

CHRISTIANITY AND ANIMALS

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David James Petroc Willey: CHRISTIANITY AND ANIMALS

An exploration of the place of animals in Christian doctrine and belief, and of some of the ethical issues concerning the relationship between humans and animals which follow from this. A thematic approach is taken rather than a historical one, looking at the doctrines of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Christian Community and Incarnation. There is also a chapter on the idea of the world as a vale of soul-making, one on the model of the earth as a gift from God to humans, and an analysis of how the "Just war" tradition could be applied to the human treatment of animals. The first chapter is concerned with methodological and source questions. Most of the chapters adopt a structure of first presenting a view (which might be initially thought to be representative of Christianity), excluding animals from either doctrinal significance, moral concern, or both, which is then argued against. Although most of the chapters can be read and understood separately they form a consecutive argument, the overall conclusion being that Christianity encourages a less anthropocentric outlook than might have been expected.

The following is a summary of the conclusions of each of the chapters. Ch.I: although there is a paucity of material in the Christian tradition which relates specifically to animals, implications concerning the place of animals can be drawn from Christian doctrine and practice. Ch.II: the idea of the world as a place of soul-making must either include animal souls within its scope or else be deemed unsatisfactory. Ch.III: if only humans are fallen then only they are candidates for redemption, but respect for the unfallen world is implied all the more. Ch.IV: certain features of the natural world (e.g. predation and death) suggest that it is fallen. Ch.V: animals, as well as humans, will be redeemed. Ch.VI and VII: the Just War tradition is applied to the relationships between humans and animals in order to offer a set of guidelines to aid understanding in how we ought to conduct ourselves in the fallen world. Ch.VIII: Christian ideas of community cannot restrict themselves to humans: human communities exist within the Earth community. Ch.IX: the earth is a gift to animals as well as to humans. Ch.X: the doctrine of the Incarnation does not necessarily imply the theological centrality of humans, but raises the dignity of all creation.

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Chapter I
SOURCES AND METHODS

No place for animals?

"Official Christianity has no relation to the animal"(JUNG(3) p.22). Christianity, it might be argued, is not only an anthropocentric religion, it is one that has relevance exclusively to the human species. This would be meant neither as a criticism nor as a commendation, but as a simple matter of historical and theological fact.

It is a religion based upon a revelation, not upon natural theology. It has to do with the descent of God, rather than primarily the ascent of man; that is, the initiative lies with God and with His revelation of Himself and human religion is always a response to this prior fact. It is a matter of "If God thus loved us, dear friends, then we in turn are bound to love one another"(1 Jn 4:11), where the antecedent is a necessary condition for the consequent. This revelation is centred in the life of a human being, Jesus Christ, and it is a revelation to other human beings, living in a human-orientated society. The message of salvation, and the deeds which accompanied it, were subsequently passed on to widely differing groups of humans, holding out to them the hope that they, too, being members of the 'chosen species', could experience God in a new, redemptive way.

More especially, they could do so if they entered into the community of those who recognised the unique importance of this revelation, the Church. In the human sphere this message had revolutionary implications and proved capable of breaking down barriers which had seemed insuperable: there was no longer to be Greek and Jew, slave and freeman, or male and female, for Christ is all and is in all (cf Col.3:11; Gal. 3:28).

But the place of animals in this scheme is not so much a minor one: it is non-existent. They were not addressed in this tale of God's announcement of Himself and His purposes; they were not invited to join the company of the saved. How could they anyway? How could animals have faith in One of whom they had never heard? And what kind of messenger could tell them?

The only conclusion possible would seem to be that animals, and the rest of the non-rational creation (for it has seemed right to except angels), are outside the sphere of saving grace. They are outside of the Church, outside of Christ, outside merely by dint of being non-human. Christianity, as far as the visible creation is concerned, is for humans only. God has no care for the sparrow that falls.

These general assertions are deliberately polemical, but they would appear to be confirmed rather than quashed by the claim of one biblical scholar to have identified more than

fifteen different 'creation theologies' in the Old and New Testaments, to say nothing of those variations which multiply in the Intertestamental period (REUMANN p.20). The views which are expressed in the biblical literature are both fragmentary and widely diverse and one can raise serious doubts as to whether there is enough material to warrant one calling anything the 'theology' or the 'outlook' of the Old or New Testament writers on the question of animals - even whether one is entitled to outline anything as being the 'view' of a much more limited group such as the Deuteronomic school or the Priestly tradition. There are specific passages relating to animals, but in themselves they cannot easily bear the weight of a 'theology of nature'.

Perhaps even more seriously, not only is there generally a paucity of material from which to glean information, but there is also almost a complete lack of subject matter with any explicit ethical content: one might except Proverbs 12:10, and possibly some of the levitical laws (e.g. Lev.25:4ff; 22:27ff), but that is just about the sum of ethical comment on the question of the treatment of animals.

The Old Testament is, at first sight, a more promising source than the New Testament, for at least in the Wisdom literature there is a certain amount about animals and the natural world ("Its theology is creation theology" (Zimmerli, cited in HERMISSON p.118)). Here, however, we come up against

the question of the diversity of the Old Testament literature itself, quite apart from the views on animals found there. How far can we say that the Wisdom literature is representative of the views of the Israelite community in its perception of itself and its standing in the world? Is there, indeed, an identifiable 'representative' view reflecting a single vision or outlook either of the environment, or of the history of redemption, or of anything, which we can safely say was entertained by the vast majority of Israelites? If not, then it is surely an exaggeration to write of Israel:

"The experiences of the world were for her always divine experiences as well, and the experiences of God were for her experiences of the world." (RAB(2) p.62).

This suggests that the Israelites had, as part of their religion itself, something which meant that they would not perceive the world without at the same time perceiving God to be closely bound up with the processes of nature. This view is justly criticised by ROGERSON, who remarks that it would be better to say that some Israelites interpreted nature in such a way as to perceive intelligible manifestations of the divine. He continues:

"It seems to me to be self-evident from a reading of the Old Testament that the reason why the common people of Israel so often forsook their God, and why their rulers often disregarded the ways of God was that whatever may have been the perception of reality that they shared, it did not obviously and inevitably point to the God of Israel. It seems to me that we can only adequately understand the frequent apostasies denounced by the Old Testament prophets if we suppose that whatever

false religion the people turned to, this religion seemed to give a more adequate account of the world of their experience than did Yahwism." (ROGERSON p.79)

Psalm 104, for example, is a magnificent expression of the divine perceived in nature, but although it may have been a true rendering of the religious faith of some Israelites, we cannot say with confidence that it reflects a faith which in its details was common to all. 'Old Testament' religion is not homogeneous: it contains many different strands which cannot easily be brought into a unified whole; in addition, it would be rash to assume that one could simply equate 'Old Testament religion' with 'Israelite religion'. The Old Testament documents are the products of traditions and 'schools' which are not necessarily representative of Israelite religion as a whole.

If the Old Testament picture seems to be ambiguous in outlook, it could be argued that the New Testament sheds even less light on the subject. This is not to say that what is non-human is denigrated, but only that the natural world is not specifically dealt with (a distinction to which we shall be returning). There are a few isolated passages mentioning certain species of animal (normally sheep), or 'creation', but again this can hardly count as adequate for the construction of a theology of nature; nor is there anything in the New Testament comparable to the Wisdom literature, where at least the natural world is considered in a little more detail.

Both the Old and the New Testaments are basically the stories of communities - their initial foundation and subsequent growth. No doubt it would be very useful if we could find in this literature a systematic discussion of the relation between the chosen community and the natural world; but on the whole there were other, more immediately compelling, problems to be surveyed (for example, in the New Testament, the issue concerning the precise bond which ought to hold between the developing Christian community and the Jewish tradition in which were its roots). We have no right to insist that the early Christian communities should have produced a theology of nature, just as we have to accept that they did not see it as their task to concern themselves with detailed sociological analyses of church structures. This is not to say that Christians now should not interest themselves in such issues - nor do I believe that in so doing they need to reject the biblical material as a set of wholly irrelevant documents, since various standpoints developed whilst struggling with other areas of doctrine and ethics will be found to have profound implications for any attempt to assess the place of animals in a Christian view of things. At the same time one has to be careful not to read back into the historical documents one's own concerns: there is no Marxist Christ to be uncovered from the pages of the gospels; there is no Paul offering a Freudian analysis of the human predicament;

neither should we fall into the trap of trying to force our exegeses of the New Testament to yield a modern ecological view of the world.

Here we would do well to remember the apocalyptic setting of many of the New Testament documents. They were written in an atmosphere where the end of the whole of the present order was expected as imminent. Those convinced that they are living in the end times do not concern themselves overmuch with detailed plans for the conducting of daily life. Also suggested as a partial explanation for the general lack of interest shown in the natural world by the New Testament writers is that they were probably more 'urbanised' than the agriculturally-based Old Testament authors (as also Jesus Himself)(J.A.BAKER p.103). Again, this is no doubt true, although of course we have to remember that they were hardly urbanised by our standards.

When we turn from the biblical literature to consider the development of the Christian tradition we find, again, very little specific mention of animals. There is a certain amount of discussion of the place of 'matter' and of 'the world' (as in the iconoclast controversy, for instance), as also of 'things' (a generic term often used to cover everything not a 'person'); but for the most part such terms tend to be used ambiguously and unsystematically, making difficult any serious evaluation of the Christian position concerning animals. So,

for example, in much devotional literature one finds phrases such as, 'Christians are bound to respect the material world'; no doubt they are, and such sentiments are laudable as far as they go, but little attempt is made to distinguish between such items in the material world as cats and cassette players or to ask what 'respect' might mean in each case (VANSTONE is a welcome exception in this regard).

Total Ignorance?

In all of this, how much are we saying? Are we saying that the Christian scheme of things is unavoidably anthropocentric, and that therefore animals are bound to be assigned a place far below humans? Or are we saying only that until recently Christians have never paid much serious attention to the moral status of animals, but that this isn't an inevitable result of its religious structure? If the latter is true, then what we have had has been something more like 'anthropocentrism by neglect' - we are not committed to the belief that Christianity is inescapably anthropocentric, certainly not to the extent of excluding all non-humans from the sphere of ethical concern.

The fact that there has been neglect in this area is undeniable (though there have been notable exceptions) but the reasons for this need not be held to be part of the intrinsic logic of the Christian system. Theology is not the only influence in Western culture. There are also broad tendencies

of thought and outlook, underpinned by powerful philosophical traditions. C.W.HUME argued that neo-platonic attitudes harmed the cause of animals. Perhaps more plausibly, Stoicism, scholastic intellectualism (ROLAND) and Cartesianism (ROSENFELD) have been named as some of the culprits. We have to distinguish, then, between two different positions:

(1) Christianity is necessarily anthropocentric in outlook, so that animals are excluded from the area of moral concern as far as the distinctively Christian vision is concerned.

(2) Christianity has, historically, not dealt systematically with the question of the place of animals in its outlook, but this is in no way a 'necessary' neglect. There is room for a Christian position to be worked out.

Both of these have, in turn, to be clearly distinguished from a third view, which holds that we are inevitably ignorant of the place of animals as regards any Christian standpoint: the revelation, given once for all, has not dealt with the question clearly or decisively, so we cannot know. It is this last option that I wish to examine now.

This view implies that we cannot say (speaking from within Christianity), that, for instance, animals were created to be at the disposal of humans, to be food for them, or whatever. For such an assertion to be true it would have to be supported by adequate grounds, and such grounds are held to be available in revelation alone. But if the revelation gives

no clues in this area then the claim that animals were created to be of service to humans is left unsupported. One could as well hold that humans were created to be at the disposal of animals - this view is also unsupported in revelation, but since both are, they are both equally possible positions for a Christian to take. Those who stress our ignorance of the status of animals from the point of view of Christianity have to accept the logic of this lack of knowledge and realise that it leaves open other possibilities for patterns of relationships between humans and animals than just that of the total subjection of animals and their interests to humans

Thus, if we have the propositions: (p) 'Christianity does not deal with the question of the status of animals. It is therefore impossible to develop a theology of the place of animals and their relationship to humans', and (q) 'Christianity holds that animals exist only for the sake of humans', it can be clearly seen that p and q are incompatible options. Although q in no way amounts to a 'theology' of the place of animals, it is expressing a definite relationship between humans and animals which it claims that Christianity supports. But if p is true then Christianity does not back any claim dealing with the status of animals. And if p is incompatible with q, then p is also incompatible with ways of acting which depend upon the truth of q as their necessary condition. So it would seem that if we believe p to be true

we cannot act as though q were true.

However, the implications of our ignorance concerning the status of animals on the way we behave are not as simple as this; for if p is incompatible with q, p is also incompatible with r, which we can define as: 'Christianity says that animals do not exist only for the sake of humans', since, as we have seen, p holds that Christianity does not give us any guidelines as regards the status of animals and their place in creation. Again, if p is incompatible with r then it is also incompatible with patterns of action which depend upon the truth of r as their necessary condition - or rather, we cannot say that Christianity requires any particular pattern of behaviour with regard to animals and all ways lie equally open.

How, then, are we to act? We have run up against the familiar problem of the relation between scepticism and ethics. Wittgenstein argued, surely rightly, that doubt must amount to something, that it must make a difference to the way one acts. It was partly because of this that he repudiated the Cartesian method of systematic doubt: how can doubting the existence of material reality make a difference to the way you act? At the most it makes a difference to the way you might think or speak. But how real are thoughts or words which are incapable of expression in a distinctive way of life?(WITTGENSTEIN(2) 120, 338f,428). The withholding of

judgement concerning the truth or falsity of a proposition should make some kind of difference to one's patterns of behaviour. One of the problems of scepticism has always been that it leaves itself open to the charge that, in effect, it commits itself to no particular course of action - that is the nature of the sceptic, he is doubtful as to the validity of any particular epistemological stance or moral standpoint (even his own scepticism). He withholds commitment from affirming any proposition as true and so from affirming any forms of behaviour which are grounded upon the acceptance of the truth of certain propositions. This effectively paralyses all action. But it is one of the necessities of life that one occasionally does something. This leaves the sceptic in the position of refusing to believe that any course of action is more right than any other, and yet still having to act as if it were right. In practice he may follow the fourfold compulsion of nature, tradition, sensation and the rules of such arts as he may choose to practise - but even about this he will not be dogmatic (SEXTUS EMPIRICUS 1,23). Epictetus attacks the follower of the sceptic Agrippa, arguing that believing is often preferable to withholding belief, since the latter leads to a trivializing of morality:

"One man does not see the battle; he is ill off. The other sees it but stirs not, nor advances; his state is still more wretched. His sense of shame and self-respect is cut out of him, and his reasoning faculty, though not cut away, is brutalised. Am I to call this 'strength'? Heaven

forbid, unless I call it 'strength' in those who sin against nature, that makes them do and say in public whatever occurs to their fancy." (Discourses Bk.1, Ch.6, in OATES p.233).

The sceptic cannot say that one way of acting is 'better' than another, nor that one set of beliefs is any more true than any other. It may be that such amoralists would, in the end, "make a more enjoyable reality than the mixture of dogma, sentiment and vague conceit which passes for orthodox thought" (CLARK(1) p.190), but the issue is, inevitably, uncertain.

Reason, Revelation and Interpretation

There are basically two ways out of the scepticism of p:
(1) we can accept the truth that p: Christianity cannot offer any ethical guidelines. But we still have to decide upon how to act. We therefore turn to secular thought for guidance. It will be thought proper to assume that where revelation is either an unclear guide or no guide at all, reason is best equipped to help us; (2) we could question the truth of p: perhaps it is not the case that the Christian tradition has nothing to contribute to a discussion concerning the moral status of animals. It is not as hopelessly ambiguous in what it does say as has been suggested.

I shall be choosing the second option, arguing that Christianity has much to say pertaining to the relationships which should properly hold between humans and animals. But

this does not mean that (1) and (2) have to be treated as exclusive options. The main body of the Christian church has been loath to set the sacred and the secular at odds with each other, or reason at odds with revelation. Man is not considered to be an empty vessel, incapable of knowledge or of seeking out the path of virtue before the advent of revelation.

At the beginning of this section it was suggested that the fact that the Christian revelation is centred in a man, Jesus Christ, means that any 'natural theology' is rendered at best superfluous and at worst misleading. So, in his gospel, John uses the title 'Logos' for Jesus, and if we look at the background to this word we find that what he is probably trying to say is that Jesus is to be understood as the self-expression of God (DUNN pp.213ff).

"Noone has ever seen God; but God's only Son, he who is nearest to the Pather's heart, he has made him known"(Jn.1:18).

Does this mean that God's glory is not, after all, discoverable in nature, that the vision of God indwelling His creation must belong to the pre-Christian era? Does the revelation given in Christ replace any revelation which was thought to have been available in the natural world? Does it even show any such belief in the possibility of experiencing the divine in the natural processes to have been a choosing for the Baal of nature rather than the Yahweh of mankind? The

heavens do not tell of God's glory: "The world can declare itself only as world" (GALLOWAY(2) p.113).

We might feel that this is true as a general comment on the invalidity of metaphysical propositions - they are philosophy misinterpreted as natural science. Metaphysical statements are meaningless because they cannot be correlated with elements of reality: "God does not reveal himself in the world" (WITTGENSTEIN(1) 6.4.32). But such a wide critique would apply equally to ideas about Christ being a revelation of the Father; so if we say that natural theology is impossible because of the problematic status of metaphysical statements then propositions about Christ can have no metaphysical reference either.

If we allow that metaphysics is a possible enterprise we might still want to deny that the natural world is revelatory of God in any significant sense. HUME(1), besides asking why we should not be content to just stop with the world as an unexplained brute fact, rather than postulate its dependence upon a further Entity who must then, in turn, be defined as self-sufficient Being, pointed to the massive ambiguities of the created order: if the world does point beyond itself, it would appear to be a dubious witness to the existence of the Christian Creator, a God traditionally conceived as perfectly good, omniscient and omnipotent.

There are several ways of answering such an argument. One

would be to say that this is where the person of Christ comes in: the revelation of God in Christ controls all other kinds of revelation. All other possible candidates for being a revelation of God are tested beside the revelation in Christ. To perceive Christ as the Word of God is not to make God's revelation of Himself in the natural world superfluous, but to define anew just what it means to say that one sees the Good revealed there.

