humans in some way.<sup>3</sup>

Religious traditions hold, of course, that humans are special because of their remarkable moral abilities. But from 1900 to 1950, religion in many places, including most circles in North America and Europe, actively advanced the view that humans, when using their considerable moral abilities, need focus only on members of the human species. Such a view is sometimes referred to as "ethical anthropocentrism," and it frequently is accompanied by an instrumentalist view of other animals as mere things rightfully excluded from the moral circle.

It is important to note, however, that the combination of anthropocentric ethics with instrumentalist views of other animals is not the only view of other animals found within religious traditions. Within Christianity, for example, more compassionate views such, as those espoused by St. Francis of Assisi, long have represented a significant, though often subordinated, sub-tradition regarding the value of other animals. In general, however, even if the list of Christians who have advocated compassion for nonhuman animals is long and distinguished, it is far shorter, and characterized by far fewer major figures, than is the list of those who have advocated an anthropocentric standard. On the longer list is, for example, Pope Pius IX, who led the Catholic tradition from 1846 to 1878. He is reported to have said to the anti-vivisectionist Anna Kingsford, "Madame, humankind has no duties to the animals," and then backed this up by opposing the establishment of a society for the protection of animals in Rome (see Gaffney 1986; Kalechofsky 1991).

Apart from its dominant position in the hierarchy of Christian institutions and in the mainline theology of the tradition, ethical anthropocentrism in one form or another can also be found in other religious traditions

(Waldau 2001a). Yet they, like Christianity, have moderating sub-traditions that allow adherents to be *both* "true believers" and respectful of nonhuman animals' interests. In such sub-traditions, considerable respect has been accorded to both other animals' place in the moral circle and their status as living beings with whom we share the earth.

## Mid-Century Winds of Change

From the midpoint of the twentieth century onward, certain developments have pushed many religious traditions to become more sensitive to nonhuman animals as candidates for moral concern. These developments include increasing interfaith dialogue; greater historical awareness of the traditions' own pro-animal sub-traditions and the irrational prejudices against nonhumans within and across traditions; increasing interest in the relationship of human ethical abilities to environmental issues; and, above all, better information about nonhuman animals.

Such developments have enhanced the ability of religious believers to "see" other animals better. This, of course, is relevant to how those believers' ethical abilities might be engaged, for, as the English philosopher Stephen Clark has said, "One's ethical, as well as one's ontological framework is determined by what entities one is prepared to notice or take seriously..." (1977, 7).

An essay written by C.S. Lewis (1963) at mid-century can be used to highlight dormant possibilities within religious institutions, especially because it reveals that even those traditions thought not to be "animal friendly" have resources for a full engagement with nonhuman lives. This is so because each of the traditions is, in fact, an extraordinarily rich cumulative tradition within which many past believers have rec-

ognized the relevance of human ethical abilities to nonhuman lives. Apparent in the re-emergence of these oft-subordinated possibilities are the beginnings of an important series of changes that continue to this day in the established religious traditions in North America.

Lewis's essay first appeared in 1947 in the journal of the New England Anti-Vivisection Society. Later it appeared in other publications.<sup>4</sup> This seminal article appeals to core beliefs of Christians about the special qualities of humans' moral abilities. Thus even though the arguments are stated in terms of the dualism "humans and animals" that Lewis was trained to use by his own religious and cultural traditions, the article reveals that the Christian tradition has much to offer those who care enough to engage the realities of other animals' actual lives.

Lewis lures the reader into engaging the issue openly by observing that it is "the rarest thing" in the world to hear "a rational discussion of vivisection." He then argues that a rational discussion must begin with whether pain is an evil. If pain is not an evil, Lewis suggests, then the cases both for and against vivisection fail. He reasons that if pain is not an evil, its infliction on nonhuman animals need not be opposed, but, *also*, if pain is not an evil, there is no reason to look for ways to ameliorate it in humans. The discussion, then, must begin with recognition that pain is an evil.

Focusing on the standard Christian position "in the Latin countries. . . that we are entitled to do anything we please to animals because they 'have no souls'" (1963, 154), Lewis notes that if this is the case then infliction of pain on them is "harder to justify," [f]or it means that animals cannot deserve pain, nor profit morally by the discipline of pain, nor be recompensed by happiness in another life for suffering in this. Thus all the factors which render pain more tolerable or make it less totally evil in the case

of human beings will be lacking in the beasts. "Soulessness," in so far as it is relevant to the question at all, is an argument against vivisection.<sup>5</sup>

Lewis then appeals to a fundamental claim at the very heart of the Christian and many other religious positions, namely, the belief that humans alone among the earth's creatures are moral beings. He uses this important claim to challenge facile Christian acceptance of instrumental uses of nonhuman animals:

[W]e may feel that though objective superiority is rightly claimed for man, yet that very superiority ought partly to *consist in* not behaving like a vivisector—that we ought to prove ourselves better than the beasts precisely by the fact of acknowledging duties to them which they do not acknowledge to us. (1963, 154)<sup>6</sup>