"Through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life." (Jn.1:2f)

Christ is seen as "he, through whom God already recognisable in his creation becomes understandable" (A.Schweitzer, cited in DUNN p.189). When the world is viewed from within the context of faith in the God of Jesus then the heavens bear witness to Him. Natural theology and the 'proofs' of God's existence are then seen as confirming and reinforcing a faith which is already held. After all, Aquinas was convinced about the Christian system being true before he worked out his Five Ways. 'Faith seeks understanding'. This Anselmian dictum need not mean that faith does not also presuppose a certain capacity for understanding, for being able to comprehend the possibility of a revelation taking place (with all the implicit beliefs which must accompany that - that God exists, that He is the sort of Being who would want to share Himself with His creation, and so on); and also being able to identify

something as a revelation if or when it does happen. In Johannine terms, this is possible since the Logos who is the bearer of the revelation (and the revelation Himself) is also embedded as the ruling principle in the minds of all rational creatures. Revelation and reason are not, then, exclusive options.

The scriptures themselves, the 'deposit of faith', also offer more than we have so far allowed. Paul, at least, writes in sweeping cosmic terms in some of his letters. Certainly we have to be careful here, since Paul's 'cosmic Christ' language is not first and foremost about lions and oak trees. He is not principally concerned with the phenomena which go to make up the cosmos, but with the powers 'behind' the phenomena - the world spirits, the dark rulers. It is to these that the church can in some sense be said to have a ministry and a mission, to the demonic world rather than to the animal world. Paul is preaching a liberation from the tyranny of the powers of the air - Christ has overcome them by His death (Col.2:15), though the victory has still to be made effective. However, although Paul's message is more directly concerned with the demonic powers it certainly has implications for the way in which the natural world is viewed. We might ask, for example: when the dark rulers behind the phenomena are defeated, what becomes of the phenomena themselves? The most obvious answer would be that, on being

freed from such foreign domination, they are restored to their original goodness and move into the sphere of Christ; they are saved just as humans in the orbit of grace are saved - and indeed such hints can be found in Paul's letters (e.g. Rom. 8:18ff) (cf SCHNACKENBERG(1) pp.176ff). It is, for the most part, only hints that we have; it is for us to develop fuller expositions.

At this point it is necessary to recognise that we automatically inherit a vast amount of biblical exegesis, particularly from the patristic period of the church. We are bound to take serious notice of what tradition has handed down in this respect, not least because the methods used and the conclusions reached have often proved influential in the formation of doctrine and Christian discipline. Sometimes the interpretations of scripture have been brilliant and penetrating, at other times they have been dubious in the extreme. As regards the views on the natural world which have been virtually 'canonised' by being part of tradition, some of the items in this unwieldy and mixed bag have definitely distorted the scriptural sense. SINGER(1) p.209) cites the following passage from Augustine:

"Christ himself shows that to refrain from the killing of animals and the destroying of plants is the height of superstition, for judging that there are no common rights between us and the beasts and the trees, he sent the devils into a herd of swine and with a curse withered the tree on which he had found no fruit...Surely the swine had not sinned, nor had the tree." (AUGUSTINE(2) p.102)

Singer does not question the likelihood of this interpretation's being the correct one. But Augustine was preoccupied at the time of writing this with an assessment of his own previous attachment to Manichaeism and in this instance interpreted Jesus' actions in the light of that concern - as well as employing a wholly unsuitable vocabulary borrowed from Stoicism. Augustine sees both the action of casting the devils into the swine and the cursing of the fig tree as exemplifying Jesus' belief that the non-human creation has no intrinsic value which might allow it moral recognition.

By comparison, let us consider these two passages in some detail, in order to see what an exegesis using historico-critical methods might yield. We are perhaps in a better position than Augustine to understand what the scripture writers meant to communicate by such reported actions.

Devils into swine : this story is in each of the synoptic gospels. Assuming Marcan priority, we shall look principally at the account given in Mk.5:1-20 (parallels: Matt.8:28-34; Lk.8:26-39). The part concerning the swine is only a minor element in the narrative (Mk.5:12f):

"the main part of the story is almost entirely independent of the presence and destruction of the swine, a feature which is confined to two verses (vv.12-13), and there are in fact some grounds for thinking that this element in the story is a later addition." (NINEHAM p.150)

Why was it included at all? One possibility might be that the swine drowning themselves provided evidence that the devils really were cast out. The reality of the miracle is thereby confirmed. It was widely believed at the time that when spirits were exorcized they often took revenge by performing some act of evil which would be obvious to the onlookers. Here the vastness of the evil (about two thousand swine) stresses the immense number of devils cast out.

As is well-known, swine were considered to be unclean by the Jews. Here is perhaps another clue as to why the swine are present. Since the miracle is recorded as taking place in Gentile country, this might be a way of pointing to Jesus' cleansing of the Gentile lands to make way for the mission of the church.

Again, many scholars would say that in all likelihood vv.12f existed as a separate 'popular' story of a Jewish exorcism in a heathen country, which was added to the gospel narrative, because of one, or both, of the reasons suggested above - or perhaps merely because swineherds witnessed the exorcism(v.14). This would certainly help explain the untidy alternation between singular and plural as to who was possessed by the demoniac throughout the story.

Cursing the fig tree : this episode can be found in Mk.11:12-14,20-25 (Matt.21:18-22). Rawlinson (cited in NINEHAM p.298) comments that it approximates more closely than

any other episode in Mark's gospel to the type of 'unreasonable' miracle - something which is generally found only in the non-canonical gospels (see also MANSON(2)). It is especially untypical of Mark and it is most unlikely that we should read the incident as a display of power for its own sake, since many commentators feel that Mark may have taken over, as one of his sources, a view of Jesus as little more than a wonder-worker, which he transformed to offer a far more profound reading of the events.

At any rate, it should certainly not be read as a cursing of a fig tree because Jesus did not feel that we need show concern for such forms of life (contra Augustine). It is best seen as a graphic incident interpreting the cleansing of the Temple, with the fate of the tree representing what awaited Jerusalem and the Israelites (ROBIN). Perhaps the fruit stands for true religion (and so the absence of fruit the absence of such) and the leaves stand for mere outward observance.

So, if the story records an actual historical event, then it is almost certainly an example of prophetic utterance: that is, something which both symbolised, and was felt in some way to effect, that which the action meant (cf Jer.27:2,28:10ff). It is not a miracle merely displaying Jesus' power, or His contempt for plants. Still, can Jesus' action be seen as at least licensing destructive uses? Even if it is a prophetic

action, and to that extent in a special category, would He work such signs on things that mattered? It seems He might: the blind man in John's gospel was so from birth not through his own or his parents' sin, but in order that the glory of God might be manifested in the healing given by Christ and that Christ might be seen as the true Light (9:1ff). Again, Paul did not hesitate to strike Elymas the sorcerer with blindness as a sign of his spiritual lack of vision (Acts 13:10ff). But to attempt to extrapolate ethical guidelines from scriptural passages such as these would be to misunderstand them. Their purpose is not one of general moral instruction and they should not be forced into such a service.

In any case, the story may originally have been a parable (connected with Lk.13:6ff?) and only in the process of transmission have become the telling of an actual event. Certainly, as the recalling of a historical happening the unreasonableness of the curse jars on the reader - the fruit tree has no fruit "for it was not the season for figs"(v.13), yet the tree is still cursed for not bearing fruit.

Another alternative which has been suggested is that as the episode stands at the moment it could be the result of a linguistic misunderstanding:

"The Aramaic imperfect 'yekol', which underlies 'fagol' in v.14 was ambiguous. It could originally have had a future sense, and then could have been understood wrongly as an optative. Once we allow this possibility, we can see how an announcement of the nearness of the end ('No one will ever eat fruit

from you again')...might have become a curse ('May
no one ever eat fruit from you again') and then a
cursing miracle" (JEREMIAS p.87).

We have moved a long way from Augustine.

Chapter II
THE VALE OF SOUL-MAKING

Christianity is concerned with redemption. As such it presupposes that the present state of things is less than perfect, for both 'redemption' and 'salvation' are terms which imply rescue from something. Here, if anywhere, we can surely test to see whether animals have a place in Christianity: are they included in the redemptive scheme in any significant sense? If they are not, then they must be deemed to be outside the whole logic of the religion.

In secular parlance animals are typically classified as part of the 'environment', by which we mean, of course, the human environment. All that is non-human - mountains, grass, lizards and ponies - serves as the human habitat, the human place. Theological jargon tends to employ similar language and speak more specifically (and more spiritually) of the world as the place of human soul-making. Again, in 'Gaudium et Spes', the Vatican II Council says that the world which it 'has in mind' is "the whole human family seen in the context of everything which envelopes it: it is the world as the theatre of human history" (FLANNERY p.904 - my emphasis).

The world is a stage upon which the drama of human salvation is worked out. The stage, with all its scenery, is ultimately unimportant, except as providing somewhere for the

play to be acted. The play itself is a serious affair since the choices made and the roles chosen have eternal consequences for the actors; but, for all that, life in this world also has something of an air of pretence and unreality about it similar to that found in a theatre: here, people live and love and die, but these are only rehearsals for the real Life and Death which will appear when the theatre has gone. Eliot uses this image of the world as a theatre:

"I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
Which shall be the darkness of God. As, in a theatre,
The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed
With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness,
And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant phenomena
And the bold imposing facade are all being rolled away" (Eliot p.180).

Animals, along with the rest of the world, have a definite purpose and use in providing this place for the nurture and growth of humanity, and as such they merit some kind of respect and an attention towards their preservation. The LORD has deemed it best for our soul-making that it should take place amongst a variety of other kinds who variously reflect His splendour, and so we should not unduly impoverish His creation. Still, where all things are seen to rightfully belong to us, and to have been called into existence only to adorn and supply our world, this may seem only a token respect. We are not bound to extend our care over this particular cat,

nor this particular habitat. We will probably feel, with the lady who was interviewed on the B.B.C. concerning whether she thought it wrong to buy a fur coat which took the skins of over a hundred mink to make, that 'they breed fast enough'.

The world is unrelated to any transcendent sphere and so is understood to be the domain of man, who can deal with it without any reference to some supernatural destiny. The evolution of the whole world can be regarded as solely directed towards the establishing of a kingdom of humanity. Animals are mere aids to the foundation and growth of this kingdom; they will never be incorporated into it, but will finally be discarded - with the rest of the non-human world. So we pray to "escape from our earth to your heaven, the heaven you have kept for yourself since the casting thence of the proud one purged it once for all from pride" (William of St.Thierry:Meditations 6:1). We long to escape only in the sense that we seek a better home, a more perfect place. This monastic writer does not fall into any gnostic temptation to regard the world as evil: he knew that it could not be, having a good Creator. But there is a tendency here, as in much Christian literature, to see the world as neither good nor evil, but simply neutral. Like Aristotle's Prime Matter it is all potential, and its value as good or evil depends upon what informs it. Humanity is an unambiguous good, standing above a neutral world which can be manipulated at will, whilst the

world can never fundamentally affect what is deepest in humanity. We are each of us a "universe of spiritual nature endowed with freedom of choice" (MARITAIN(2) p.9). To the extent that we have this free-will we are considered to be 'wholes' in our own right, independent in the face of the world which gave us birth. Nature cannot lay prey to this universe without our permission, for our eternal destinies depend upon the unhindered exercise of this freedom.

What kind of souls?

Animals lie beyond the scope of salvation for the quite simple reason that they cannot be redeemed. This is because only humans have the kind of souls which can survive the death of the body. Certainly, animals have souls as well - 'sensitive' souls - but they are material and cease to exist when the animal dies.

Perhaps to speak in this way, though, is to misunderstand the way religious language works. When I speak of immortal souls I am not making some factual assertion about a future state, concerning an expectation that personal survival of death is possible in some form. Even if talk about disembodied spirits and non-material bodies rising after death is not incoherent in itself, all this has nothing to do with genuine religion. Beliefs about souls, immortality and eternal life are really about present states of the soul.

"The immortality of his soul has to do, not with its existence after death...but with his

participation in God's life, in his contemplation of divine love" (PHILLIPS p.38).

Such an analysis of soul-talk is not confined to the neo-Wittgensteinians (see also TILLICH III pp.409ff; LASH p.180).

A response to such an argument could point out first, that any proposal that the notions of eternal life and immortality be understood in such terms - that is, as relating exclusively to this present life and having nothing to do with any ideas about survival after death - can be shown to be a radical departure from the ways such words were understood in the New Testament and have been generally in the Christian tradition (BADHAM pp.16ff). This is a particularly damaging criticism as far as Phillips is concerned, with his stress on adopting the criterion of 'meaning as use', that is, his insistence that one should always consider the actual use made of the terms in the appropriate contexts.

Secondly, it is in any case extremely doubtful whether, given an analysis of 'soul' and 'immortality' such as Phillips presents, it would be any easier to speak of animals' possessing souls capable of eternal life. It would mean that they would have to be thought capable of the kind of selfless devotion to love and truth which Phillips understands as constituting true religion. Few, I think, would be willing to take such claims seriously.

Is this one of the reasons why animals have been denied

immortal souls (understood now in the traditional Christian sense to signify an indestructible, immaterial Self) - that they are incapable of certain ethical stances or of appreciating values which call for response and commitment?

It depends (once again) on what one means by 'soul'. When Descartes denied that anything other than man had soul he meant by this, 'reason', for the two are synonymous in his vocabulary. In saying this he could certainly appeal to a long tradition in Western thought which had understood human uniqueness, and what it means to say that humans are made in the 'image of God', partly in terms of rationality. But by unambiguously holding that the two words stand for one and the same reality, thus completely translating questions about souls into questions about intelligence, he was profoundly altering the ways in which humans and animals were thought to be related to each other. Man is the only creature capable of self-conscious reflection and so of soul. Descartes was bound to refuse animals any share whatever in reason since to do so would also have been to admit, by his own canons of conviction, that they too had immortal souls. But this would place the beasts on a par with man.

It is this last point which was perhaps historically decisive: what helped to secure the Cartesian-inspired idea of the beast-machine was that it seemed to safeguard the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, a belief that was being

gradually eroded by the realisation of how close man and beast are in many respects. Faced with this notion of a closer kinship between humans and animals, the response tended to be to discard features in humanity that had before been held to belong exclusively to them, rather than attribute such characteristics to animals as well. In such a climate of belief Descartes' uncompromising distinction between immaterial thought and material extension, and his confining of the beasts to the category of extension, was something to be welcomed.

The lack of souls (or reason) in animals was not thought to be something which could necessarily be discovered if one analysed certain 'facts' about animals carefully enough. Support for this thesis was not sought primarily in the empirical sphere. Such forms of 'knowledge' were, of course, all held under suspicion by Descartes, but in this area in particular a heavy price was paid for such a wholesale rejection of accumulated observation. Descartes held that all animals are automata, that they are entirely determined by the rules and operations of matter. However, it was admitted that a confusing point is that the actions and behaviour of many animals certainly suggest to us an 'inwardness' analogous to our own. What we have to do, then, is reject any notion that such analogies could be proper ones to make, particularly as regards (supposed) sentience in animals. Descartes wrote to

Marsenne:

"I do not explain the feeling of pain without recourse to the soul...but I do explain all the external motions which in us accompany that feeling: these alone are found in the beasts, and not pain properly speaking."(Letter: June 11,1640).

Thus Descartes, and those who held his theory, did not suggest that we should expect to see something different from what we do normally suppose that we see if someone, say, strikes an animal. We suppose that we are seeing a creature reacting with all the common and obvious behavioural responses of one who is in pain. The Cartesians never denied this, never denied that the most obvious surface explanation for such behaviour is that the beast concerned really is in pain. But for metaphysical reasons the physical must in this instance be utterly deceptive, and it is an unjustified inference from our own experience of pleasure and pain and the physical signs which habitually accompany them to assume that non-humans are also sentient. Animals are simply material extension.

If the empirical evidence should be allowed an influence on one side or the other at all, then the Cartesians argued that, paradoxically, it is the apparent 'rationality' of animals' actions which shows conclusively that they are really irrational creatures, mechanical automata. Descartes realised that if it were once granted that animals were at all rational, one would also be bound to accept that in some respects their rationality exceeds that of humans. He wrote:

"although there are many animals which show more skill than we do in certain of their actions, yet the same animals show none at all in many others; so that what they do better than we do does not prove that they have a mind, for it would follow that they would have more reason than any of us and would do better in everything; rather it proves that they do not have a mind, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs." (DESCARTES(2) p.75)

The same argument would equally prove to be destitute of reason a skilled lumberjack who found pure mathematics impossible to understand: he, too, would be seen to work mechanically as a clock does, all springs and cogs (or, all neural chemistry and no thoughts).

This type of Cartesian approach is still an influence in modern ethology, despite the severe methodological criticisms that have been made of it, and even though one would now rarely find such an honest denial of animal sentience (it is more common to find a profession of complete agnosticism on the subject, as though it were impossible to penetrate 'behind' the animal to find the pains it might be suffering).

To take one example:

"The ability to pursue purposes and goals, and to chose the most effective way of doing so, is what we call reason. The whole of nature operates in accordance with reason; or if we think of effective performance as the fundamental principle that binds nature together, all nature is in accordance with reason" (von Baer, cited by KOELER p.103).

Such a view does not require that animals are themselves reasonable creatures; only that, like good computers, they operate effectively and are goal-directed.

Descartes does not specifically use the word 'instinctual' to describe animal behaviour, but his position is similar to one who would sharply divide 'instinct' from 'reason': if an animal is acting instinctively he cannot also be acting reasonably. The absurd lengths to which such a position can be taken are well illustrated by the remark, supposedly made by Pascal - and typically Cartesian - upon seeing a frog repeatedly play dead when approached by a pike: 'Since it always acts the same way, it acts mechanically' (ROSENFELD pp.53f).

In fairness, it must be allowed that the general point can be a valid one, and it is worth investigating the flexibility of possible responses to situations which animals are able to make; certainly one criterion for judging the capacity to freely choose courses of action is whether a creature can alter its response in order to meet new circumstances. However, Descartes certainly underestimates animals on this point (indeed, as we have seen, metaphysical commitments impel him to do so).

But let us assume the Cartesians to be correct in saying that humans alone have souls. Animals are destitute of reason and are no fit candidates for any immortal destiny. The world might then be construed as a 'vale of soul-making', a place in which rational spirits are purified and made ready for eternity.

The phrase 'vale of soul-making' originated with Keats, who believed that each human being has a divine spark, or 'Intelligence' (this terminology possibly being suggested to him by Milton's 'pure Intelligences of Heav'n' (Paradise Lost VIII: 180f) (BRADLEY p.202n)). This Intelligence returns to God as an 'identity' if it has profited from the vale of soul-making. Children who die before their sparks have had "time to learn of or be altered by, the heart - or seat of human Passions" have them returned to God unchanged (KEATS II p.103). The Intelligences seem to be conceived by him to be impersonal lumps of divinity which are rendered personal by having a human life joined to, or incorporated into, them. He does not mention the fate of animals, but an educated guess would be that under this scheme if they, too, are possessed of Intelligences, they would return unchanged to God, as is the case with children - unless it were considered that the vicissitudes of an animal's life could sufficiently 'personalise' the Intelligence. But if it were felt that the Intelligences would never be transformed into identities through dwelling in animals then it would be simpler to say that the beasts do not have such sparks than that they are always returned to God in their original impersonal form. Thus it would seem that under the Keatsian scheme there is no hope for any personal immortality either for children or animals - and this for the quite simple reason that neither

category is considered to be personal in the first place.

It is worth noting that Keats does not believe his system to be a Christian one, saying of it:

"I think it a grander system of salvation than the chryst(e)ain religion - or rather it is a system of Spirit-creation" (KEATS II p.102).

He contrasts the idea of the world as a vale of soul-making with what he considers to be the more orthodox Christian view, that of the world as a vale of tears from which we will be redeemed by God at the end of time. It is an important distinction, and in my opinion a correct one.

Nonetheless, this same model of the earth as a place of soul-making has undoubtedly proved popular in the construction of recent Christian theodicies. Thus, for example, HICK ((1)pp.351ff) asks why those animals who appear to undergo an immense amount of pain in their lifetime should exist at all. Rejecting the idea that perhaps they, like humans, are destined for an immortal life, he sees them as providing part of the present 'setting', as well as the temporal origin, for the making of human souls. They are part of the environment within which human souls can develop and mature. He is willing to be agnostic as to whether this function exhausts the significance of the non-human, but certainly in terms of the question of redemption this is the reason they are here. There is no question of animals themselves being redeemed.

In many respects this is similar to Gnostic systems, in

that they held that once the divine sparks had been redeemed from the creation the material world would simply cease to exist. Still, a Gnostic would not say that it could pass into non-existence because its function as a place of soul-making was now complete, for he would not envisage that the earth could have such a noble function as this; the only reason, for a Gnostic, that this material world exists at all is because we ignorant spirits within it have not yet discovered our true identity. The world is in no way an aid to discerning the divinity within, except in so far as it repels us and forces us to look inwards. But Hick seems to agree with the Gnostics on this one account, that when the last self has found its freedom the whole creation (including animals) will be bereft of value and purpose and so cease to exist.

The ethics of soul-making

Not every doctrinal nicety bears obvious moral fruit, for good or ill, but one might with justice hold that to regard animals as outside the scheme of salvation is also, in practical terms, to place them beyond the sphere of moral concern (at least, in so far as one is deducing ethics from a Christian dogmatic standpoint). Lecky's study of the history of European morals certainly led him to this conclusion (LECKY II p.173). It is not a matter of a logically binding sequence (indeed, we shall be finding that, if anything, the implications of this view favour very good treatment for

animals); nonetheless, to have one's life influenced by a world-view which allows little or no place for animals makes it likely that they will not receive much moral attention. It is possible to argue otherwise:

"the rejection of animal resurrection among most Protestants has not prevented a widespread exercising of conscience over the wrongness of cruelty to animals" (ATTFIELD⁽⁴⁾p.207).

I would argue, though, that this is partly because many recent Protestant intellectuals have placed less emphasis on the whole concept of an afterlife than has traditionally been the case, and that the corresponding concentration on this life has made the rejection of animal resurrection a question of lesser importance. What matters is how we live here and now, and how we should live in the present can be discovered without any real reference to a future hope. The concern of which Attfield rightly speaks has come about despite the doctrine of a human-only resurrection.

If it is only man who possesses an immortal soul, and if the ultimate purpose of the creation is the cultivation of such souls, then it makes sense to assume that everything on earth exists for this. However, what does not follow from these premises is that everything exists only for man; rather, everything exists only that the human soul may be nurtured and developed. The human body is part of the 'everything'. It is not equivalent to saying, "In nature not only the plants but the animals are made for our use"

(Penelon, quoted by LOVEJOY p.187; cf Aristotle: Politics I:8) - unless one understands 'our' to mean 'our souls'. The principle does not licence a carte blanche as regards the human use, and treatment, of animals. Indeed, it might be argued that this principle, that all creation exists for the purpose of serving the cultivation of rational souls, does not of itself favour any particular set of guidelines as to how animals should be treated. St. Paul wrote that any combination of circumstances can be used by God to help those who love Him (Rom.8:28). Humans are created for God, and animals exist to assist humans towards Him.

"Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul; And the other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created. Whence it follows That man ought to make use of them just so far as they help him to attain his end And that he ought to withdraw himself from them just so far as they hinder him." (Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises)

Such a position does not imply that humans can use the natural world just as they wish or for whatever they wish: cruelty to animals, being a sin, is not conducive to the saving of one's soul. So Cardinal Manning remarked that the most brilliant physiological discovery would be a poor compensation for the deadness of conscience vivisection requires (PAGET). He who hates God's creation cannot be said to love its Maker. Science is not just the random collection of 'facts', however useful,

which we gather in any way we can. Scientific endeavour springs from a love of Being and has to be governed by a desire to love that which it seeks to know. Only thus is the LORD of creation rightly honoured.

We have noted that various theodicies have been built along the lines that this world is a place of purification, of soul-making, and suffering can have a place in this picture because it is considered to be one possible means of furthering this process of purification, helping to release the soul from its narrow concerns and self-interested schemes. Suffering can have a positive function for humans (which is not to say that all, or even most, suffering does have this effect). Indeed, in the early church in particular, martyrdom was seen as one of the logical consequences of the Christian life, crowning the movement towards total self-sacrifice.

But if animals have no souls, and there is no afterlife in which they can share, then the suffering they endure in the world cannot be interpreted in the same way as is possible for humans. Each bit of animal suffering remains unredeemed and their deaths can never be martyrdoms. If any conclusion is to be drawn from this it is that humans should not inflict suffering upon animals in order to avoid pain themselves. We ought not to conduct painful experiments upon the beasts in the hope of easing our own problems; and where animal suffering is unavoidable for some reason we ought to remember

the debt owed our brethren who exist for our 'two-footed' prosperity:

"We are all pain-fellows, but nothing you
dismay,
Man is to prosper. Other lives, forbear
To blame me, great and small forgive me
If to your various agonies
My light should seem hardly enough
To be the cause of the ponderable shadow"
(Christopher Fry: A Sleep of Prisoners).

Certain ways of treating animals, then, are prohibited if we would save our souls.

Killing the soulless

The assumption is often made that the question of the possession of souls is relevant to the otherwise predominantly non-theological discussion concerning the value of animal life. R. & V. Routley, in their exploration of what might count as a reason for justifying human 'chauvinism', appear to accept that the doctrine that humans alone have immortal souls would support such a position. They write:

"Once the theological doctrines of the exclusively human soul on which the distinction [between humans and animals in terms of rationality] once rested are abandoned..." (R. & V. ROUTLEY p.41)

But we have to ask the question: what if such a doctrine is not abandoned? Would such a position justify understanding the value of human life to be significantly different from the value of animal life?

It appears to depend in part (to return to an earlier discussion) upon what is one's concept of the soul. The more

it is viewed as something setting humans completely apart from animals, and the more it is conceived to be a substance essentially alien to nature, the easier it is to identify it as the sole bearer of value to which all else is directed. However, this also tends to separate it from the body, which is a part of nature and seen as redeemable (if at all) only through its fairly tenuous association with the soul. On the basis of such an outlook as this one might quite readily allow the killing of a human being since one need never fear that it is the Real Human that will be slain. So Krishna tells Arjuna not to be overly concerned about his having to give battle to his own kinsmen since the 'embodied self' is immortal, is not destroyed when the body dies. Again,

"The early Church saw an incompatibility between love and killing. In later times the attitude and the act were harmonized on the ground that the destruction of the body does not entail the annihilation of the soul."(BAINTON p.77)

This view, then, concentrates on the value of the soul in itself, rather than on the particular existential bond between body and soul which is an earthly individual. By treating the body/soul bond as of lesser importance it makes the separation of the two a matter of less ethical weight. Killing humans need not be so bad. But killing animals may be. If I kill a dog, the Real Canine does not continue in a greater and wider existence beyond the confines of space and time. In killing an animal I do not merely sever a link between body and soul

which was only ever very fragile and temporary (as is the case with humans), for the beasts do not have souls. I simply annihilate that particular being.

Perhaps a different view of the soul is adopted, one which conceives of a closer bond between soul and body. LECKY (II p.34) writes of a

"minute and scrupulous care for human life and human virtue in the humblest form...(which) was produced by the Christian doctrine of the inestimable value of each immortal soul".

This points to a very close connection between the soul and the life of the individual with his manifold activities. We are not souls inhabiting our bodies but 'animated bodies', as biblical scholars are fond of reminding us. This narrows the conceptual distance between humans and animals and inevitably means that one tends to find that the arguments which oppose the killing of humans also oppose the killing of animals.

But perhaps there is a distinctively theological reason why killing an animated human body is significantly worse than killing an animated animal body. One might be that a premature death would prejudice the lot of the soul in the hereafter. This argument would only apply to humans since only they have souls capable of surviving the death of the body. To kill a creature with an immortal soul is wrong, then, because we are thereby consigning that person to an eternal fate. Why would that be wrong? Is eternity a less preferable state than time? But perhaps one might kill a

person who was in a state of mortal sin and because of this the person went to hell; whereas if he had lived longer there always remained the possibility of repentance and therefore an eternity in heaven rather than hell. SINGER((2)p.79) believes this argument to have been important historically, although in an age like ours in which belief in eternal damnation is on the wane it must carry less weight - if there is no hell then one can never consign a person there by killing him.

But in any case this argument seems to have rather unpalatable implications. If it is primarily wrong to kill a human being because one might be thereby consigning him to a terrible eternal destiny, would it not be right (indeed, one's duty to humanity) to kill someone who was in a state of grace so that eternal bliss were granted him - and lest he were later to fall into sin and merit a very different fate? We have here, then, a parallel argument for compulsory euthanasia for saints - in their own interests, of course. What is it (other than a lack of faith) which prevents us from carrying out genocide on this basis?

Plato, after all, said that death was not a hurt for the just man - it appears as the fulfilment of a life well-lived and not as the embodiment of sin (cf Rom.5). And perhaps it is not only the just who may be killed with impunity, but also the mystic. He has seen through the illusion of an individual self which could be harmed by death:

"Should the killer think, 'I kill',
Or the killed, 'I have been killed',
Both these have no (right) knowledge:
He does not kill nor is he killed." (Katha
Upanishad 2:19)

Selfhood merges imperceptibly into the Whole and there is no need to refrain from killing individual modes of the One. To do so out of superstitious regard for such insubstantial manifestations is to reveal one's own backwardness on the path to enlightenment.

Lest all this be thought mere academic fantasy, note that Charles Manson was capable of reaching the same logical conclusion given premises similar to the ones outlined above. "If you're willing to be killed, you should be willing to kill (Manson, quoted by ZAEHNER(2) p.67). He was perfectly able to draw the necessary distinctions, according to the rules of the game, between those who were ready to die and those who had not yet reached full enlightenment and should consequently be spared. Some were not ready to find Nowness in death: of Linda Kasabian he said, "Her ego wasn't ready to die". Unfortunately for Shorty, he was more advanced in mystical matters:

"They got Shorty in his car...They hit him in the head with a big wrench. They took him with them. They let him sweat. When he came to, they would cut him some more. He was begging for his life. They finally had to cut his head off. He got to Now, and they killed him." (Ed Sanders, quoted in ZAEHNER(2) p.67)

But perhaps Manson was wrong: there are some things, like

killing, which God reserves for Himself. It is perfectly reasonable to think that there might be many things which God allows Himself but does not allow us. However, this reply does not get us any closer to any idea of why God should particularly object to the killing of immortal creatures rather than mortal ones. We have advanced the argument that this life is for a maturing in love and a development of one's soul, and that to kill a person before his 'time' deprives him of the opportunity for further spiritual development:

"the Lord waits for us daily to translate into action, as we should, his holy teachings. Therefore our life span has been lengthened by way of a truce, that we may amend our misdeeds" (Rule of St. Benedict: Prologue 35f).

One should not kill since it might mean sending the person inadequately prepared before God.

Against this we could offer the following argument. God is omniscient and therefore knows the actions of all His creatures. If A kills B, then God knows this. If B dies before he has had time to make an adequate amendment of his life because A killed him, then God knows this as well. God is also just in His dealing with His creatures. Therefore, He will not punish B, holding B's state of unreadiness against him, since He knows that it is because of A that B has died. If God will thus ignore B's state of unreadiness of soul from the point of view of deciding B's eternal destiny, then it is not a bad thing that B died when he did. It is not,

therefore, a valid reason against killing B that it might consign him 'unfairly' to his eternal destiny: God is never unfair, so it won't. So it is not wrong of A to kill B.

There is, though, an element of *reductio ad absurdum* about this argument: B is held not to be responsible only because A is responsible. But the conclusion is that A is not responsible - so presumably B is responsible! Further, it could be said this argument rests upon a mistaken idea of the relationship between responsibility and judgement, for it is also an implication of this kind of position that if B had died at the age of twenty in a state of mortal sin because a freak storm had knocked a chimney pot onto his head, then in this case as well God would have to accept that it wasn't B's fault that he had died unprepared, and make due allowance. From B's point of view it is immaterial whether the agent which causes his death is a tornado, a crocodile or Person A: all that is relevant is that he dies unprepared because his life is unexpectedly cut short.

Moreover, cannot all deaths be seen in this light? If we say not we are arbitrarily deciding that death is more 'appropriate' at some times than others. But when is it the 'right' time to die? And do we mean to imply that outside of this 'right' time God is not able to make a judgement concerning a person's life without the verdict automatically being an unjust one? Christ plainly warned His followers to

be prepared at all times for the coming of the Judge: "Watch, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming"(Matt.24:42).

But I am not convinced that the argument that one should not kill humans because one is thereby consigning them to an immortal destiny is a good one. There may be additional reasons for not killing the bearers of immortal souls over those offered for not killing ordinary mortals, but this is not one of them. I am more inclined to agree with the attitude (though not the action) of the Papal legate who, when he was asked at the taking of Beziers, during the persecution of the Cathars, how the troops could tell the difference between Catholics and Cathars (so as to know whom to kill) replied: "Kill them all; God will know which are His" (NICKERSON p.115).

Even if we were to assume that it is an especially serious matter to kill a human being since one will thereby be sending that person into eternity, this principle says nothing at all about whether or not it is also a serious matter to kill animals. The only way in which this argument could have implications for the question of the killing of animals is if this were held to be the only reason why killing any creature is wrong. Then, since animals have no eternal destiny, there would be nothing wrong with killing them. It seems to me that there are numerous other reasons why we think that taking

human life is wrong and that, therefore, this conclusion that animal life is of absolutely no value does not follow.

Indeed, what is often overlooked is the sheer irrelevance of the 'possession of a soul' argument as regards the question of whether or not one should kill a creature. There is a simple confusion made between: (1) The value of a being who has an immortal soul, and (2) The value of a being's mortal life. It may be that the value of a creature with an immortal soul is higher than that of a creature who does not have one, but it does not follow that the mortal life of the being is also of more value. So E.B.NICHOLSON (p.31) writes ironically:

"Animals will have no after-life: that is a reason why they should be denied what would otherwise be their rights in the present one".

If animals have no chance of happiness in another life, that is surely all the more reason for allowing them to seek it in this one. The unreasoning beasts have no reason to fear hell (cf Matt.10:28), but every reason to fear hell on earth.

Mechanism and soul-making

One of the arguments used by Origen to show that seemingly irrational creatures are really rational spirits in a new guise, is that the observable facts of regularity and order in the universe point insistently towards there being 'faithful' creatures 'behind' such phenomena (de Principiis I:7:3). In holding this he was in agreement with many of the ancient Greek philosophical 'schools', who conceived of nature

as permeated by mind as the source of order in the natural world. An ordered environment, as opposed to one merely in motion, implies, they believed, an immanent intelligence. So individual plants and animals were seen as sharing, in differing degrees, in the universal Mind.

This argument, that order and regularity imply mind, is interesting not least because the regularities of nature have been as often used to support the thesis that the natural world is a dead world, that it is more akin to the workings of a machine. The evidence is held to point, not to an immanent intelligence, but to a cosmic Machine-maker.

It is this model, of the world as a vast machine, which might seem to provide the best grounding for the idea of the earth as a place of human soul-making. It quite clearly distinguishes between the soul on the one hand, and everything else on the other, enabling one to locate value only in the former, with the cosmos conceived to have been set in motion solely to attend to the soul's needs. The machine analogy lends itself to a simple teleology: all machines are for something, are constructed to perform some task. The task of the world-machine is to provide a setting for the improvement of souls. When the job is completed the machine will have achieved its purpose and will no longer be needed: it can therefore be discarded. This need not be considered any kind of 'injustice' - that would be the worst kind of sentimental

fallacy, since machines, as is well-known, are lifeless. They operate as if they were intelligent, aware and so on, but in reality are not so. The Cosmic Machine may be vastly more intricate than most machines of human construction, but this is only to be expected since the Maker in this instance is God; but there is no reason to suppose that it is an exception to the universal rule of machines being lifeless.