Relying relentlessly on common sense, logic, and frank appraisals of the general nature of instrumental uses of other living beings, Lewis adds many other creative arguments. He suggests that it was *non-Christian* values that promoted the argument to allow vivisection, and he reminds us that, at least in England, Christian society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had many resources for seeing the anti-vivisectionist as a religious person.<sup>7</sup> Lewis's principled and, most relevantly, *fully Christian* engagement with a facile acceptance of contemporary instrumental uses of living beings pushes him to repudiate completely any casual acceptance of instrumental uses of other animals:

The victory of vivisection marks a great advance in the triumph of ruthless, non-moral utilitarianism over the old world of ethical law, a triumph in which we, as well as animals, are already the victims, and of which Dachau and Hiroshima are the more recent achievements. (1963, 155)

## Traditional and Compassionate Views

Lewis's essay exemplifies both typical and unusual features of the religion and animals landscape at mid-century. His arguments are typical in that, despite his obvious compassion for pain in other animals, he reflects what amounts to a dismissal of other animals' complex lives as relevant to their moral standing. In the passages quoted above, he implies very negative images of nonhuman animals. In particular, his argument assumes that because humans understand that some nonhuman animals act in ways that humans see as cruel, *all* nonhuman animals are cruel. This involves not only the obvious fallacy of overgeneralization, but also the standard caricature of nonhuman animals that has dominated western cultures since the classical Greeks.

Thus because Lewis knew virtually nothing of the behaviors of the more complex nonhuman animals and existed at a time when his culture sanctioned such ignorance, in an important sense his arguments merely perpetuate the following culturally significant stereotypes: (1) of the earth's denizens, only humans are complicated beings; (2) nonhuman animals live without any kind of moral or social regard for each other; (3) for all intents and purposes, all other animals lack intelligence in any significant sense.

When seeking to understand either the history or the future possibilities of religion on the issue of nonhuman animals, it is crucial to recognize that not all religions have dismissed nonhuman animals in this way. Indeed, at certain times and places some religious believers have had significant, empirically based knowledge of other animals. Accordingly they could be called upon to point out the caricatures and ignorance that underlie the generalities used by Lewis. The fallacy

is, of course, that the absence of evidence has been taken as evidence of absence. The prevailing ignorance is not dispelled because no one is looking for complexities, and hence none is found.

Lewis's own religious tradition, along with the other traditions that have had a significant influence in the industrialized world, has lost much of the experienced-based knowledge of the natural world and its nonhuman animals that is found, among other places, in certain religio-cultural traditions now classified among the "indigenous" traditions. Similarly, the Christian culture into which Lewis was born was not characterized by any ethically developed sense of humans' continuity with other animals, although examples of this can be found throughout the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions.<sup>8</sup> In fact the negative views and radical dismissal of other animals' lives that underlie Lewis's failure to engage any specifics of the nature and abilities of nonhuman animals relative to humans are characteristic of many of the most influential institutions and voices within those religious traditions that have the most influence in the industrialized world. In effect these institutions and loud voices, as it were, have drowned out the voices of the more compassionate sub-traditions from within their *own* circle that have been willing to promote the moral significance of nonhuman animals.

Nonetheless Lewis's essay has some features that begin to bring to light the additional Christian possibilities for seeing nonhuman animals. In this respect Lewis foreshadows some of the developments seen in other traditions' believers, engaging insights sometimes buried deep within the religion and animals landscape at mid-century. For example, it is worth noting that Lewis is arguing *as a Christian* and that he reaches his conclusions even though he adheres to, and in some ways promotes, aspects of Christianity's traditional, ignorance-based appraisal of other animals. Thus, in spite of his traditional views, his profound religious beliefs

connect him to life generally, and he thus finds a way to assert that other animals *should* matter to Christians as moral agents. It is as a *Christian* that Lewis speaks of the value of other animals' lives, and his concern clearly is to reach Christian colleagues as Christian, as well as the Christian establishment that had been quiet about humans' instrumental uses of other animals. This is precisely why Lewis emphasizes the cherished senses of (1) human uniqueness and (2) human moral abilities that lie at the center of Christianity and all other religious traditions. Through a focus on our important ability to care about others, be they human or not, Lewis questions the facile, absolute dismissal of all nonhuman animals that dominated his own religious traditions during his lifetime (he died in 1963). In making this challenge, Lewis reflects the internal resources established religion has available for the task of reexamining modern industrialized societies' radical marginalization of other animals.

In reflecting both the traditional and more compassionate sides of contemporary religious traditions, Lewis reflects well the dilemma regarding nonhuman animals faced by religion in the twentieth century. His essay, particularly as it highlights the very *un-Christian* (in Lewis's view) features of the modern practice of vivisection, sets the stage well for understanding the complex trajectory of developments within religious traditions since 1950 on the issue of "animals." During the last half of the twentieth century, informed religious believers had to come to terms with the consequences of the modern world's increasingly radical, virtually absolute dismissal of all nonhuman animals as valued individuals deserving protection as *individuals*. It is noteworthy, for example, that Lewis does not argue the Christian's duty is to *species*, and he never alludes to the issue of loss of species. His concern is with individuals who are harmed by a specific practice, not the qualitatively different concern for biodiversity. It is

this standard of sensitivity to other living things as individuals that Lewis names in this essay as the proper *Christian* standard. Even if such sensitivity is not altogether new, but rather a reaffirmation of a sub-tradition that has existed in Christian and other religious traditions all along, it provides a challenge to contemporary mainline Christianity. This is a formidable and identity-threatening challenge, for the mainline Christian tradition, not unlike mainline interpretations of other religious traditions, has in its ancient, medieval, and contemporary theology promoted anthropocentric, exclusivist views and practices among its believers and churches.