The Renaissance view of nature, which was influenced by such thinkers as Copernicus and Telesio was, by and large, one which conceived of the world in this way, by analogy with a machine; but the charter which provided a wholly mechanistic and quantitative picture of the natural world was given by Cartesian dualism, which saw nature as exclusively 'res extensa' and in no sense 'res cogitans'. To some extent this repeats the more ancient version of atomism, although the Cartesian model has a dualistic standpoint not typical of its classical precedents; and, as we shall see, where modern science is mechanistic it has, like the ancients, tended to drop the mental from sight. Nonetheless, it was Descartes who went a long way to giving mechanism an intellectual respectability, and it is with his system that we shall be most concerned here - not least because of its overtly theistic character. Obviously, a mechanistic world-view which denied the realm of the distinctively mental could not support a model of the world as a place where immaterial spirits are

purified.

Among environmentalists, the mechanistic conception of the world seems to be held in a unanimously low regard. But what is wrong with describing the natural world in terms of an analogy with one vast machine? There must be much to be said in favour of it or presumably it would not have been found to be such a useful concept for so long - which is not to say that all aspects of the theory found immediate favour: according to Thomas HUXLEY (p.216), Descartes' notion of animals as elaborate machines "attained more notoriety than almost any other Cartesian hypothesis". From a theistic standpoint, though, the view would seem to have several advantages:

(1) It can point to a certain kind of beauty which an animal possesses, its innate perfection. Machines are not, after all, necessarily ugly. In his 'Cogitationes privatae' Descartes draws the machine-like nature of animals as an inference from their perfection: "From the perfection of animal actions we suspect that they do not have freewill" (quoted in ROSENFELD p.3). There is no reason why a machine should be considered perfect, it might reasonably be objected - human-made machines rarely, if ever, are. However, a divinely conceived and created model might labour under no such imperfections. The machine model therefore stresses the perfection of animal nature.

(2) A mechanistic world-view also affirms the dependence of the world upon God. To think of a machine is to think at the same time of a machine-maker, a point made by many religious apologists. So Paley pictures the world as a watch: if we were to come across a watch in the desert we would immediately reason to the existence of a watch-maker. He notes that this postulation of a Creator is still a valid one even if the watch doesn't work properly - that is, by analogy, even if the world is imperfect. This is true, though it tells against our first reason for considering it a possible advantage to call the world a machine (i.e. to stress its perfection): if it is now admitted that the machine is perhaps imperfect this argument is clearly of little value. A glance at other religions reveals that one reaction to evil in the world has been to assign malicious designs, or sheer incompetence, to the Creator. Still, the world-as-a-machine analogy might be seen as helping to safeguard a theistic view of the world by pointing to its created quality.

(3) To think of animals as machines could also lead one to care for them. All machines need to be looked after, serviced, checked for things which might be going wrong with them, and so on. Christians generally agree that they have certain responsibilities, as creatures granted dominion over the earth, which involves a minimal standard of care for animals in their charge. The mechanistic model seems

perfectly capable of dealing with this aspect as well. Thus we meet Cartesians such as Polignac, who believed that animals were automata and yet was extremely fond of them (ROSENFELD pp.52ff). But Polignac's heart was better than his principles, for it is also part of the mechanistic position that, lacking souls (or reason), animals are also insentient. Descartes was better aware of the practical implications of his views, on animals as machines without feelings. He wrote:

"My opinion is not so much cruel to animals as indulgent to men - at least to those who are not given over to the superstitions of Pythagoras (a vegetarian) - since it absolves them from any suspicion of crimes when they eat or kill animals" (DESCARTES(3) p.245).

He is not being cruel to animals, for one cannot be cruel to a machine. One may 'damage' its parts, but one cannot be 'cruel' to it, for that is a word which implies sentience and awareness in the beast. No guilt is involved towards the machine for any way one might act towards it, but only (if at all) towards its Maker. Thus, if animals are machines, farm animal welfare considerations, for example, can be conducted quite simply on the level of assessing the effects of certain situations on protein metabolism, as recommended by the MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (pp.6ff). But whether animals are properly cared for on such principles begs the question as to whether they have a subjective life at all - it begs the question as to whether or not they are machines.

Mechanism, Magicians and Metabolism

Perhaps Christians are bound to regard the world as more like a machine than anything else - "the theists take their cue from manufacture, the pantheists from growth" (JAMES(1) p.8). By having a Creator external to the world Christians have already committed themselves to viewing the world as an artifact.

Have they? It can easily be forgotten that a mechanistic understanding of animals and nature arose in, and out of, a mechanistic age and that the analogy was not available before then. Even with its coming there are other metaphors which may seem preferable - God as an artist (VANSTONE; HENDRY pp.154ff), or Iluvatar and the Ainur singing the world into existence (TOLKIEN pp.15ff). Indeed, a theistic perspective on the cosmos could actually be held to cast serious doubts on the propriety of conceiving the universe mechanistically.

Whilst it allows that there may be genuine knowledge of the world since nature is governed by dependable laws (which, in turn, are determined by God), mechanism can tend very easily to a magical view of nature, where magic is understood as the art of controlling objects through the exertion of external power - it views force as external to matter rather than as immanent to it. Keith THOMAS(1) p.770) sees magic and mechanism as closely linked:

"The magical desire for power had created an intellectual environment favourable to experiment and induction; it marked a break with the characteristic medieval attitude of contemplative

resignation".

Matter is passive and inert, and to change matter is simply to rearrange particles as motion is transmitted from one part to another in the causal nexus. Because matter is passive and nature as a whole is lifeless, mechanism is, above all, a philosophy sanctioning the manipulation of the world.

Surely, though, there are clear limits to the kind of manipulation possible, not least because mechanists themselves are bound under the very same mechanical laws which, they profess, control nature. The laws that govern nature govern our own actions as well. Moreover, since these laws are considered to be totally inflexible (so that miracles are, a priori, impossible, being defined as occurrences which break unbreakable laws), one is all the more restricted. Mechanists are inevitably obedient to the God-given laws of nature.

However, these laws (as we have said) were considered to be external to matter, and therefore when man discovers them and operates by them, he is also distanced from the material world. Nature is divested of any kind of life, even of the capacity for motion, so that all these things are imposed from without. It is no longer a question of nature being in any way 'responsive' to human action - and certainly there is no thought that humans are to be (or can be) responsive to nature, for the non-human world can initiate nothing. Nature is dead, and man looks for spells to manage her, which he

finds in the governing laws. But where man plays the magician, forcing the desired response from nature, nature's God loses His freedom to operate in the world: divine providence is outlawed. Not prayer, but incantation, becomes the appropriate means of relating to the LORD.

It is not only environmentalists who have cause to be concerned by a mechanistic view of nature: humanists do as well. With the advent of strict behaviourism in biological science, the time was long since past when a merely anthropomorphic vision of non-human reality was denied, for the ban also attached itself to zoomorphism, to anything which hinted at there being any kind of inwardness present in any life form. All spirits are removed from nature and external objects are describable only as basic qualities - as extension, motion and magnitude. Modern behaviourists and cyberneticians in effect often adopt a Cartesian position with regard to man, though without taking on board the metaphysical cargo. They rarely specifically deny mental attributes, but external actions are held to be explicable quite satisfactorily in terms of physical occurrences alone. It is not always denied that certain actions undertaken by humans and animals may be accompanied by particular states of awareness, but these are explained according to some variation on the theme of epiphenomenalism and are held to be scientifically irrelevant. The human world, as well as the

animal, is stripped back to its basic, inanimate elements, so that to believe that anything more need be taken seriously is merely to fantasize.

I am not concerned here with the general shortcomings of this philosophy, but am simply presenting it as a further possible implication of mechanism: where faith in the pure Cartesian ego is lost one is reduced to a world of extended matter. One's thought that this world consists merely of extended matter then becomes just one more effect of the mindless motion of molecules and presumably merits no special consideration to truth - it is just one 'thought' among many which has 'happened' to occur, although many other arrangements of matter were equally possible.

It might be argued, though, that a theist who has adopted a mechanistic understanding of the world in the first place because of the clear assurances it gives on the point of the thinking subject, whose existence is to be relied upon even if nothing else is, is not going to lose faith in the transcendent ego. Behaviourism will not be a serious option.

Still, there are other damaging objections which can be made against a mechanistic world-view. With the growing acceptance of an evolutionary picture of the world there was (in theory) a hasty retreat of the mechanistic view, since it is impossible

"to describe one and the same thing in the same breath as a machine and as developing or evolving. Something which is developing may build itself machines, but it cannot be a machine" (COLLINGWOOD p.14).

But this still allows for the possibility that animals may be machines - it only means that nature herself, in her totality, cannot be one. The Whole cannot be explained in that way. But we, or animals, may be machines within nature, and whether or not one takes this idea seriously seems to depend upon how radically one applies the concept of evolution: is everything evolving, or are there basic constants in the realm of nature? If there is an unchanging material substrate of some sort, as was postulated by many nineteenth century scientists, then this may be describable in mechanistic terms. Again, if the Essential Person is something other than the rest of the evolving and changing creation, this is leaving it open as to whether or not humans are describable mechanistically. Perhaps Descartes got everything the wrong way around: it is the thinking ego which is a machine.

The all-pervasive nature of metabolism within the living system contradicts the most basic elements of any mechanistic understanding of life. It is not a matter here of making an analogy using the image of an engine and the constant inflow and outflow of nutrients, and so on; the transformation which is metabolism involves interchanging the elements of the engine itself. In any mechanical view of the universe we would be conceiving of a basic, inert system over against the changing identity of the matter with which it is 'fed'. In the metabolism of living systems, however, the whole system is

a result of its metabolising activity. It involves the constant 'becoming' of the machine itself - which means that it becomes inappropriate to speak in terms of machines at all in this context, for machines simply do not behave in this way. Animals are not machines.

There is a further, but related, point at which the analogy with a machine breaks down, and this is that the universe is no longer conceived to be a closed, completed system; it is unfolding, developing and changing. A machine, by contrast, is a finished system, a 'closed' one. We might speculate about whether the universe is moving towards a machine-like state, towards the point where the system will be complete; but until that time arrives (if it does) we cannot describe the universe in mechanistic terms - whilst it is being constructed the world cannot function as a machine.

Problems with teleology

Even if (impossibly) we were to waive all these difficulties we would find that mechanism cannot do the job asked of it in respect of our model of the world as a vale of soul-making. It was proposed that to view all things other than the human soul as machine-like would provide us with a simple but effective teleology: just as a machine is made to perform some specified task, so the world's function is to be a suitable place for soul-making.

Certainly, from a historical point of view, a mechanistic

view of things, such as the one proposed by Descartes, has led to the assumption of a fairly definite anthropocentric teleology; but can it really underlie and support a philosophy which sees all things as created for, and directed towards, humans (or the human soul) as their final end? It would seem at first that the application of a mechanistic concept to the world stresses the primacy of the 'What for?' aspect, that the machine is above all else a finalistic concept. However, there are problems with viewing a universe conceived in this way in terms of final causes, and we will find that it allows us to see things only in the light of efficient causation, asking about the 'How?' of the world.

In parenthesis, existentialist philosophies, various versions of which are still very much in vogue in theological circles, also militate, in their general mood, against any recognition of teleology in nature. Some doctrines of absurdity derive their power from the juxtaposition of a blind, relentless environment and man, a being incorrigibly given to seeing patterns of meaning and purpose and forever seeking a response from nature (e.g. CAMUS). We are far here from espousing a world-view with all material creation ministering to human needs. Nature is indifferent to man and so indifferent to his needs. Teleology is ejected from the system of natural causes and so this purposeless creation can provide no sanction for possible human purposes. Consequently,

any value system, reflecting some intrinsic hierarchy of being, is cast aside, throwing the self back upon itself and the human community in its quest for meaning.

The ability to use the concept of a final cause is essential to any picture of the universe, bar that which accepts the Whole as a meaningless sequence of events. Aristotle pointed out that unless one is able to distinguish between a mere ending to a series of events and the intrinsic 'end' of a motion, death would have to be universally seen as the aim of life, the goal of life being simply equated with its final condition. The running down of the universe, the increase of entropy, is the direction of the active behaviour of life's constituents, and therefore maximum entropy is presumably the 'goal' to the attainment of which all behaviour may be interpreted as being directed. But if one can distinguish between intrinsic and 'accidental' ends, then perhaps animal life, as well as human life, is capable of being understood in such a way.

Certainly, a mechanistic view of the universe does not obviously abandon a teleological outlook, since the man-made machine clearly embodies in its design a final cause which guides the construction. However, mechanistic views of the cosmos have, in fact, dispensed with final causes by translating this concept into the importance of understanding the workings of efficient causation. The achievement of the

final cause is made to depend solely upon the effective workings of efficient causes.

Mechanism is a philosophy which has tended to deny intrinsic changeability to material bodies: they cannot be acted upon so as to undergo any intrinsic 'becoming'; the only change possible to the basic discrete particles, which make up the universe, is extrinsic change i.e. motion from place to place. There is no development in the particles themselves and their interaction; all that the extended world offers is a constant flow of rearrangements of the original parts of the Whole. It is therefore difficult to see how final causes can possibly be admitted into the material sphere. Descartes explains how he thinks local motion is possible in a world in which real condensation and rarefaction are denied by this postulation that bodies move in a circular fashion:

" one body expels another from the place that it is entering, and this in turn expels another, and another, and so on until the last one to be moved moves into the place left by the first at the very moment that it becomes vacant" (DESCARTES(1) II p.33).

Thus matter has no final end, but is merely involved in a continuous circular movement. This is not to deny a Creator, since someone would be needed to set the whole thing in motion. Indeed, in the period which saw the rapid growth of the mechanistic concept of the universe, the idea of a divine designer was heavily drawn upon. However, any design discovered in the cosmos which seemed to suggest final causes

could be interpreted in terms of the strictly mechanical operations of matter set in motion by God.

If it is impossible to see matter (and therefore animals, who are only individual lumps of matter) as made 'for' man in any sense, indeed 'for' anything at all, then the mechanistic world-concept cannot underlie the idea of the cosmos as a place of human soul-making. But surely even if the teleology involved is not an immanent one, it must make sense to ask what animal machines are 'for' since the machine is still a finalistic concept?

Descartes implied that animal machines are, in fact, their own end, when he said that self-preservation was the effect of the functioning of the organic automaton. The existence of the machine is its own end. This again raises problems, for if it is its own end, to benefit itself, then we would have to allow that animal life is more than just a machine existence; but Descartes cannot allow that, for he has insisted that animals are purely 'res extensa'.

The animal cannot be its own end. Neither can man be the end of the animal world. It is true that from one point of view man is the only creature of whom 'end' can meaningfully be predicated, since he alone entertains ends, a fact made possible by his possession of soul, a dimension of pure subjectivity. However, Descartes' dualism excludes this possibility of man being the end:

"the supposed beneficiary of living creation, i.e. of all the other organic mechanisms, was now himself an inexplicable, extraneous combination of mind and body - a combination with no intelligible relevance of the body for the existence and inner life of the mind (as also, of course, vice versa)" (JONAS(2) p.60).

Thus, although the non-human world is necessary to support the human body, the existence of the human body is not itself necessary to support the existence of the person understood as the thinking ego. Moreover, according to occasionalism, man's body is itself a mere automaton, like the rest of the animal kingdom, indistinguishable from it in terms of either function or value - so it is also difficult to see how the whole created order could be said to exist for the human body.

We have looked at a Cartesian-type dualistic philosophy, then, thinking that it would provide the best basis for the picture of the world as a place of human soul-making. But we have found that its teleological position is self-defeating in terms of the model it is trying to support. The notion of final cause is discovered to be inapplicable to the natural world, largely on the ground that final causes are familiar and cognate to the human mind and the human experience and to believe that any part of the non-human world can share the emotions or the purposes of man is to commit the "pathetic fallacy". Such a general attitude towards all that is not human is shared by many who would not formally espouse a Cartesian philosophy; it is an understanding which, with

Descartes, sees man and nature as two utterly different substances.

Is there an alternative to a mechanistic view of the world which could serve the vale of soul-making model better? The idea of a cosmos in which spirits are slowly being transformed and purified, in which there is motion and process, perhaps points more to an evolutionary view of things. Historically, it was Darwinism, more than any other strictly philosophical tour de force, which undermined many of the foundations of the Cartesian world-picture. However, in terms of our model it seems equally inadequate, since such an outlook on the world normally involves accepting the fact that life is ultimately a blind striving, effectively one vast but senseless process. Is this all the evolutionary view has to offer?.

Evolution and the Representative Soul

An 'organic' picture of the world is one which is based on an analogy with the human body, and is able to stress the delicate interdependence of the parts which go to make up the stable self-supporting whole. It is a model which finds more favour with environmentalists than the mechanistic one we have been looking at, partly because it seems to fit in better with an evolutionary understanding of life.

Descartes, in his approach to the question as to what is the nature of an animal, began from the idea that there is a

definite mechanical structure and that the life of an animal is the flowering of that structure - the performance of the machine. Structure both determines, and entirely explains, animal life. It is obvious that such a view militates against any acceptance of gradual evolution.

By contrast, evolutionary theory tends to regard each specific type of structure, each different organism, as both the condition for a specific kind of life and also as "the outcome and temporary stopping-place of a continuous dynamism which itself must be termed 'life'" (JONAS(2) p.45). There is a two-way process of influence, between the individual member and his environment, and it is these two together which form a system, which produce 'life'. This is markedly different, then, from the Cartesian picture, where 'life' is simply the working out of a fixed species structure.

An organic view is more in line with modern evolutionary theory. Is it also consonant with the idea of the world as a place of soul-making?

In the first place, organic views need not be ateleological (although the strict Darwinian view undoubtedly is). The path which evolution has taken might be best explained in terms of either an immanent or a transcendent guiding power (or one that is both). Man, it could be argued, can rely upon what he supposes to be knowledge of the universe and of himself precisely because the course of evolution was

intended to lead to the development of mind (cf TAYLOR p.112ff). Indeed, how can 'mind' be trusted to give a true account of reality if it was not intended? But if this guide is an immanent one, is that not an implicit denial of theism, and do not organic views tend to repudiate the concept of a transcendent Power over-seeing the natural processes, in favour of a much more immanentist picture?

"The Renaissance thinkers, like the Greeks, saw in the orderliness of the natural world an expression of intelligence: but for the Greeks this intelligence was nature's own intelligence, for the Renaissance thinkers it was the intelligence of something other than nature: the divine Creator and ruler of nature." (COLLINGWOOD p.5)

For the purpose of this argument we may understand 'Greek' to mean 'organic' and 'Renaissance' to mean 'mechanistic'.