## Competing Tensions

The tension in Lewis's article between elements of the traditional view that humans are superior to all other animals, on the one hand, and those morality-based implications so creatively argued by Lewis, on the other hand, can be used to frame not only the issues that faced religion at mid-century on the issue of the status and importance of nonhuman animals, but also the issues facing today's religious communities, churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship or meditation.

First, tension is occasioned by the very questions Lewis and other believers ask concerning modern practices in an environment where religious communities and believers promote a status quo dominated by anthropocentrism in ethics as well as in politics, economics, law, and even academia. Lewis's modeling of possibilities of extending concern and compassion can easily be based on passages in the Qur'an, the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New and Old Testaments (in their original and translated forms), the Vedas from Hinduism, any of the Buddhist canons, or the astonishingly rich stories of indigenous religious traditions that support the extension of deep concern to nonhuman animals. These stories have remained a part of

even the main line, anthropocentric interpretations of those religious traditions that predominate in the industrial world. Thus even if the dominant stories in Christianity and other religions take an instrumentalist approach to “humans and animals” and confine their believers’ focus to humans alone, believers still can find elements of compassion that can be extended to nonhuman animals. If they do so, they are likely to find tension between that choice and the standard assumptions made in their own community or place of worship.

Second, merely naming the possibility of a more compassionate view as the truest Christian (or Jewish, Muslim, etc.) position creates tension. Lewis was extraordinarily popular in his native England, and he remains an icon in many conservative Christian circles in the United States. Yet despite the fact that Lewis is widely held by conservative Christians to be a person of vision, his conclusions in *this* essay remain unrealized. What’s more, they are rarely, if ever, cited. The latter fact suggests that, although certain concerns for nonhuman animals that are grounded in the Christian tradition’s most basic values have been and continue to be brought to the forefront by some major voices heard in contemporary circles, they have had but a limited effect. There are, without question, very strong competing values in the Christian tradition that negate concern for nonhuman animals. Still, Lewis’s gambit remains a constant challenge on explicitly Christian grounds to the practice of vivisection. His arguments can be seen as a foreshadowing of the contemporary debates both within and without religious circles on the issue of nonhuman animals’ moral significance.

Third, even greater tension now is evident on the issues Lewis addressed, for when he published this essay instrumental uses of nonhuman animals were just beginning to increase. The extraordinarily harsh features of intensive, or factory, farming; widespread use of nonhuman animals in experiments; and, of course,

genetic engineering of animals to model human diseases were basically unknown to Lewis. These uses, some of which are described elsewhere in this volume, now dominate humans’ relations with other animals.

Yet even if the Christian and other Abrahamic traditions have not yet given Lewis’s reasoning any real standing in the debate over the propriety of the widespread contemporary practices that so obviously inflict pain and suffering on nonhuman living beings, Lewis’s and other similar arguments continue to mark the possibilities of religious believers being open to the significance of other animals’ lives. Since Lewis wrote this essay as a Christian argument for other Christians, his work continues to suggest that Christianity and other religions can use their own internal resources to provide insights into the importance of the lives of other animals.

## The Image of God and Dominion

Ethical anthropocentrism characteristically is driven by the notion that humans are different from “animals.” That humans are different in significant respects is, of course, both important and true, though this point often is overstated in the extreme. As Radner and Radner note:

Obviously there are differences between humans and other species. Every species is different from every other species: this much is plain biology. The ideology lies not in the search for differences, but in the unwavering belief that humanity is defined by attributes that have absolutely no precedent in the rest of the biological world. (1989, 8)

In many contemporary forms of religious traditions, in particular the Abrahamic traditions, as well as in many secular traditions, the separation of humans from other animals is one of the forces that prevent humans

from achieving a better understanding of their place in the ecological webs that link all lives. White, in a piece that has become one of the most notorious of modern essays, argued that the Christian doctrine of creation, particularly as it was elaborated in medieval times, forms “the historical roots of our ecological crisis,” and that “orthodox Christian arrogance toward nature” thus “bears a huge burden of guilt” for present problems. White’s thesis was based on the premise that our increasing ability to control and harness natural forces is flawed by the assumption that “we are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim” (1967, 1206). This led White to comment:

Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen. . . . Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions. . . not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends. (1205)

White’s analysis can be seen, upon even superficial consideration, to be in important respects a rhetorical and unfair overstatement, for a wide variety of factors other than religious ones, such as economic, social, political, and historical, underlie contemporary environmental practices (see also Merchant [1980] for the change from an organically oriented mentality to a mechanically oriented mentality between 1500 and 1700).