But neither view need be exclusive of the other. We do not feel in the case of humans that a theist must choose between attributing intelligence either to one or to the other. We do not need to renounce our claim to be intelligent creatures in order to uphold the rightful claims of an Intelligence greater than ourselves. We can accept that our intelligence is derivative: any truths that we may have are dependent upon the Truth-maker. As with us, so with the natural world: there is no a priori reason why God may not have created Gaia, or the World-soul, to organise its development. So, according to Diogenes Laertius, Thales thought of the world as a living organism, endowed with

intelligence, but conceived of it as dependent upon God (COLLINGWOOD p.32n.1).

Naturalistically speaking, there is no reason to view humans as the peak of the created order - for the Darwinian they are merely the most eccentric developments so far. As we have seen, though, if there is a Guide to evolution He may have intended humans as the crown and purpose of the natural order. He may have: that is enough for our immediate purpose here, and it appears to be a claim supported by scripture (e.g. Gen.1; Ps.8).

Does this mean that our spirits, as well as our bodies, are intimately connected with evolutionary history, that our spiritual nature has evolved out of a non-spirit past, so that by one of those inexplicable leaps, comparable to the movement from lifelessness to life, spiritual souls capable of surviving the death of the body have developed? We could compare such a view with the soul-theory which was probably the one most widely held in the early centuries of the church - 'traducianism'.

This quite materialistic understanding of the soul says that the soul-substance which God breathed into Adam has since been passed down through the generations quite literally by continual division (Tertullian: A Treatise on the Soul Ch.27). HICK ((2) P.39) feels that the theory is capable of translation into the language of genetic science, thinking of

the transmission of characteristics in terms of a common human gene pool which flows down through the generations. One's whole personality is thus explained in terms of genetic inheritance (plus environment as one develops).

Hick understands 'soul' to be a value word, useful for distinguishing man from the beasts: by saying that humans have souls one is not only postulating an immortal inheritance for them, but also specifying that they are creatures of irreplaceable worth. In Kantian terms, to say that a being has a soul is to say that it must be treated as an end-in-itself. It is from this perspective that we can understand the accusation of 'treason' to the human race made against those who declared man and beast equally soulless and mortal. This was tantamount to denying the unique worth of each human individual: when human immortality is called into question so is human irreplaceability.

Yet, drawing as he does on genetic theories of personality inheritance, Hick is surely faced with the dilemma that humans are not genetically absolutely distinct from other species and so the uniqueness of man can be called into question. The early traducianists might be dismayed by the discovery of the genetic link between humans and animals - although they might not: some of the early Fathers seem to have quite accepted that human and non-human share a common parentage:

"Surely we ought to show (the beasts) great kindness and gentleness for many reasons but, above all, because they are of the same origin as ourselves" (John Chrysostom, quoted in LINZEY p.103).

Still, even if there are very close links between humans and animals, and humans (including human souls) have evolved out of an animal past, this need not prevent us from considering them as the highest point of the natural process (so far?).

Traducianism is rarely held now. In so far as there is an 'officially' sanctioned theory of the nature of the soul and its relation to the body, it is that of 'creationism' (at least in the Catholic tradition) - the doctrine that each human soul is a distinct divine creation which God attaches to the body at the moment of conception. The human soul is not part of the natural process, nor has it evolved along with the body.

Whichever theory is chosen, we can speak of the evolutionary past as 'preparing' for the appearance of humans on the earth, whether that preparation involved the slow transformation of organisms into the human body and soul, or just the construction of a material body to which a spiritual soul is added by direct divine creation. All things have been created for humans in that they function as part of the great chain of Being that leads from the inanimate, through primitive life forms, through the higher mammals, to man, the highest of all species and the only one endowed with a

spiritual soul. "The remembered shapes of our evolutionary ancestry are recapitulated in every human embryo" (ROSZAK p.54).

The evolutionary scale could be compared to a vast alchemical process. Alchemists held that all metals are living substances in the process of growth towards gold, which is their end. If there were no exterior obstacles, Nature would always complete this process, since She longs only to make gold. The 'births' of imperfect metals are looked upon as freaks, which have come about because Nature has been obstructed in some way, so that she finds herself constrained to produce inferior types of metal (ELIADE(2)).

In the same way, the whole world is aimed at giving birth to the sons of God, which is its only purpose (cf. Rom. 8:18ff). It is not necessary to go so far as to look upon non-human species as freaks or mutations from the Human Type in the way that alchemists see ordinary metals as 'failed' gold, since we have seen that a certain diversity of animal species is part of a deliberate setting for human soul-development. Still, the whole aim of nature is to produce humanity.

In the alchemical process the metals are, ideally, transformed into gold, thereby reaching their true goal. We might even say that in this way they achieve 'salvation'. Is there a comparable process whereby nature (including animals)

can be understood to be undergoing a process of transformation into humanity, thus achieving their salvation? This is not a suggestion that buffalos might be saved as buffalos , for in the alchemical process iron is not saved as iron, but only as gold. Similarly, then, perhaps we can hold that animals are saved as humans, as the end point of their process of development. In the resurrection of the human body all of nature participates, since it is of the stuff of nature that the human body is composed. The human body is restored at the last because it participates in the realm of grace, and in this body the whole of nature finds its looked-for transfiguration.

Matter is to be redeemed, the whole of nature is to be saved - but only in man. Creation as a whole would seem to be permanently excluded from the sphere of grace on this reading. But perhaps it still makes sense to speak of its redemption 'in' man because man integrates the whole of existence in himself - it is this which distinguishes him from the rest of creation. Because he is a synthesised creature, a unique mix of body and spirit, he can represent all creatures. As Nicolas de Cusa said, man (as the highest animal) necessarily possesses the most perfect soul, which encompasses the capacities of the souls of all inferior creatures within its own unity (WATTS pp.101ff). When man adores God, the whole of creation adores God - in man. Certainly each part of the

created order can praise God separately, according to its proper mode, but each remains limited because of its own nature. Man alone can unite in himself the praises of all creation: he is a representative being. In fact, St. Leontius goes further than this by asserting that creation is actually unable to worship except through human articulation:

"Through heaven and earth and sea, through wood and stone, through all creation visible and invisible, I offer veneration to the Creator and Master and Maker of all things. For the creation does not venerate the Maker directly and by itself, but it is through me that the heavens declare the glory of God, through me the moon worships God, through me the stars glorify him, through me the waters and showers of rain, the dew and all creation, venerate God and give him glory" (quoted in WARE(2) p.70).

Augustine also understands the worship of creation to be, in reality, human worship on behalf of (that is, representing) creation. Animals praise God only in the sense that

"When we see them, and think upon the Creator who made them, they cause to arise within us praise to God; and, since through consideration of them God is praised, all things praise God" (Expositions on the Book of Psalms:148).

This understanding of man representing creation clearly implies not the representation of individuals, but of general aspects. I do not represent Tabitha, but the Feline nature; not Leo the lion, but the Leonine nature. If man is nature's representative not only as the one who worships God, but also in the sphere of salvation, then clearly although the Feline nature will be saved in man's body (or in his consciousness),

Tabitha will not.

But man, too, has a representative, who is a unique creature. The primal man, although slain and scattered over all the universe, has still One who is his perfect mirror. That one, of course, is Christ - that unique co-mingling without confusion of the human and the divine in the one Person. The salvation of nature is not something still to be achieved, since when Christ assumed human nature in its entirety, He also assumed the whole of created nature (humans being the complete representatives of creation). Angels and animals alike are saved 'in' humans, since they alone incorporate the spiritual and the physical; and humans, in turn, are saved in Christ, the perfect representative of humanity, the new Adam.

What is the place of individual non-human existents in this scheme of salvation? Clearly, in theological terms, they are superfluous. They add nothing to the universe. They are separate instances of what is already in man, and they cannot be 'added' to man to make something greater than that which already exists in him. Indeed, they are even one step more distant than we have so far suggested: it is truer to say that individuals are distinct instances of natures which are already represented in man. Not only Tabitha, but the Feline nature, is superfluous.

One can begin to see the overall tendency of this

approach, which is to constantly seek a 'higher' unity into which the manifold natures of creatures can be resolved. But the end point of this movement is to make human individuals superfluous as well. Once again, the attempt to make humans the only candidates for salvation turns out to be self-defeating.

We can see this by looking at the vast scheme of cosmic salvation constructed by Duns Scotus (see GILSON pp.122f). The true man is the Idea of man in God. In this Idea all possible individual human beings are eternally contained, and the Fall consists in the multiplication of humans as they become separated from this unity. Not only has man separated through multiplication, but he has carried with him, in his fall, all the beings of inferior nature whose Ideas were contained in his own. They too are fallen, in and through man, and now enjoy a less perfect state of existence, separated as they are from their unifying Ideas.

All material beings, then, have been created by God under the form of their respective Ideas in the 'mind' of the Idea of man, and their redemption consists in their returning to unity with this human Idea. The One is superior to the Many and so salvation must consist in coming back to a more perfect original unity.

However, it is not the Idea of man which is the highest point, but the Logos: this is the divine Idea which holds all

else together. The Idea of man is itself redeemed by being made at one with the Logos, its ruling principle. In other words, all things are resolved within the divine Unity. But it is left very unclear, in all this, as to the state of individual existents, whether human or animal. One suspects that the Scotist position renders both superfluous (this same ambiguity can be found in CARDENAL pp.81ff).

Thus the logic which leads us to understand humans as representative of animals in the sphere of salvation tends to lead, by the same logic, to seeing humans themselves as represented at a higher level again.

If we wish to maintain a healthy respect for the intrinsic value of individuals, for the Many as well as the One, we will have to seek out a different approach to the question of redemption. In so doing, perhaps we shall find that there are, after all, acceptable ways in which we can understand animals as part of a Christian scheme of salvation. The next four chapters will explore some areas connected with this, paying particular attention to the themes of Fall and Redemption.

Perhaps there is a fundamental reason, though, why all that is non-human must be beyond the range of salvation, as this is understood in any Christian sense, and this is that only humans need to be saved. Only humans are fallen away from grace, and the rest of the world is now as it was

originally intended to be, without doubt 'very good'(Gen.1). If only humans are in need of redemption then it becomes not so much difficult, as senseless, to speak of animals being saved with humans. The natural world has its own goodness which is quite proper to it and stands in no need of radical improvement, either from divine or human agency, unlike man's fallen nature. This topic is the subject of chapter III, which also looks at the question of how humans ought to conduct themselves in an unfallen world.

If, on the contrary, we were to find that it were both possible and sensible to speak of there being a fundamental flaw in nature (or some parts of nature) as well as in man, then that would point towards our seeking an understanding of how nature, too, could be redeemed:

"the Christian doctrine of creation has it that the transcendent God...is responsible for the consummation and perfection of what is" (C.F.EVANS p.70).

Not that God could ever be said to be responsible to anyone - there is no agent outside of Himself to whom He could be 'answerable', for the simple reason that nothing can be outside of God. What is meant is rather that He is the kind of God who creates in a way that we are able to understand as 'responsible', in particular with a view to bringing to fulfilment, or completing, that which He sets His hand to.

Whether the natural world can be understood to be fallen - and if it can then in what way - is the subject of chapter

IV. Whether it is tenable to consider that animals might share in the afterlife is the subject of chapter V. Finally, the pressing question of how we are to live in a world which is (like ourselves) fallen, is discussed in chapter VI.

Chapter III

FALLEN HUMANS IN AN UNFALLEN WORLD

Sin and Disobedience

Perhaps the most persuasive of the arguments used to show that only humans can be said to be fallen, so that only they are in need of redemption, is that which points to the close - indeed, exclusive - relation between fallenness and sinfulness. So, in an article analysing some of the differences in the concepts of 'salvation' as used by Buddhists and Christians (though Buddhists would probably prefer to speak of 'liberation' rather than 'salvation', since the former does not have the theistic implications of the latter), Masao ABE argues that the Christian tradition has concentrated primarily on humans, rather than looking at the world as a whole, because it is predominantly concerned with the notions of sin and forgiveness, and these are concepts applicable only to moral agents - which must mean, only to humans. Animals, because they cannot sin, cannot fall either; and because they cannot fall, they cannot be redeemed - 'cannot', because the word 'redemption' carries with it the assumption of a prior fall.

Buddhism, by contrast, understands liberation in a far wider context. Humans are members of the class of sentient beings, and liberation is something which pertains to all

these creatures rather than to man alone. This is because it is not a freeing from sin that it sought, but a release from the cycle of death and rebirth, in which all creatures are caught. Indeed, it is with the fundamental question of life and death that Buddhism is concerned, and so its outlook comprehends all created existence, animate and inanimate alike, since all are involved in the movement from non-being to being and back to non-being again. By comparison with this, Christianity begins to look a very parochial affair.

For the Buddhist, humans share, with the whole created order, in the transitoriness of existence, even if they may be supposed to be the only ones for whom this fact is a living problem (since only they are self-aware and capable of grasping something of what it means to die). The resolving of the problem, however, takes place on a level on which all existents are involved. Liberation consists in seeing that this fleeting life is rooted in the infinity of 'sunyata' ('emptiness'), which underlies all things. Because it is a matter of seeing what is, things are not thought to become liberated so much as to reveal themselves to have always been free.

My own reading of Buddhism is that although there is definitely a cosmic scope to the idea of liberation, humans are far more central to the picture than Abe allows. Certainly, both Buddhism and Hinduism adhere to the idea of

reincarnation, thus holding there to be a definite spiritual link between human and animal life (though Buddhists are wary of speaking about any permanent Self which could be said to transmigrate from one body to another. The Buddha preserved a 'noble silence' when asked whether such a Self existed, and the preferred analogy to explain the process of reincarnation has been to compare it to one candle lighting another, where it is left ambiguous as to whether the flame can be said to be the same one or not). However, despite this link, human life is elevated far above animal life (and also above the gods): liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth is only available to humans, and one's incarnation as a human is held to be such an unlikely possibility that the stature of humanity rises immeasurably. The likelihood of one's being born a human is compared to that of a turtle swimming around the world's oceans and happening to put its head through a turtle-head-sized hole in a piece of wood also floating aimlessly on the seven seas. So although humans can recognise all things as already liberated in some obscure way, only humans can do this. One is faced with inevitabilities of paradox here: Buddhism holds that only humans are able to 'gain' liberation, and also that liberation consists in the realisation of all things as already liberated. Still, if this kind of language is incoherent rather than paradoxical it is a confusion which most religions seem to share: Christians

also speak of all things having already been given in Christ, including salvation, and in the same breath of working out one's salvation in fear and trembling.

Whatever the logical status of such ideas, one thing is clear: that humans occupy a central place in the scheme. One could support this with another observation: although the doctrine of reincarnation means a recognition of the common origins and close links between humans and animals, there is also a heavy stress laid upon transcending one's animal nature. Animals are disordered passions, for it is precisely the sensual who are reincarnated as beasts. Therefore the place of asceticism is strongly underlined.

Humans, then, have a unique place in the Buddhist scheme of salvation. But it is still a place which is inclusive of animals: liberation is (or will be) a reality for them as well. It might be argued that the situation is very different as regards Christianity. Here we have a religion with a personal Creator who issues commands to His creatures. Sin is definable as disobedience to these commands, and the possibility of salvation depends upon the Creator's willingness to forgive. The will of God is the standard of right and wrong for the theist, and the most important thing is not to transgress His will.

Although it appears as a particular type of deontological system as far as moral theory goes, utilitarians, too, have to

accept that if theism is true then God's commands should always be obeyed. This is explicable in purely utilitarian terms and for utilitarian reasons.

The utilitarian makes that which determines whether an action is good or not the simple criterion that, out of all possible courses of action which could have been chosen by the agent, the one performed must produce at least as much pleasure as any other would have done. And in calculating the amounts of pleasure which will result from each course of action, the agent must take into account all those who will be affected by the action. This means not only the pleasures and pains which it may cause to humans and animals, but also (for a theist) supernatural beings and, supremely, God.

It is, of course, only by analogy that God can be reckoned capable of pleasure and pain, and we certainly cannot mean by this that He experiences bodily pleasure or pain, since He has no body (neither, reputedly, do angels). But bodily pleasures and pains are not the only, or necessarily the most intense, kind. The Judæo-Christian tradition has a deep commitment to believing that God is affected by human actions, our goodness causing Him joy and our sin causing Him distress.

Moreover, unlike any individual member of His creation, God is infinite. We have to be willing to accept, therefore, that our finite actions have infinite effects in God of joy or

distress, and this not because of our natures, or the nature of our actions - not, that is, because any particular action of ours is itself infinitely good or bad - but because of the nature of the One affected, who is infinite. It is reasoning of this kind that underlies Anselm's theory of the atonement, which he sets out in 'Cur Deus Homo?': Adam's sin, though finite in itself, offends an infinite God, so that no subsequent finite action undertaken by a merely finite agent can remove its consequences or make atonement. Because it is God who suffers by man's sin it is necessary that God Himself should be the agent of atonement. Thus we come to the innermost logic of the Incarnation and Passion.

In the same way, each act of disobedience on the part of humans, each action contrary to God's known will, results in distress to God which is infinite (that this distress has been atoned for in the sacrifice of Christ is beside the point: sin causes distress even if atoned for). Again, such pain must, by definition, automatically outweigh all other pleasures in the calculus which might be set against it, for these pleasures would only ever be finite, just as the joy caused in God by obedience to His will would outweigh any pains on the other side of the calculus for the same reason. So even if utilitarianism is correct one would still be bound to regard that action as good which agreed with the commands of God, and that action wrong which transgressed such commands.

Theists of all persuasions with regard to moral theory will look to God's commands in order to decide which actions are right and which wrong. Sin will be thought to consist in (or result from) the disobeying of such commands, just as salvation consists in the restoration of a right relationship between the Creator and His creatures.

These ideas concerning sin and salvation not only imply a special concentration upon humans as the only beings (apart from angels) who are full moral agents, and so the only ones capable of sin, but it seems to be an exclusive concentration (unlike Buddhism). Salvation is simply not a concept which is applicable to animals.

A fallen vision?