White’s thesis has been very valuable, however, in raising awareness of how profoundly religious values have influenced the ways believers approach living beings. Jeremy Cohen (1989), among others, has argued persuasively that White’s claims are wrong in some important specifics, since the dominion charge of Genesis 1:28 (relied on heavily by White) was not taken by ancient and medieval readers as any sort of license “selfishly to exploit the environment or to undermine its pristine integrity” (309). Cohen notes, however, that the

language of Genesis 1:28 (which reads, in the Revised Standard Version, “Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish in the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every other living thing that moves on the earth”) was consistently taken as a divine call to rule over other animals. This analysis provides an interesting example of the how “environmental” issues and “animal” issues are by no means identical and do not overlap perfectly, even though they are obviously related. Conflating them under the rubric “environmental concerns” can, interestingly, make many nonhuman animals disappear from the moral landscape altogether. This happens, for example, when the exclusive focus is on species conservation and not on treatment of individuals from species that are not threatened. The upshot is that many morally relevant issues regarding nonhuman animals sometimes disappear in environmental discourse even if those who employ language that is eminently “environmental” have the best of intentions and are obviously in earnest about the relevance of the lives of nonhuman animals to us as moral agents.

## The Realities of Change

Of great relevance to understanding the possibilities of change in religious views of nonhuman animals is the fact that religion at the start of the twenty-first century is, as it were, a different animal from what it was in the middle of the twentieth century. Negative factors pushed such a change, including astonishing ethnic, political, religious, and economic oppression, widespread ecological damage, and a proliferation of refugee crises brought on by countless wars. Positive factors pushing this change included increased communication, changing demographics, and interfaith dialogue.

The result of these and other factors prompting change has been that religious traditions and their believ-

ers often exhibit far more mutual understanding now and better awareness of each other. In general the leadership of religious institutions has become much more willing to tolerate, talk to, and even respect, believers of other religious traditions, though, of course, many well-known problems involving religious toleration remain unsolved.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless pluralism has become an accepted phenomenon, grounded institutionally, politically, and philosophically by the open-minded work of the World Council of Churches and such pioneers as John Hick, Masao Abe, Ninian Smart, Sallie McFague, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Karl Rahner, John Cobb, Huston Smith, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Their work has been advanced by other philosophers, comparativists, theologians, and religious leaders, including Diana Eck, Arvind Sharma, Sulak Sivaraksa, Keith Ward, Jonathan Smith, Karen Armstrong, David Tracy, Langdon Gilkey, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, and Jay McDaniel. Such believers reflect well the openness that religious belief can stimulate when it notices and takes other perspectives seriously.

## The Prevailing Context and Reality

The changes discussed here in the vast and diverse realm of religion took place in the late twentieth century, and continue in the new century, at the same time as an extraordinary ferment concerning perspectives on the diverse group of living beings referred to as “animals.” One influential philosopher describes the changing values regarding nonhuman animals, especially as these values are enshrined in federal protections of laboratory animals, as a changing social ethic (Rollin 1999).

These important changes have been manifested in countless ways outside of religious traditions. In media and literature, discussions regarding the

status of nonhuman animals now abound, as they do in the ever-proliferating forest of biological sciences. Awareness of nonhuman animals in recent decades has not, however, been led by religious traditions. It has been led more by two forces: (1) primarily secular forces in industrialized countries, and (2) various life sciences such as primatology and marine mammalogy under the guidance of such recognized authorities as Goodall (chimpanzees), Roger and Katy Payne (whales), and Cynthia Moss, Joyce Poole, and Katy Payne (elephants). In philosophical circles a broad discussion has been taking place concerning ethical issues as a secular matter; this has been especially prominent since the 1975 publication of *Animal Liberation*, by Peter Singer.

The emergence of widespread interest in protecting nonhuman animals in some manner or another has led to a complex social movement, often misleadingly labeled “animal rights.”<sup>10</sup> This broad movement is a particularly forceful manifestation of many humans’ concern to include at least some animals as “others” whom their ethical values address. Environmental interests, though often exceedingly anthropocentric, also were part and parcel of the industrialized world’s expansion of the moral circle in the late twentieth century and surely will continue to be relevant to the protection of nonhuman animals. Of particular significance is the development and popularization of science-based information regarding nonhuman animals. This has occurred in such fields as ethology, conservation biology, animal behavior, and cognitive science.

These developments are powerful supports for the burgeoning social concern for nonhuman animals. Of perhaps even greater importance, however, is the dramatic change in attitudes and values, described elsewhere in this volume, regarding companion animals. This phenomenon alone is pushing remarkable changes in awareness (see Rowan 1988; Manning and Serpell 1994), as evidenced in the changing landscape of veteri-

nary medicine and values (see Rollin 1999; Tannenbaum 1995).

The changes in values and attitudes toward nonhuman animals have been so rapid and dramatic that even some of the most conservative realms of industrialized societies, including major religious institutions, now reflect such changes, though often in only small ways. In the United States, lawyers have been instrumental in pushing the legal system to consider whether moral standing for nonhuman animals should be enshrined by way of legal rights in legislative and litigation arenas.<sup>11</sup> Law is, of course, an area of society whose discourse is often “privileged,” that is, legal discussions and terminology often are given a special level of respect by society at large and by media. Thus law has a profound effect on many other areas. Other privileged areas are politics, economics, academics, and, importantly, religious discussions. Debates, media, and other ongoing conversations in any one of these realms can affect many outside that realm. Ferment in these areas can, thus, be of extraordinary significance in fostering cultural changes.

## **Animals at the End of the Twentieth Century**

The second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have manifested an extraordinary increase in humans’—and thus religious believers’—interest in animals. This has been promoted by better observations, a phenomenon helped along by the fact that assessments of other animals no longer are dominated by (1) the ideology of narrow, dismissive views that, in large part, originated in religious traditions; (2) the equally narrow-minded ideology of early twentieth-century science (in the form of behaviorism and its dismissive, Cartesian premises); or (3) the longstanding tradition of anthro-

pocentric ethics that dominated Western daily and intellectual life, and which had roots in both the Abrahamic traditions and classical Greek presuppositions about the special nature of human minds.

A consensus is emerging in which many humans now understand that humans cannot continue to destroy the ecological niches they occupy; that the earth itself needs to be the beneficiary of human ethical sensitivities; and that at least some nonhuman living beings are complex beings worthy of ethical consideration in their own right. This consensus is the foundation for a change in perspective on nonhuman animals that is pushing religious traditions to revamp their conceptuality and discourse.

To be sure the changes in attitudes toward nonhuman animals that have taken place since 1950 have not all been positive. In some senses nonhuman animals are treated worse than ever before. This certainly is true in terms of numbers killed for human use and in terms of the environmental destruction that affects so much nonhuman life. Hence there remains tension of many kinds—over wildlife in backyards, the use of nonhuman animals for experiments, the destruction of so many unwanted companion animals by shelters, genetic engineering of nonhuman animals, captivity of animals in zoos, and experimentation. These tensions were, at the end of the twentieth century, being addressed by more than 10,000 organizations in more than 130 countries (de Kok 1999).<sup>12</sup>

## **The Complex Terrain at Century’s Dawn**

The ferment in the fields studying religion and in those engaging nonhuman animals will, no doubt, produce extraordinary challenges—and opportunities—for the emerging study of religion and animals. As conservative as many parts of the worlds

of religion and religious studies remain, these domains in some respects are advanced relative to the discussions now going on in the legal, political, and business worlds. The academic world reflects openness to the study of religions but remains quite conservative on the issue of moral value beyond humanity. Discussions in academic circles remain uneven and as yet without much impact on politics and business practices. But in some realms—including the academic study of religion and of law—concerns for other animals now surface in interesting ways. The 1999 conference “Religion and Animals” and the emergence of “animal law” classes at leading law schools are but two examples of the ways in which the world of education reflects an increased profile for the interests of nonhuman animals.

The upshot of such profound, complex, and widespread change is that many people perceive other animals differently now from how they did in 1950. This is particularly true not only of companion animals, who have become significantly more important in private lives, but also of wild animals and experimental animals. Noticeably absent, though, are food animals, who in the vast majority of cases remain without effective legal protections of even a minimal sort.

Such changes create additional pressure on religious traditions, for they remain the primary source of ethics and world view for the majority of the human race. As might be expected, in such a context of change noteworthy concern has emerged in religious communities. They, like so many other communities in contemporary society, reflect the profound changes at many different levels and in many different ways. This is apparent in the daily activities of believers as well as at the most learned levels, such as contemporary theological thinking on the environment (see, for example, the website of the Forum on Religion and Ecology).

In assessing how religious traditions have responded, it is good to recall that concern for nonhuman

animals is a venerable tradition that reaches well back into all religious traditions (see Regan 1986; Masri 1987, 1989; Salisbury 1994; Linzey and Cohn-Sherbok 1997; Grant 1999; and Waldau 2001b). Some of the best-known concerns are those manifested in the religions that originated in India, such as the Hindu traditions, the Jain religion, and various forms of Buddhism. In addition many indigenous traditions, including those of the original inhabitants of North America, often are cited for their animal-friendly concerns. Such concerns also abound in the ancient strata of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and often are cited when the importance of other animals is discussed.

Despite the availability of these profound resources, the situation is, in many respects, one of continuing myopia. There is a certain irony in this, since White argued that even though

[w]e shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence but to serve man. . . [b]oth our present science and our present technology are so tinctured with orthodox Christian arrogance towards nature that no solutions for our ecologic crisis can be expected from them alone. . . . [S]ince the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. (1967, 1207)

White's main hope was a refocused Christianity rather than a wholesale repudiation of it; he suggested a return to the alternative Christian views of humans' relation to the earth, especially as such alternatives are exemplified by St. Francis's respect for the living world.