That only humans have fallen is an opinion shared by many of the early Christian fathers. To take just two examples: ATHANASIUS ((1) 43) wrote, "nothing in creation had erred from the path of God's purposes for it, save only man". And it is surprising to find that Irenaeus, who certainly wrote of a cosmic redemption, did not deal with the idea of a fall in nature at all. The human fall is the result of the successful temptings by Satan. But the devil could corrupt no more than the human race:

"The devil, however, since he is an apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, namely to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying God, and the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him to the forgetting of the true God and the adoration of

himself as God" (Irenaeus: Against Heresies 5:24:3).

Satan is firmly located as the personal tempter of man - and him only. This lack of a doctrine in a cosmic fall in Irenaeus' thought may be partly explained as a result of his taking up a polemical stance and refusing to play the Gnostics at the then fashionable game of cosmic speculation. Quite independently of this, though, he does advance a simple argument which seems to show that he did not feel the natural world to be in any sense corrupted. He says that the universe must be good since God Himself is good and the creation cannot be unworthy of its Maker. Moreover, there is no gap between God's conceiving the world as good and its actualisation as such since God is omnipotent (Against Heresies 2:2ff).

This verdict, that humans are fallen but the natural world is not, should perhaps occasion no surprise. Have we not already said that the categories of fall and salvation are inextricably bound to the ideas of sin and forgiveness, and that this, in turn, is limited to the area of human action? What is there to suggest that nature is fallen as well as man?

Perhaps it is fallen in that it affects us badly. In the last chapter the thesis was proposed that the world is an environment created for the nurture of humans, or human souls. This, indeed, was suggested as its sole reason for existing. But then we are faced with the anomaly that so much on the earth is inimical to human progress and well-being. We are

assaulted and buffeted at every turn by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornadoes, by animal pests, by inhospitable climes and by deadly bacillae. It would seem that either we are not the object of such divine providence as we had thought, or else the channels of providence have been severely tampered with.

The problem has been recognised, of course, and in fact a third solution has proved popular. It is neither the case that humans have to renounce their claim to be the supreme receivers of God's providential activity, nor that the natural world has to be thought to have been the subject of malign interference. Rather, it is an inevitable part of its being a finite creation that the natural world will sometimes appear harmful rather than beneficial towards humans. Water, for instance, can bring life or death, depending upon one's situation: a certain amount is necessary for life, but given a bit more one can drown in it. Similarly, oil can be used to lubricate car engines, or it can be boiled and poured over the heads of enemy troops. This dual nature of the world is not a sufficient reason to call it fallen.

"Hear them not that praise the fire's light and dispraise the heat, respecting not the nature of it but their own profit and disprofit" (AUGUSTINE(1) XII,4).

We take too narrow a view of life, relating all things to our own personal benefit and asking, "Does this suit me?" We mistake in equating providence with an optimizing of our

preferences. God seeks our good, but not our continued existence in the illusion that we are the world's centre. Our true good is to be found in relating to the world as it is, not as we wish it to be. We should not think things evil just because they hurt us or oppose our flourishing. People who think in this way

"do not observe what place in nature these things occupy, nor how much they grace the universe (like a fair state) with their contributions" (AUGUSTINE(1) XI,22).

The only fall has been in the consciousness of man, and only he is in need of redemption. Salvation consists in transforming one's outlook from a position where everything is related to the finite self as centre, to where everything is seen in its true light, as existing in its own place within the overall mercy of God. Every creature should be a sign of God to the human perceiver, assisting one to return to Him; but in the fallen state all things have a dual aspect in so far as they estrange from God as much as they reveal Him. But the fault is not in the world, but in our perception of it. So William of Thierry wrote,

"And when I first put myself to school in your service, I seem to see a new earth and new heavens, for of a sudden you make all things new for me" (Meditations 4:12).

Is this an adequate answer, though, that it is only the doors of perception which must be cleansed, that to the pure all things are pure? Is the transformation something which

takes place on the level of the human individual only? In his poem, 'The Transfiguration', Edwin MUIR (p.199) asks this question. After recording his momentary vision of a world transparent to total loveliness, with everything appearing new and holy, he writes:

"...Was it a vision
Or did we see that day the unseeable
One glory of the everlasting world
Perpetually at work, though never seen...
Was the change in us alone,
And the enormous earth still left forlorn,
An exile and a prisoner".

Is it that the world is already transfigured although we can but rarely see this? We might argue that it is impossible to hold onto the idea of a fall in man and exclude a fall in the natural world, since no absolute divide can be made between the human and the non-human. In temporal terms, the human has evolved from pre-human species and it is well-nigh impossible to decide at what point non-human becomes human.

However, it does not follow that just because we cannot (if we cannot) find a specific point at which the animal becomes the human that we cannot call one unfallen and the other fallen. There is no specific point in a child's development at which we can confidently affirm that he has become an adult, but that does not mean that we cannot affirm certain things as pertaining to adulthood but not to childhood. Similarly, there are many subtle gradations of colour between blue and yellow, but this does not prevent us

from calling one garment blue and another yellow.

But (one could reply), what we are calling non-human is also part of what it is to be human. We share many things in common with the beasts as well as possessing uniquely human traits, so that if humans are fallen then what is non-human is inevitably involved in that fall, at least in the human body. And if we can speak of nature-in-us falling, then why not also nature-in-itself, apart from such direct contact with humans?

Perhaps the human fall is best expressed as being the usurpation of control by the 'natural' elements in the person over the total personality, so that what is 'higher' and specifically human no longer rules over the 'lower' elements. Reason abdicates to passion, or is overruled by passion. In order to know the Good and to live by that knowledge, it is necessary that reason, which alone can comprehend the Good, be master over desire. We are fallen in that although our reason may still seek the Good, we are divided creatures and our baser desires are seeking other things under the misapprehension that they are the Good. Thus in practical terms we defeat reason since we perform bad actions rather than good.

But this is not in itself to say that what is lower in our nature is necessarily fallen. It is rather that there is a proper hierarchy which has been corrupted. If the order of this hierarchy has been reversed this might point to the

inadequate power of the will, which has allowed what is lower to usurp control over what is higher. The body (flesh, desires - however we wish to identify it) is the locus of sin, but not for that reason sinful itself. It is a fall for man to be controlled by elements in his psycho-physical make-up which should be submissive to his overall integrity as a morally responsible and rational creature; but just because it spells chaos for him to have the lower elements rule over the higher this does not mean that the lower nature is chaotic in its own right. In scholastic terms the human fall consists in living on the level of the sensitive rather than the rational. But the beasts only have sensitive souls: they are not fallen by living on this level. Whether they, too, are corrupted and live on the level of the vegetative (that proper to plants rather than animals) rather than the sensitive, as LEWIS((4) p.123) suggests, is a point we shall be investigating later. But to live on the sensitive level is merely to live as an animal: it is an eminently sensible option for an animal to take. For now, then, it is enough to say that it seems possible to hold that humans alone are fallen from grace, whilst nature has retained her pristine innocence.

Wholes and Parts

We have argued so far that if things seem to be wrong with the world, as well as with humans, then this is in appearance only - our vision has been impaired by sin. This

is perhaps arguable when what we call wrong with the natural world is how it affects us badly (arguable, though not very satisfactory: if we are stricken with cancer, is calling this predicament an evil just a matter of having a limited or selfish view of things?). However, the situation is surely very different when we are faced with what we consider to be 'injustice', 'waste' or 'cruelty' in the world which is unrelated to humans. Is it having a false, or limited, perspective on life to call the fact of an animal suffering unrelieved pain an evil?

Perhaps we should accept that some parts of nature are imperfect. Still, this need not impugn the goodness of the Creator: His goodness is of such a sort that takes care of the Whole but leaves the parts to take care of themselves. "The gods take care of great things, and disregard the small" (CICERO). It is not an argument normally thought acceptable to Christian thinkers, who more often distinguish between God's general providence (which cares for the Whole) and His special providence (which cares for the parts). Special providence is not to be denied, even though at times it sits rather uneasily alongside general providence.

Perhaps, though, there is no imperfection:

"All nature is but art unknown to thee,
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good." (POPE II,

35ff)

If Pope's view is correct, of course, we need speculate no longer about possible falls in the natural world: the Whole is perfect, and every part of the Whole is absolutely as it should be, despite all appearances. It transcends, whilst holding in being, every form of contrariety.

Monistic theism, which has to employ arguments of a similar kind to the sentiments expressed in Pope's verse, does seem to leave one, however, with a very problematic account of evil.

A strange unseen harmony this, one might well feel, made up of so many particular ills -

"flies are born to be devoured by spiders, who are in turn devoured by swallows, and swallows by shrikes, and shrikes by eagles and eagles are born to be killed by men, who in turn live to kill each other and to be consumed by worms or by devils."
(Voltaire, quoted by TSANOFF p.150)

One of the problems for us is that, being only 'parts', we are able to see so little and so cannot understand how the positive Whole can be constructed out of such a manifold of hideous parts. But in that case it must be asked: if we can see so little, how do we know that the Whole is a positive one? It also leaves us wondering why the perfection of the absolute should require such dark forms of life, especially since it is always represented as being One upon whom nothing alien can be forced. Its perfection is the source of things, and yet the first effect of this perfection appears to be a tremendous amount of imperfection in the realm of finite experience. The fact that, from the point of view of the

absolute (in one sense the only real point of view that there is) the world is a perfect place, can only make this absolute even more alien to us from a moral standpoint. Moreover,

"Does not our very failure to perceive the perfection of the universe destroy it?...In so far as we do not see the perfection of the universe, we are not perfect ourselves. And as we are parts of the universe that cannot be perfect" (McTAGGART sects.150,153).

The ideally perfect Whole is certainly the Whole of which all the parts are perfect. But the parts are not perfect, at the very least because they are dissatisfied with being the parts they are: so the Whole is not perfect. In all such absolutist conceptions one is left with the unfathomable mystery of an impossible evil managing to exist.

A different attempt at showing how what appears evil in the natural world is really only a disguised good, combines what has come to be known as the 'principle of gradation' with the 'principle of plenitude'. The first says that the universe is to be viewed as an immense hierarchical arrangement of beings, ranging from the meanest and most imperfect, all the way up to the wholly perfect (naturally, God). The second holds that there can be no unrealised potentialities in the world. Thus, imperfection is a strictly necessary element in the creation for there can be no gaps in the continuum. All the levels of imperfection are necessary in order to give the universe its fulness of being. It is a principle which contains a peculiar paradox: on the one hand it is argued

that there must be no unrealised potentialities in the scale of being, so every degree of imperfection must exist; on the other hand, since all evil is privation, all levels of imperfection various degrees of lacking in goodness, the scale is itself a vast unrealised potentiality for good. In order to make up the perfection of the Whole, the Whole must be made imperfect.

The two principles are joined in order to argue the case for a particular kind of theodicy. KING grants that God could have made a world free from the horrors of nature red in tooth and claw, simply by refraining from making certain kinds of animals; but this would have meant denying the world its proper fulfilment, as defined by the principle of plenitude i.e. it would have meant a diminishing of the diversity of life. Now obviously if the perfection of the world consists in having as many different forms of life and being as possible, then there is an end to all need for justifying the existence of some particular evil, for any moral imperfection in the world is overridden by the necessity for variety. The assumption behind the principle of plenitude is that "the desirability of a thing's existence bears no relation to its excellence" (LOVEJOY p.222). God's goodness is of such a kind that He desires variety of life before the well-being of the life He creates. Though (perhaps) He desires both, if there is to be a choice it will always be for the more abundant

variety. Virtue and happiness both have their place in the scale of values, but not the highest places.

Thus, for instance, if it were suggested that the Fox's seemingly pointless tendency towards overkill were an evil in the natural world, an example of how nature had 'gone wrong', it could be replied: but if the Fox did not act in this way it would not be acting according to its nature i.e. it would not be acting as a Fox and so would no longer be a Fox to that extent. But if all foxes were to fail to act as the Fox, the Fox would no longer exist and the world would be the worse off for this diminishing of variety.

There would seem to be a basic flaw in this argument. Let us say that we have two kinds, Fox and Foxa, which are identical but for one characteristic, that of a tendency to overkill (Fox has it but Foxa has not). The argument is clear: Fox, imperfections notwithstanding, ought to exist, and has as much 'right' to exist as Foxa - it is a metaphysical ought which takes precedence over all moral criteria. However, the fact that Fox exists but Foxa does not is surely as much a diminishing of variety as it would be if Foxa were to exist but not Fox.

It appears that Foxa does not exist: so the world is lacking. And it is not only Foxa who does not exist. Neither does Horses, the carnivorous horse, nor Penguin, the underwater penguin. In so far as these are non-existent, is

not the Whole terribly deficient? It is always possible to identify gaps and spaces in the scale of Being, unfulfilled possibilities of existence and ask why, if the principles of plenitude and gradation are both true, they are not filled. We can also point to the multitude of species which have become (and are becoming) extinct: do (will) they not similarly leave gaps in the Whole?

Perhaps it could be argued that whilst it is true that at any particular moment there are gaps, this is only a lack in appearance, a mistaken view to which we time-locked creatures are naturally susceptible. What else is evolution but the slow transformation of species, the gradual mutation and adaptation of types so that in the patient course of time all possible varieties will have come into being? Foxa, Horses and Pinguin have existed, or will exist in the future, even if they do not now. The One who is beyond time can see that all is complete: we see only a part. There is an infinite number of possible kinds, but that is no problem: time had no beginning and has no ending (we must assume), and so the Whole will not be deprived of its fulfilment.

Let us examine this general outlook more closely by looking at the exposition offered by Aquinas.

Aquinas and the unfallen world

Because of his adoption of the idea of evil as privation, Aquinas had no need (or, better, no room) for any idea of a

fall in the natural world. This is not to say that the presence of evil is intended by God, for He does not directly will that anything should lack goodness. Why, then, is there evil? The paradoxical answer is: for the sake of the perfection of the Whole. Without evil, the Whole cannot be a true reflection of the goodness of God.

The existence of creatures deficient in goodness is due to the fact that for God's perfection to be manifested in the universe all degrees of perfection must be present, for whilst God's perfection is single, created perfection is (of necessity) manifold. Therefore some creatures will be less perfect than others (that is, they will be more deficient in goodness). As we have said, this imperfection is not willed for its own sake, but only for the sake of the completeness of the Whole. In scholastic terms we can say that, as deficiency, evil has no formal cause, but only an accidental cause. It has no 'positive' existence, but only a 'negative' one.

Because degrees of imperfection are necessary to make up the perfection of the Whole there is no need to hold that nature has lost anything of her original goodness. What was lost at the Fall was man's beatitude alone, which is now only available as a product of unmerited grace, a special favour which God bestows on man.

Does such a conception make sense? Let us assume that

only the highest level of created being exists. Would the universe be further improved by the added existence of beings nearer the bottom of the metaphysical ladder? Is goodness, or being, something quantifiable which can be added to itself, so that ten angels and one human is preferable to just ten angels? And if being is quantifiable, is it just levels of being, or is it also types of creatures, or again numbers of types, which can be added to make up the fulness of the Whole?

If the addition of numbers of particular types is important, so that one hundred tigers is better than ninety-nine, then we are bound to multiply the numbers of creatures in the universe in order to increase the amount of good. This multiplication will have to take place on all levels of being (for all are important), so that it is not only the number of tigers which must be increased, but also the numbers of humans and daffodils. But, obviously, however many of a kind there are, more can always be added, thereby further increasing the amount of goodness in the world. But if more numbers (and so more goodness) can always be added, then the universe can never, despite its manifold variety, reflect the simple goodness of God. One could argue that numbers can be indefinitely added over infinite time, so that there could be an infinite number of each kind. However, this conflicts with the suggestion made earlier concerning the conceivability of there being no gap in the series of kinds,

so that Fox will be replaced by Foxa, Horse give way to Horses, and so on. But this picture relies on each kind existing for only a limited time, on there being constant a transformation of types, and in this case there could only be a limited number of any species. The command to be fruitful and multiply, treated as a metaphysical necessity, is incapable of achieving its purpose - the perfect manifestation of God in finite reality.

If it is not numbers which are to be added, then perhaps it is types. We cannot call the existence of a particular carnivorous species an imperfection in the universe without immediately adding that this species is necessary, with all its agreed imperfection, for the making up of the wholeness of the created order. It is not enough for gazelles to exist: lions must exist as well. It is not clear, though, why there should be more than one type on each level of being. Humans are taken to be the only kind on their particular grade, so there is no problem there. They are the only animals with rational souls. But lions and gazelles are both variations on the theme of irrational, but sensitive-souled creatures. How does the lion add anything, in metaphysical terms, to what is already offered by the gazelle? To show that the lion does manifest more of God's glory in the universe we would have to show, on the scheme presented by Aquinas, that they and gazelles were at different points on the scale of value. To

my knowledge, this kind of valuation of species within a broad category of being has never been attempted - nor can one imagine that it could ever be anything other than quite arbitrary (which is 'better', an elephant or a giraffe?).

One suggestion which could be made as to why there are different kinds of sentient being is that different types embody different virtues: the Dog embodies Faithfulness, the Dove embodies Purity, and so on. On this reading the mediaeval bestiaries were broadly correct in understanding animals as variously exemplifying the moral life. But unless we are happy with adopting this kind of view the conclusion to be drawn is that, in theological terms, no variety can be added by the coming into existence of more than one type on any particular level of being. Indeed, even the beasts-as-virtues view appears to be undermined by the common supposition that all the virtues can be realised on the level of human existence, so that there is no need for their additional manifestation in the beasts.

If it is not types which can be added to better show the perfection of God, then we are left with broad categories of being. There are creatures with existence but not life, those with existence and life but not sentience, and so on up the scale until we reach the pinnacle of the created order with the ranks of bodiless spirits. Each of these levels, then, must be represented individually and separately, whether they are

made up of only one species (as on the rational animal level) or countless species (as on the angelic level - for various reasons Aquinas treats each angel as a member of a different species).

It is still puzzling, though, why these various degrees of imperfection should exist as independent entities. After all, Aquinas can say that nature does participate fully in the final end and redemption of all things, even though they only do so in so far as there is a union of nature and grace in man. But if humans can represent the creation at the redemption can they not also represent the created order in its earthly reality? There seems to be no compelling need for the numerous other levels of being as separate entities (GALLOWAY(1) pp.123ff). Or if there is felt to be such a need then it exists equally in the order of redemption.

But the scholastic doctrine of the Chain of Being tells against the separate existence of levels in both cases, since it expressly holds that each level contains within it the being of all that is below. If we call A the lowest level and Z the highest, then A is contained in B, A and B are contained in C, and so on up to Z which contains everything from A to Y. If all created being exists in Z why should it also exist outside of Z: is this not a mere duplication of being? To be sure, Aquinas, contrary to the opinion of his contemporaries, argued that none of this means a multiplicity of souls in

creatures: humans don't have a plant soul and an animal soul and a human soul. To speak thus would make it difficult to understand clearly who could be said to be speaking, eating, writing a letter and so on - is it just one person or many? So each human has only one soul - a rational one. Yet in other respects the principle remains the same as in the idea of multiple souls, for the rational soul is still inclusive in that it controls and organises the animal and vegetable functions in the human body.

The manifold goodness of creation, which exists to manifest the simple goodness of God, is thus itself represented in each human - each human rather than each angel for it is another of the peculiarities of the system that although angels are higher than humans on the objective scale of being, humans can contain in themselves all types of being, both higher and lower, since they alone are microcosms of the universe. Spirit is higher than matter, but angels, being bodiless, cannot 'contain' matter. Humans can, being that unique mix of immortal spirit and animal - they contain the whole compass of being within themselves. Given this picture of the cosmos, the independent existence of other creatures (including angels) does not seem to make sense.

There is another danger with an approach such as this, and with any attempt to explain evil by relying upon some supposed proof of the logical inevitability of a given element

in this, the best of all possible worlds. Although Aquinas would not have held that this is the best possible world in quite such explicit terms, nonetheless he comes close to the heresy with which Bernard (justly or not) charged Abelard:

"that God ought not to prevent evils, since by his beneficence everything that happens does so in the best possible way" (cited in LOVEJOY p.73).

The more closely one associates the present state of the world with being a necessary one if the creation is to exist at all, the more one leaves things in the world uncriticisable, since all possible contingent reality is then postulated as necessarily containing evil. We are also moving away from the whole idea that God's reason for creating at all is to express and share His goodness.

The Christian tradition has always resisted the idea that any act of creation is a necessity for God, either as a means of expressing His goodness, or for anything else. Not only is this particular world not necessary, but no world is. God creates by a free decision and not by any kind of inevitable emanation. Athanasius held that creation is an act of the will of God and that 'will' must always be kept ontologically distinct from 'nature'. By nature the Father generates the Son, but it is by the will of God that creation occurs, and this means that God remains absolutely free to create or not to create. Neither Arius nor Origen made such a distinction between the nature of God and the will of God and this fact

certainly contributed towards the rejection of their systems (FLOROVSKY).

A Utilitarian Argument

Another Whole-parts argument which is accepting of predation as a good, though acknowledging at the same time that there is evil in it as well (of a lesser amount than there is good) is one which is based on a utilitarian approach to the world.

"One thing is certain, an animal kingdom such as we know on earth is infinitely better than no variety of animals at all. A vast kingdom of predacious animals is better than the much more limited number of herbivores who could live on plants alone."(TURNER p.110)

It is better that one animal should be devoured by another than that it should never have existed (PLOTINUS 3,2,14ff). I simply see no reason for accepting such arguments. From whose point of view is it better that such an animal should have existed? The individual who is devoured? Perhaps many animals would opt, if given the choice, to exist on this earth even if they knew that they would be devoured by another (though how can we presume to know?). Perhaps we, too, would accept existence on such terms. Such a decision would depend upon a great many things in each individual's life - the quality and manner of existence before the moment of being devoured (and perhaps the precise manner of devouring). To argue that the bare fact of existence always takes precedence over the quality of each particular life, so that one can

ignore such things as the amount of pain a creature may have to endure, or the exact manner of death, runs completely counter to the whole tenor of utilitarianism, which must, of course, carefully weigh all such things.

If it were true that sentient existence on any terms is preferable to non-existence, it would seem that we were morally bound to bring as many creatures into the world as possible, since this would automatically constitute doing something valuable, no matter what disadvantages in terms of life-style might follow - overcrowding, starvation through food shortages, and so on. Perhaps a human population of over ten thousand million would seriously disrupt Gaia (LOVELOCK p.132), but that would not be an evil in any sense that this position could comprehend. Again, any attempt at a theodicy, on the basis of this argument, is quite beside the point: God has given us the gift of life - what matter if that life be endless torment?

So maybe from the point of view of the individual being devoured, existence is not always a good. But in terms of a cosmos-sized utilitarian calculus it is claimed that it is. The predatory world provides its own pleasures, in addition to the regrettable pains, and these pleasures justify its existence. Although creatures pursued and eaten undoubtedly suffer in the process, the predators find in the exercising of their predatory instincts pleasurable feelings that far

outweigh the pains of those unfortunate enough to be their victims (KING). So, too, it would be immoral to deny the hunter the skill and excitement of the chase. How one can know that the intricate balance between pain and pleasure falls so securely on the side of pleasure is beyond me; but let that pass, for it is a strange position which holds that the infliction of suffering is agreeable to God as long as the pleasure it affords is greater than the pain caused. None are more justified in torturing than those who enjoy it.

Utilitarianism would appear to support King's position (if the calculus does weigh in favour of the predators). But it is one of the more ambiguous aspects of utilitarianism that it seems, in some circumstances, to permit such an interpretation of its position. Most utilitarians would find the stance too counter-intuitive and would feel that inflicting pain to increase pleasure is not an acceptable way of increasing the total amount of happiness in the world. Certainly, those not formally committed to the utilitarian position are likely to have no hesitation in finding King's arguments seriously wanting.

Ethics in an Unfallen World

The most persuasive argument that we have so far found to support the thesis that only man can be rightly said to be fallen, and that therefore any evil in nature must be an intrinsic part of its being, is that which ties fallenness to

the capacity for moral obedience and disobedience, something with which humans alone are endowed.

But even if nature is not itself 'fallen' or 'sinful', it might still be correct to speak of it being in some sense in 'bondage'. Perhaps the natural world is held in thrall by man:

"God said to Noah, 'The loathsomeness of all mankind has become plain to me, for through them the earth is full of violence'" (Gen.6:13).

In terms of the Priestly writer's outlook, the violence that corrupted all the earth is traceable to mankind. Again, when Jerome asks how sense can be made of Paul's writing of the liberation of the whole of creation (Rom.8:18ff), how the sun is in slavery and how it is to be set free, he answers that the sun is in bondage because it has to bear with evil in the world:

"It beholds parricides; it looks upon homicides; yet it is always obeying the command of him who issued it: 'For he makes his sun to rise on the just and the evil'" (Jerome:On the Psalms:58).

God has chosen to bind the world in the consequences of human sin, and it is from this that it needs to be liberated. Similarly, Anselm presents the view that the universe is fallen in so far as it is infected with human sin:

"When man does not will what he ought, he dishonours God, so far as in him lies, since he submits not himself freely to God's direction, and, as far as he can, perturbs the order and beauty of the universe" (Cur Deus Homo? 1:15).

What sorts of implications does this view have for our present relationships with animals? It is interesting how far such a view is from the rather querulous dissatisfaction with life that often finds expression:

"We for a certainty are not the first
Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed
Whatever brute and blackguard made the world"

(A.E. Houseman: Last Poems).

We are wont to think of ourselves, and humanity in general, as nobly struggling towards the divine despite the indifferent, or even openly hostile, universe. There is a tragic nobility in the human situation: the tragedy stems from uncontrollable forces outside of ourselves with which we have to grapple, whilst all within is grandeur and nobility. Existentialism has generally fostered such a picture.

This picture stands in marked contrast to what we have suggested as the Christian view. Basically, this latter says that the world is good enough (indeed, it is perfect) but we are born into a depraved species. Moreover, we can hardly complain that this is an accident of birth which has no relation to us now, since each one of us freely casts his lot on the side of depravity again and again throughout life (DERRICK). There is no question that humanity is relatively innocent, but unfortunately trapped into a vile world: "We should not injure our Creator by imputing our vices to our flesh" (AUGUSTINE(1) XIV:5). In itself matter implies no

tendency to disorder, and is certainly not the direct cause of evil.

This does not necessarily mean that we ought to view nature as a guide, retracing our erring steps back to her faithful ways. They may be perfect for her, but that does not mean that they are for us. As we have already noted, in scholastic terms one result of the fall is that we live according to the fashion of the beasts. They, quite obviously, were created to live like that: we were not. Tigers may be the best exemplars of Tigerhood, but our Form is a different one, and with regard to the tiger our task is to "admire his stripes while avoiding his claws" (CHESTERTON p.110).

If only man is vile, this points to an ethic of non-interference in the natural world. The laws governing nature, the whole 'givenness' of the natural world, is something willed by God. There is not a static world in which we are obliged to maintain some imaginary status quo, for we know that not only are species continually being lost, and new ones evolving, and much of this not due at all to human influence, but the whole make-up of eco-systems is constantly changing. It may be right to exercise a certain pressure of preservation with regard to some particular species, but we are not bound to do so. But if we are not to police and protect existing environmental structures, neither are we to

imagine that the world is in need of 'humanisation' or improving in any way. Nature does not need to be restored to some lost dignity. It is we who need that. Whilst it is certainly possible to argue that the creation, to be complete, needs human adornment, that points to the necessity for humans to co-operate with God in working out their own salvation so as to present themselves as an unblemished contribution to the created order. If the natural world is already perfect, there is nothing that humans can add to it. We should involve ourselves in the natural world, then, only in so far as is absolutely necessary - and this not because it might pollute us, as some of the more ascetic world philosophies have suggested, but so that we might not injure it further (cf LE GUIN p.361).

But is it not, in fact, necessary for us to make extensive use of the natural world - and as regards animals, to kill them for food and clothing, and to experiment upon them for our legitimate good? We need to be careful here. A picture of the world which sees humans alone as sinners and nature in a state of innocence, would suggest that the suffering and death endured by humans is a more justifiable feature of the world than similar pains and deaths undergone in the animal world. All men are sinners (and inheritors of original sin), and deserve to die, for the wages of sin is death. We tend to feel a profound sense of justice at work as

we face our inevitable death - in the acknowledgement of our guilt we also recognise death as somehow 'right' for us. Animals, on the other hand, are incapable of sin and so cannot 'deserve' either suffering or death. This does not mean that they have any sort of absolute 'right' to life against the Creator, for it is difficult to see how any creature could have that, but they stand before death as moral 'neutrals', as it were, unlike us guilty ones. Vivisection then looks like an attempt to shift the consequences of our guilt onto animals:

"there can be no offence more shocking and no act more dastardly than this of trying to shift the natural punishment of our own sins and vices and stupidities, on to the shoulders of those who are powerless to resist us" (Caird, quoted in FRENCH p.335).

If God does punish sin, and if death and suffering are part of the divine retribution for disobedience, then any use of animals to avoid such deserved punishment is not only unjust towards animals, but also an attempt to evade God's judgement.

Chapter IV
THE FALLEN WORLD

It is often said that the Judaeo-Christian tradition is deeply committed to a belief in the basic goodness of creation. What is meant by this, in view of what we have said so far? The world is not itself the supreme Being, Who is the only perfect Good. Since it is dependent on that Being it cannot be perfect, for if it were so it would be God. An effect is always less than its cause, is an 'image' of the cause as the neo-platonists would say, and so cannot be on the same level, but must be to it as a reflection is to the object reflected. It logically follows from this that the world cannot be metaphysically perfect. God's omnipotence does not extend to the power of creating another God.

Beyond this, though, the logical impossibility of the creation being perfect, the Catholic tradition has been at pains to emphasise that the world as a whole must be good: that is, the evil in it must be subordinate to the good since evil is a perversion of goodness, a parasite upon prior goodness. In as much as there is evil, there is also good. If sin had abolished all good it would have abolished all being along with the good and the world would no longer exist. Evil cannot eliminate nature without eliminating itself. It was because he accepted this basic position that Anthony,

father of monks, could say that even the devils could be redeemed, since they were created as angels. They were created good, and even their treason cannot eradicate that (ATHANASIUS(2) Ch.22).

But one is free to allow as many devils as one likes, provided that it is remembered that all evil is 'overcome' by good. Evil is not only an 'appearance', even though it is logically dependent upon the priority of goodness. To allow that there is evil is not necessarily to compromise the goodness of God, for He is not identical with the creation. Neither is it a denial of the world's basic goodness to allow that there may be non-necessary evil in the world.

Is it a Christian view, then, that the natural world, as well as man, is somehow fallen from its original perfection? And does it now lie under a slavery comparable to that endured by the human race? To ask a connected, but different, question: if the first Christians believed that the natural world is radically imperfect (and we shall have to look to see whether they did) is this something we can still believe now, or must it be dismissed as part of a credal content belonging to an age that could still take animism and other such (supposed) fantasies seriously?

A voice from the Middle Ages represents one deeply-rooted strand in Christian thought, with its low estimation of life on this passing earth:

"Our lives in this world are a tissue of fear, of toil, of suffering; not for us the sight of God, the joys of paradise, the food of heaven" (Aelred of Rievaulx, cited in HALLIER p.158).

The monastic tradition, from which Aelred speaks, tended to be imbued, from the beginning, with a certain pessimism towards the world. To a large extent this was just a reflection of a much wider social attitude, which was shared in particular by the lower and poorer classes (VANDENBROUCKE pp.31ff) - Aelred is giving a realistic account of lower class life. But it must also be admitted that some monastic writers did not escape a frankly unchristian, because pejorative, attitude towards the material world. Another strong influence on the early monastics - as on the early church as a whole - this time a philosophical one, was that of Platonism, from which was learnt a certain distrust of the physical. The sensible universe was to be ignored, in order that the only Real world, that of the spiritual Ideas, might be attained.

This is not entirely fair to Plato himself. Although Aristotle credits him with a straightforward dualism, and on this point ranges him with Empedocles and Anaxagoras (Metaphysics A,6,988a 7-17), it is not easy to find a clear text in Plato to justify such an assertion. Presumably, on Aristotle's view, the principle of evil for Plato would be matter; but it seems fairly clear that he did not consider matter itself to be evil, or the source of evil. It is a lesser reality than the Ideas, certainly, but the dark region

is not the earth - which has a sort of being, however tenuous - but non-being itself (cf. Republic 514aff). There is no need to suppose that a Platonic outlook must lead to a denigration of the material world. Physical objects are only shadows of the Forms, and are thus neither wholly real nor wholly good (since reality and goodness are correlative) - indeed, Plato held to a theory of value which placed matter at the foot of the scale. Still, even at the lowest level of reality, it remains a manifestation of the eternal, archetypal world, and as such worthy of the utmost respect. As that famous Christian neo-platonist was later to write:

"earthly things are not comparable to heavenly: yet might not the world be without them, because the others are more glorious" (AUGUSTINE(1) XII,4).

A greater danger, which assailed Christianity from the beginning, was that of Gnosticism, which simply identified evil with the material world. This earth is ruled by demonic forces ('Archons'), who are utterly opposed to the First Life. Their tyrannical rule is called 'heimarmene' - that is, universal fate - which in its physical aspect corresponds to the laws of nature. Unlike Platonism, then, Gnosticism does not say that there is a less than perfect order in nature, which shows the world to be deficient in goodness. On the contrary, the world is bound by a rigid and demonic order:

"The blemish of nature lies not in any deficiency of order but in the all-too-pervading completeness of it" (JONAS(1) p.253).

God only became involved in the world's tangled destiny at all in order to retrieve the divine sparks imprisoned in the universe. The world, then, is seen as the domain of Satan, and all temporal realities are understood to be inevitably heading for perdition. Animals, along with the rest of nature, are abandoned by God to the demons and the church's task is restricted to the invisible empire of souls.

In the face of a world like this, man's only hope lies in learning the truth that sensible reality is valueless and completely opposed to what he must understand as his true Self. Any emulation of the natural is simply a further consorting with evil and in this lies the danger of forgetfulness of one's true identity, which can only be discovered when one lives as a stranger to the world. The earth not only reveals nothing of God's glory, it actually distracts one (deliberately?) from true worship, saying

"Come let us make a great unheaval, that he may forget the heavenly voices" (cited in JONAS(1) p.53).

Ignoring the world and showing one's disregard for the material can take many forms, but principally the way to enlightenment in this tradition has consisted in either a life of extreme dissipation and self-indulgence, or else an equally extreme asceticism. Both ways are dismissive of the life of normality, cluttered as it is with its superstitious taboos, its over-concern with earthly affairs and its moral

scrupulosity, all things opposed to the way of salvation, which lies only through the gaining of spiritual knowledge far transcending such matters.

The monastic way obviously stands in an ascetic tradition, but although some kind of gnostic contempt for society and the material world may have provided part of the initial impetus to the movement, it is not a typical feature of mainstream monasticism. The desert Fathers were clearly ascetics, but the aim of the monks' lives was not asceticism but God, and the way to God was charity (BENEDICTA WARD(2) XV). As Abba Poeman said:

"We have not been taught to kill our bodies, but to kill our passions" (cited in BENEDICTA WARD(2) p.162).

The Fall and Contingency

A theology which is centred around Christ, through Whom all things were made and in Whom they subsist, cannot hold contingency itself to be an imperfection. Admittedly, any tradition which holds that contingency is the point where evil enters is perhaps an easier position to develop than any idea of a radical transformation within time and the history of the world. The Creation and the Fall are then viewed as one and the same thing, the Fall occurring at the moment of transition from essence to existence (TILLICH II pp.41ff). So it is argued that every empirical manifestation of life is inevitably defective: there is no perfect circle in existence.

But the question is begged by talking about 'perfect' circles in the first place. We could as well speak of circles that are 'non-exact', or 'variant manifestations of circles', or 'near approximations to circles'. There is no compelling reason to think of, or imply, any moral or metaphysical imperfection in this context. Still, does not any contingent world lack reality (an implication of the word 'contingent'), and so is it not to this extent imperfect after all?

Obviously, creation is unreal compared to the Creator, who alone is perfect Being. But if we are going on this account to call the whole created order 'fallen', we are uttering little more than a truism. Creation is less than God: about this none would disagree. But the interesting question remains: is it also 'fallen' in being less in terms of the created reality that it was intended to be? This would be a falling away of its already limited being into a deeper sphere of unlikeness.