Yet a contemporary example suggests how shallow and incomplete the changes within religious communities have been on essential issues. In 1993 the Parliament of the World's Religions held a meeting in Chicago, the end product of which was a short declaration (Küng and Kuschel

1993). The meeting took place a century after the original Parliament of World Religions, which did so much to promote interfaith dialogue throughout the twentieth century. A careful reading of the document signed at the 1993 meeting reveals that it perpetuates the traditional, harmful prejudice in favor of all humans to the exclusion of all other animals (Waldau 1995). This continuing shortsightedness causes a failure to see those other animals as the diverse and sometimes complex creatures they are.

To be sure, the 1993 document has some inclusive features. Addressing the important needs of all humans and giving prominence to environmental concerns, the introductory paragraphs are dominated by themes of inclusion, consideration, protection, and involvement. Within its opening sentences, the declaration acknowledges that global problems affect all life on earth. The introduction goes on to mention "life" several more times, the "ecosystems," "community of living beings," "animals," "plants," "preservation of Earth, the air, water and soil," and "nature-friendly ways of life" (Küng and Kuschel 1993, 13–16).

Despite this auspicious beginning, these seemingly inclusive references are bracketed by at least eleven explicit references to human interests alone. There is an irony in this, given that many nonhuman individuals possess considerable complexity and, in important ways, share identical, similar, or comparable interests as a matter of biology and/or personality (see, for example, Parker and Gibson 1990; Cavaliere and Singer 1994). But by and large, at the end of the twentieth century, religions had failed to engage such specifics. The declaration's preoccupation with the interests of the human species to the effective exclusion of the interests of all other species is an imbalance that threatens to perpetuate the traditional view that, of all the species on earth, the only one of real significance, because its individuals are distinctive and of value in their own

right, is the human species. The declaration does not really engage the deeply meaningful proposition that there can be value and integrity in nonhumans completely independent of exclusively human interests.

Major figures in contemporary theology manifest this anthropocentrism. J. Moltmann, whose Gifford Lectures in 1984–1985 were published under the inspiring title *God In Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (1985), spends a great deal of time on arguments about human arrogance, which he calls "anthropocentrism," and this naturally leads the reader to expect that his broadly titled text will engage the possibility of seeing other animals. Yet tellingly, nonhuman animals are ignored in the book, as there is no mention of any nonhuman animals that carries any significance. Similarly the highly respected theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg published *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith* (1993). This text is more of the same, as it in no way engages the extraordinarily rich perspectives developed in such biological sciences as primatology and marine mammal studies (Waldau 2001b).

Catholic documents from the end of the twentieth century continue to reflect the fact that anthropocentrism in ethics has important and still powerful strongholds in established religion. The 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* is not nearly as broad as its beautiful title (translated as "the gospel of life") suggests, for its language and arguments continue to promote an unabashed ethical anthropocentrism—the only "life" it focuses on is human life. None of the twenty references to nonhuman living beings gives any hint of, let alone makes serious reference to, the value of the lives of any living beings outside the human species. What makes for a certain irony in this approach is the extremely heavy concentration in the document on humans before they are born. As noted by the feminist whose work most fully engages the moral significance of nonhuman animals,

The speciesism of *Homo sapiens* is perhaps nowhere more pronounced than in the protestation about the fate of the human conceptus and zygote, while the sentience of the other animals is declared morally irrelevant because they are not human beings. (Adams 1994, 60)

Noting this irony is not meant to suggest that “the fate of the human conceptus and zygote” should be unimportant, subordinate, or in any way treated as irrelevant. The lives of future humans are, by almost total consensus in contemporary societies, extremely important to all humans even if the right of a future human to be born conflicts dramatically with the obviously important issue of an individual woman’s need to make her own moral decision about what is happening within her own body. But the absence of any meaningful reference to nonhuman animals in a major doctrinal statement that by its own title purports to deal with the importance of “life” suggests that nonhuman animals are not yet an important concern for the hierarchy of this large and influential religious tradition within Christianity.

Such lack of references to the realities and importance of nonhuman animals is ironic, given that some animals have the very traits that we value in ourselves as the basis of our own moral significance—such as family connections and loyalty, intelligence, communication, emotions, social structure, and even cultural transmission. The daily realities of nonhuman animals are addressed in ethology and related sciences; of particular interest in recent years has been the development of “cognitive ethology,” which is providing much more information about the mental, emotional, and social dimension of nonhuman lives (see, for example, Allen and Bekoff 1997.) That the Catholic Church is likely to continue to ignore such realities and espouse what above has been called an instrumentalist view is confirmed by the following pronouncement in the 1994 revised Catholic Catechism: “Animals [mean-

ing, of course, ‘all nonhuman animals’], like plants and inanimate things, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity” (para. 2415).

As C.S. Lewis might have argued in 1950, approaches to *creation* (to use Moltmann’s 1985 term), *nature* (Pannenberg’s 1993 term), and *life* (the term so central in the 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*) that continue to ignore nonhuman animals completely are in some ways contrary to a core message and value found in religious traditions. Acting on this intuition or value is a central feature of a moral and/or religious life generally. And even if a specific religious tradition makes claims about human superiority, that message does not excuse, as Andrew Linzey (1987, 1994b) has so well shown, complete failure to take any nonhuman animals’ lives into account.

Indeed it is virtually impossible to argue that any religious tradition’s core message is that other life is unimportant, although this is admittedly a subtext or “meta-message” of the rhetoric of many well-respected religious leaders. Religious believers may be heirs to the claim that humans are theologically more significant than any other animals, but that claim has *nothing* to do with the logically distinguishable claim that the religion authorizes humans to ignore the realities of other animals.

The great value of Lewis’s essay is its suggestion that it is part of the Christian view of humans’ theologically superiority that religious believers be responsible for, and learn about, the consequences for nonhuman animals of humans’ current manner of living. This same kind of reasoning, so reliant on the internal resources of each religious tradition, is available to any religious believer when the issue is the suffering, death, and other material effects—including environmental consequences—that a believer’s consumer choices and political decisions have on nonhuman individuals.

## Prospects in the Twenty-first Century

One could fairly conclude, then, that religions can rise above the obviously anthropocentric concerns that have dominated so many religious traditions in the twentieth century. The manifest lack of church, synagogue, mosque, and other religious community involvement in challenging the most egregious abuses of nonhuman animals remains a principal feature of the contemporary religious scene. That this is true in North America is suggested by respected sociologists when they comment, “The animal rights movement [is] a new social movement noted for its participants’ lack of ties to traditional Judeo-Christian religion” (Peek, Konty, and Frazier 1997, 429). Changing this reality is, no doubt, the principal challenge facing religion in North America, dominated as it is by what is sometimes referred to as the Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>13</sup> Traditions do not necessarily need to reach outside themselves to solve the current dilemma for, as Lewis’s essay suggests, religious traditions can have “core” or fundamental values that are both relevant and buried and which, once “unearthed,” as it were, can be brought to bear on the prevailing indifference toward nonhuman animals. There is evidence of this kind of movement, but it remains marginalized. Linzey and Cohn-Sherbok have written often and eloquently of the values manifest in both theological and historical parts of their traditions (respectively, Christian and Jewish) (see, for example, Linzey and Cohn-Sherbok 1997). Similar analyses exist for Islam (for example, Masri 1987, 1989), and of course for Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and many indigenous traditions in Africa, Asia, South America, North America, Australia, and various island cultures (see Suzuki and Knudtson 1992; Grim 2001). Indeed plumbing the conservative views of the Catholic hierarchy reveals that

there is some movement within that tradition. For the first time ever, the Catholic Catechism issued in 1994 included an official statement from the Catholic Church that believers have more than indirect obligation to nonhuman animals.<sup>14</sup> A required “religious respect for the integrity of creation” is explained in paragraph 2416, which states:

*Animals* are God’s creatures. He surrounds them with this providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus men owe them kindness. We recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip of Neri treated animals.

Before celebrating this important movement, it is important to acknowledge that, while this first-ever Catholic Church admission indicates that humans owe duties directly to some nonhuman animals (thus implying that the lives of these nonhuman animals have a moral dimension), the concession is *extremely* limited. Paragraph 2415, in addition to the passage already quoted, includes various factors that override Paragraph 2416’s historically new concern for direct duties to nonhuman animals. These factors include our duties to “neighbors” and “future generations,” both of which, predictably, refer to humans alone even though the terms “neighbors” and “future generations” on their face apply to nonhuman animals. In other words, the primary concern of the revised Catholic Catechism is the traditional, exclusive focus on members of the *human* species alone.

It is fair to ask whether this really is much movement, and what will happen in the future given the new abilities of humans to use nonhuman animals under the power of such technologies as genetic engineering. On the whole such complex specific problems, including widespread and uncontrolled experimentation on nonhuman animals for humans’ benefit or profit, and the cruel conditions of intensive rearing conditions (see Regan 1986a), remain unaddressed

by the vast majority of the religious establishment and its leaders. This means that the “on the ground realities” in ordinary churches remain anthropocentric in the extreme.

One hope, of course, is the burgeoning concern in religious traditions for the “environment.”<sup>15</sup> This reflects the increasingly inclusive nature of ethics today, as well as the implicit theological dimensions of any ethical discussion. Holistic, environmental themes increasingly are found in works by religious believers as *religious believers*, examples of which include Christian thinkers such as Thomas Berry, Dieter Hessel, and Jay McDaniel; Muslim thinkers such as Mawil Y. Izzi Deen and B. A. Masri; Buddhists such as Sulak Sivaraksa and the Dalai Lama; and numerous representatives from Judaism, Hinduism, and a wide range of indigenous traditions.

The state of current literature, however, is a signpost of how little has been done regarding other animals, even though other animals often are mentioned in studies of symbolism. These studies form, however, classic examples of what Adams (1994) calls the “absent referent”—in other words, the animals themselves are nowhere to be found. At the dawn of the new millennium, there still was no systematic work on the topic of religion and animals, although the papers from the “Religion and Animals” conference were close to publication.

## A Continuing Role for Traditions

Any member of any of the major world religions, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, as well as adherents of indigenous and other religious traditions, can fully embrace nonhuman animals and remain completely faithful to their own tradition. As with ecological insights, compassionate concerns for other animals are well grounded in the ethical

insights of virtually all religious traditions. Thus humane reforms, as is the case with ecological reform, can find homes in the cosmologies, stories, and communities of contemporary religions.

But will religious traditions continue to promote anthropocentric ethics alone, or will they enlarge their moral circles? One important factor in the future trajectory of religious concerns for nonhuman animals will be the continuing revolution in values in developed world societies, for as the philosopher Bernard Rollin suggests (1999, 3), “Most now realize . . . that society is in the process of changing its view of animals, and of our obligation to animals.”

Religious traditions can advance or retard such changes, or they can take a unique leadership role in this process because of their profound commitment to the ethical abilities of humans.

Today the fundamental questions for religions, as for all humans, are these: Who are the “others?” Will the “others” protected by human, religious, and ethical sensibilities be only humans? Will religions cross the species line in the twenty-first century? The verdict remains out on just what kind of force religious traditions will become in this important area of human existence.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Religions were also, to be sure, blind to many *humans*, as evidenced by both widespread religious intolerance and the all too cozy relationship between established religious institutions and oppressive regimes, imperialist foreign powers, and capitalist corporations. The major theological movement known as “liberation theology” describes the latter; see, for example, Brown (1993).

<sup>2</sup>Because this attitude focuses on the usefulness of nonhuman animals for human purposes, such views sometimes are described as “utilitarian” (for example, by C.S. Lewis in a passage quoted below). If such a description is used, however, one must be careful not to confuse this attitude with the very distinctive, animal-friendly theory of ethics called “utilitarianism” historically associated with the eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham and the nineteenth-century philosopher John Stuart Mill and exemplified today by the works of Peter Singer. See, for example, Singer (1990).

<sup>3</sup>This is the traditional Catholic position. See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a, 2ae, q. 64. art. 1, ad. 3; *Summa Contra*

Gentiles Bk. 3, Pt. 2, ch. 112, art. 13.

<sup>4</sup>The original title was simply "Vivisection." Clyde Kilby reports (1995) that the article was published in 1948 in London for the National Anti-Vivisection Society. As late as 1963 it appeared in *The Anti-Vivisectionist* (March/April, 154–5), where it has the longer title "Can Christians Support Vivisection?" The page numbers given here are from the 1963 version.

<sup>5</sup>As a technical matter, this is the position of only some Christians. The leading theologian of Catholicism, Thomas Aquinas, followed Aristotle in holding that all living beings have a soul. The practical consequences of this are not significant, however, in that Catholic theology, as noted below, has always asserted humans' complete superiority to nonhuman animals.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis also makes another argument as to why the standard Christian position is troubling: "We may find it difficult to formulate a human right of tormenting beasts in terms which would not equally imply an angelic right of tormenting men" (154).

<sup>7</sup>It is interesting to contrast this with today's general view that the animal rights movement is a secular phenomenon. See, in particular, the comment at the end of this chapter made by sociologists Peek, Konty, and Frazier (1997) regarding the non-involvement of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

<sup>8</sup>It would be misleading to infer from this comment that these other traditions have been without problems in the many ways in which they have seen and otherwise engaged nonhuman animals. On the limitations in the views and values regarding other animals in various other traditions, see Waldau (2000 a,b,c; 2001a).

<sup>9</sup>The term *interfaith dialogue* frequently is used to describe the many conversations now taking place. The journal *World Faiths Encounter*, in which Waldau (1995) was published, is a good example of the breadth and depth of this phenomenon.

<sup>10</sup>The term is misleading because not all proponents seek either moral or legal rights. For the history of the animal protection movement in the twentieth century, see Jasper and Nelkin (1992) and Finsen and Finsen (1994).

<sup>11</sup>There now are many courses on "animal law," the most publicized of which is the Harvard Law School class that began in 2000. The trend toward inclusion of this topic continues, with Yale Law School most recently offering an animal law study group in spring 2003. The best-known legislation is the Animal Welfare Act, first enacted in 1966 and regularly amended thereafter.

<sup>12</sup>In the United States alone, more than 10,000 animals per day are killed for want of a home. Details are available at the website of The Humane Society of the United States, [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

<sup>13</sup>Some scholars, such as Kimberley Patton of Harvard Divinity School, observe that this is a very misleading phrase, for it fails to signal that the Jewish and Christian traditions are much less alike than, say, the Islamic and Jewish traditions.

<sup>14</sup>Andrew Linzey (1994a) has noted that these 1994 statements of the Catholic Church go beyond the pre-1994 official position of the Catholic Church, which Linzey has described as "we [humans] do not have direct duties" (1987). Linzey also refers to some limitations on humans' "stewardship" in the 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.

<sup>15</sup>A Harvard series on "religion and ecology" (the individual titles can be found at <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion>, the website of the Forum on Religion and Ecology) includes many decidedly positive estimates of how local religious communities already are undertaking environmentally sensitive programs that affect many nonhuman animals in favorable ways.

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