Why should a contingent universe necessarily involve evil in this sense? Contingency, first of all, is not to be confused with change: the former does not imply the latter. To call an object 'contingent' is only to say that it is in a state of dependence, of non-necessity with regard to its own being. In this context we are calling the universe 'contingent' in order to specify that it is dependent for its existence upon the will of God. So there is no necessary link

between contingency and change - most things we know, which are part of a contingent universe, do change, but there is no compelling reason why created reality should be like that (and we tend to assume that some things at least do not change e.g. logical and mathematical axioms). It is possible that God could have brought about a state of contingent immutability, one of unchanging blessedness for His creatures. Such a state would be timeless (for it makes no sense to ask how long an unchanging state has existed, since time is a measurement of change, and where there is no change time becomes an inapplicable concept); but there need be no confusion between the creation's and God's timelessness, since the concept of creation is essentially to do with the relation of dependence and this is not threatened in any way by a timeless universe. On the other hand, there would presumably be at least one change: that of the non-existence of a changeless universe to the existence of a changeless universe. That the creation indeed had a beginning in this sense is the verdict of Christian revelation. But even if it were co-eternal with God one could still speak of its dependence on Him.

Zoroastrianism, in its Zurvanite manifestation, conceives of Ohrmazd's original creation as wholly static, "without thought, without movement, intangible", and it is only the disorderly movement of Az (the principle of generative and degenerative processes) that sets the temporal processes going

(ZAEHNER(1) Ch.10). In the present world all is subject to coming-to-be and passing-away, to birth and death (the vision is similar to Buddhist conceptions of the world as samsara). The world's processes are at once that on which evil feeds, and at the same time provide the arena for God's struggle to rescue temporal existence from its contorted, conditioned nature within time. The aim is to subsume the material world into spirit - not an undifferentiated One from which existents once issued forth, but a timeless cosmos in which all created things achieve their fulfilment, finally delivered from the toils of concupiscence. The material world will partake of the spiritual world without ceasing to be material - nature will be clad in spirit. To repeat: God could have created a state of unchanging bliss for His creatures had He so wished. Why, then, didn't He?

He did. The Judaeo-Christian stories of creation, like the Zoroastrian myths, hold that such a world was prepared for the happiness of creation, and only the rational beings were left free with the choice of whether they would relate to such a world as it truly existed, participating in the vision of things from within the Logos, or whether they would seek to know things as they were not, but according to their own private fantasies. The legends tell of the angelic and human races choosing to create their own worlds - that is, choosing to live by their own vision of the world, for it was never

accepted that the world could ever finally be anything other than it is as known by the Good. The timeless paradise, where "Spring and Autumn here/ Danc'd hand in hand" (Milton:Paradise Lost V:394f) was lost through disobedience.

At the same time, the Judaeo-Christian tradition attaches a very positive role to change itself and to the possibilities inherent in change. The ability of a creature to move from potentiality to actuality is desired by God more than the immediate creation of that creature in its actuality. Where the question of freewill in rational creatures is involved this is easily explicable: for such a creature to be truly free, it needs to be able to exercise its faculty of willing and desiring and acting. A creature with freewill needs to use it or else it remains only in 'potentia'. But the use of freewill implies the possibility of the wrong use of it, and hence the possibility of evil and failure entering the creation.

It is harder to see why God should have wanted to create an oak tree in potential and then sustain its movement towards actuality, rather than just create a fully actualised oak tree. There is no question here of freewill being involved. Nonetheless, perhaps we can make sense of the idea of God giving His creation a certain power to create itself - some kind of freedom which is present in all parts of the created order and which finds its peak in the rational freewill of

man.

But if change and freedom open the possibilities to much that is good, they also allow evil into the world. Evil does not exist in nature: both act and being are good (Aristotle: Metaphysics 9,1051a). However, matter is potentiality, and this is its connection with evil. It is not bad in itself, but because it is contingent and mutable there is the constant possibility of mutation and monsters. Matter, without being in itself an evil, makes evil a possibility.

There seems to be a certain indeterminacy in the most basic structures of nature which allows for a measure of freedom to be enjoyed by all created existence. The 'laws' of nature are generally taken to be statistical rather than absolute, and descriptive rather than prescriptive; so, for example, Mendel's laws of heredity are of a statistical nature: predicting the colour of a flower which is a cross-breed between red and white flowers is similar to tossing a coin - we cannot predict with certainty whether any particular toss will come out heads or tails. Similarly, we cannot be sure whether the colour of the flower will be red, white or pink, although in the end we can safely assume that there will be similar proportions. Most formulations of evolutionary theory are also of a statistical nature (KOEHLER p.108; HULL). This element of randomness in the natural world allows creatures to develop in ways other than the Creator

intends - which is not to say, of course, that it necessarily leads to disorder. But there is an ambivalence in the status of everything: the sun is life-giving, but also, in certain circumstances, deadly (e.g. if you happen to be an ant under a magnifying glass).

Much of what is often understood by the phrase 'natural evil' is really the result of this ambivalence, of the fact that

"where there are general laws, particular accidents to sentient beings which are governed by these laws are unavoidable" (K. WARD p.115).

Given beings who have a certain measure of freedom, it is necessary that there be a basic reliability and order in the universe so that they can plan their lives effectively on the basis of experienced regularities. A universe in which there was a wholly arbitrary sequence of events would be a world in which it was impossible to learn from the past or make inferences from past to future and expect them to be correct. Even a Humean has a psychological certainty on which he can fall back, though he no longer has faith that necessary connection and probable patterns are real parts of the outside world. Perhaps there is no logical entailment that the sun will rise tomorrow - indeed, not even a rational justification for considering such a thing likely or probable (for Hume's is not a probabilistic account); perhaps we lack the Berkeleyan assurance that God will see to it that events are brought

about in regular and familiar patterns (even though there is no necessary connection between events themselves); still, a Humean expects his own mind to be trustworthy in continuing to hold the same expectations about regularity and stable patterns. At the very least, he has faith in his own habitual expectations remaining constant, however non-rational they are in terms of what is happening in the world beyond such hopes. Given the naturalistic presumptions of Hume's outlook, it is not entirely clear why psychological certainty should be thought possible, whilst faith in other kinds of connection have been held in abeyance. If an epiphenomenal or materialistic account of mind is given, and there is held to be no necessary connection between material events, so that we cannot be even reasonably sure that x will continue to follow y, how can there be thought to be any necessary expectation (amounting to psychological certainty) in the mind that x will continue to follow y? How can I be sure that the matter which underlies or produces my 'thoughts' will follow any more predictable a sequence than matter elsewhere? I can no longer even believe a Humean account of causality and expect to be believing it in an hour's time.

But if our expectations and perceptions of the world are largely true, and there is regularity in the natural world which our psychological certainty reflects, then there is also the possibility of sentient creatures suffering. If the

material universe had only Me as its inhabitant it might conform at every moment to my wishes, but if another creature were introduced it could not also exercise freedom of action at all since the universe would be constantly altering at my whim and pleasure. If a pebble lies where I want it, it cannot, except by a coincidence, lie where you want it. We might agree upon its resting place, but we might not (LEWIS(4) pp.20f).

So, whilst neither contingency nor change are themselves evil, and whilst they do not necessarily introduce evil into the universe, together they allow the possibility of evil. Evil is a foreseen, but not intended, by-product of freedom and change. God is operating the principle of double-effect.

One of the possible evils that has come about is perhaps the fact that so much of the creation is structured upon conflict, both in the human and non-human worlds:

"The whole earth, believe me, Philo, is cursed and polluted. A perpetual war is kindled amongst all living creatures...The stronger prey upon the weaker and keep them in perpetual terror and anxiety. The weaker, too, in their turn, often prey upon the stronger, and vex and molest them without relaxation" (HUME(1) p.62).

But this is not to say that the world should not exist. A theist, who believes the earth to be the freely-willed creation of an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God, can hardly arrive at such a conclusion. How could we ever be right about such a subject in such a way as to make that Being

wrong? If God is willing that the world, with all its evil, should continue in existence, we cannot will less. So it is not necessary to believe that a world should have been created without the possibility of evil being introduced into it. To suggest that some aspects of the world are fallen is only to say that it contains evil which is not necessary evil.

Biblical Insights into the Fall

We now turn to see whether it could be said to be a Christian position that the natural world is somehow fallen by looking at the biblical sources. At first, we seem to be offered two quite distinct ways of looking at this question of whether there is evil in nature. On the one hand, we find in Gen.1 that the 'creeping things' are part of the goodness of creation. On the other hand, we are presented with the levitical outlook which characterises many creatures, especially those which swarm, as unclean. Both these traditions are brought together, rather confusingly, in the episode of the Flood (Gen.6 - 8).

Jean SOLER makes the interesting suggestion that the list of clean animals in Lev.11 coincides with a general list of herbivores. If she is right, and it is this which underlies the distinction between clean and unclean, then it points back to the paradise traditions, since there all animals were unfallen (clean?) and were vegetarian. A carnivorous animal, having taken life, would be unclean. It is notable that the

unclean birds on the list are those which are carnivorous (or might well have been suspected to be). Mentioning 'chew the cud' and 'cloven hoof' also cuts out pigs, who are omnivorous. Actually, some herbivores are also excluded by 'cloven hoof', but she feels that this might be a reference to the distinction between domestic and wild animals (Gen.1:24): it is the domestic who are clean. So, can we identify this levitical tradition as one which held that the non-vegetarian state in nature is unclean (fallen)?

Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that. For one thing, the vegetarian (clean) and carnivorous (unclean) distinction does not quite hold - not all the herbivores are clean, as we have noted, and fish pose an extra problem.

Soler suggested that domestic animals are clean, whereas wild might not be. However, if we were to follow the view of Mary DOUGLAS(1), that uncleanness is closely related to the idea of breaking boundaries, then we would quickly arrive at an opposite conclusion. She points out that, as a race, the Jews were (are) exceptionally boundary-conscious. But domestication tends to lead to far fewer inhibitions about crossing various kinds of boundaries: for example, it causes a blunting of the normal aversion of species to mate with members of other kinds - man is the least exclusive in his 'amours', being the most civilised, as Lev.18:23 recognised. Domestication has also helped corrupt our natural diet, which

is that of non-carnivorous anthropoid apes (J.R.BAKER p.95).
It is the wild who are clean.

Perhaps we should not be too quick to identify 'uncleanness' with evil and 'cleanness' with goodness. Or, if we should, then it is merely one of the last remnants of a superstitious Israelite conscience, which had yet to grow into the more purely spiritual religion of the later Hebrews (ROBERTSON SMITH). Or again (and more plausibly) it has to do with those animals being counted as unclean which are associated in some way with pagan religions and culture. If this is the case then there is no implication involved that any animals are themselves fallen: it is a matter of the image of certain animals being corrupted through heathen associations (NOTH). We have insufficient evidence to either confirm or refute any of these theories, though some may seem more likely to us than others. All of them have their problems - for example, if uncleanness is a matter of breaking boundaries, why were the boundaries placed where they were? That is the further question that has to be answered. No explanation has yet been found which fits the lists exactly.

If we leave the intractability of this particular area, I think we can still see that the biblical documents do lead us to understand the natural world, as well as man, as being in some sense fallen. Although there is no extended, or remotely systematic, account of what the world would be like were it

not contaminated by evil, the conviction that (whatever it should be like) the creation as we now have it cannot be the desire or design of a perfectly good Creator, can be found in the earliest chapters of Genesis. In the beginning God saw that it was good: this is the 'priority' of goodness to which we have referred, the fact that all evil is parasitical on goodness. After the flood God makes a covenant with all living beings, and with the earth, and the blessing 'Be fruitful and increase' is repeated (Gen.9:1; cf.1:28); but the subsequent, 'And God saw that it was very good' is no longer heard. The harmony has been shattered. Attention is immediately drawn to one of the effects of this loss of harmony: man, who rebels against God (Ch.3) and kills his own kind (Ch.4) also slaughters his fellow creatures (Ch.9). The animals who once came to Adam to be named now flee from him in fear. This present attitude of animals towards humans is a constant reminder of man's original rebellion (Chrysostom: De statvis hom:8,1). In paradise the human fare was vegetarian - now every creature that lives and moves is food for him.

All this is not yet to say, however, that the natural world is fallen in itself, apart from its relation to man. The fall is seen here to consist precisely in the corruption of all relationships in which humans are involved - whether with other humans, God or nature. But are the relationships in the natural world also corrupted?

Sin entered the world through man:

"It was through one man that sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus death pervaded the whole human race, inasmuch as all men have sinned" (Rom.5:12).

The word for 'world' here is 'cosmos' which can be used fairly narrowly of mankind alone (as in Jn.12:19;18:20), but is mostly employed in the much wider sense of the whole universe (Rom.1:20; Matt.13:35). The primary reference in this particular passage is probably to Adam and his descendants, but the Genesis story to which this verse directs us is one which includes the whole world in the scope of human sin.

This is not to say that the idea of animals being fallen need be linked to any personal responsibility on their part for their state: it is not the pot's fault if the potter breaks it, and we do not have to deny its brokenness just because it is inconceivable that it broke itself. So with the animal fall: not being free, responsible creatures they cannot have deserved their present state of corruption, but we need not deny that malificent agents may have been at work just because such agents cannot have been the beasts themselves.

This seems an unjust way to organise a world (to put the point at its crudest), that the innocent should be bearing the effects of the sin of others. The Jewish and Christian hope, then, has always been that this is not a final picture of reality, that there will be a time when the righteous are rewarded, when "joy prevails and all the makers of misery are

no longer able to infect it" (LEWIS(2) p.111). But in this present "age" the creatures of the world are interdependent in such a way that the sin of one means that others suffer and the righteousness of one that others are saved.

Is not this conception of the world a refusal to accept the principle of personal responsibility for one's actions by taking refuge in corporate sin, thus evading the challenge to act righteously? God, says Ezekiel, will judge each according to his own deeds; He will not, because the fathers have eaten sour grapes, set the children's teeth on edge. But this is not at odds with the idea of the organic interdependence of life, with the fact that wickedness perpetrated by one has consequences for other creatures as well. Rather, the theme of personal responsibility takes on an extra seriousness the more this is stressed: because what I do has an effect on others, for good or ill, I must not acquiesce in evil, and I must be all the more aware of the possible consequences of my actions.

When Israel sins, then, the whole land is laid waste, and when she returns from exile the land blossoms anew (cf. Is. 41). If we insist on reading such passages as merely the enthusiasms of pious hope, metaphors of the author's delight, it is because we are unable to grasp the sheer concreteness of Hebrew spirituality, the "intimate association of man and nature in their relation to the mystery of iniquity" (CAIRD

p.121).

It seems clear that Paul refers present animal woes to the Fall (Rom.8:18ff), and this is the case whether the 'him' who subjected creation to vanity is a reference to God or to Adam. It is a point which was picked up by Theophilus of Antioch (ad Autolyicum 2:17), and Chrysostom in his commentary on Romans.

But is not Paul's argument now seen to be inadmissible? Who is the 'him' who subjected creation to vanity and decay? If we say that Paul is referring to God, then he is imputing to the Creator contradictory intentions (LINZEY p.116 n.12) - why should God want to inflict suffering on His creation and then hold out hope for better times to come? If, on the other hand, we say that the 'him' refers to Adam (as seems more likely in terms of Paul's argument) then we have to accept that Paul was simply wrong. However we understand the fallenness of the world there is no evidence that with the appearance of man on the planet the natural order underwent profound changes in its internal structures. The Genesis tale of the Fall may have aetiological value, reflecting the author's conviction of the extent to which the human and animal worlds are bound together in a common destiny, but we can no longer accept that Adam was himself responsible for a historical fall in nature.

There is a third alternative which has appealed to

thinkers in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and that is one which draws upon scriptural hints of a profound disunity in the heavens themselves. The various elements in the natural world have angels appointed to preside over them (Jub.2:2ff), but this office has been maliciously twisted with the rebellion of many of the spirits against the First Good. So it is not true to say that whilst the earth manifests God's glory only imperfectly it is perfectly shown in heaven: heaven itself is fallen. There can be no simple antithesis between earth and heaven, for both alike are corrupt (which is why a new heaven and a new earth are promised (Rev.21)). Thus heaven is not (contrary to popular imagination) thought to be the permanent and final scene for the revelation of glory. Glory is revealed from heaven, but its goal is the transfiguration of the whole created order.

To explain evil in the natural world, then, we draw upon the notion of an angelic fall (as N.P.WILLIAMS pp.523ff).

How is Nature Fallen?

"Perfection or imperfection of unconscious beings has no meaning as referred to themselves...There is no evil but must inhere in a conscious being, or be referred to it; that is, Evil must be felt before it is evil" (S.JOHNSON p.224).

It might make sense to speak of animals being fallen, for they are sentient. But any suggestion that the earth itself is corrupted is surely incoherent, and is on the level of

Luther's saying that the irregularities of the earth's surface - its mountains and valleys - are the effects of sin, since God would have created a perfect sphere (cited in PASSMORE pp.108f).

But what is wrong with Luther's remark? If we are not realists about value we will agree with Johnson that calling something an imperfection makes no sense unless there are conscious beings involved. In a purely physicalist world, PUCETTI(2) argued, there would be no evolutionary or biological point to having conscious, experiencing creatures - the functions could all be catered for in other ways. In such a world there would be no Fall possible; it would be a perfect, smooth-running organism. It is the inexplicable involvement of consciousness in the material world which brings the first possibility of a fall.

If we are realists about value, however, we will not want to agree that good and evil, perfection and imperfection, can only exist where there are conscious beings. A universe with no cosmic observers and no sentient beings could still be called beautiful or ugly, since we perceive a beauty already there, rather than create it ourselves through our observation and experience. These questions are both interesting and important (and, of course, widely debated) but to follow them up further would take me too far afield, and I shall be concentrating, rather more narrowly, upon what it might mean

to say that the animal world is fallen, looking in particular at three short accounts which have been offered.

(1) MOLTMANN tries to make sense of the idea that the natural world is in a fallen state by offering an analogy with human sin. He takes Peguy's 'Sin is isolation' as his starting point. Humans are open to numerous possibilities and chances for development, and these may be realised by being open towards God and towards other creatures, human and non-human. He defines non-openness as the attempt to be self-sufficient. Because humans are contingent creatures, wholly dependent upon God, and only one part of the vast causal network of the cosmos, any such vying for self-sufficiency must fail; it must lead to spiritual (and physical) death. Sin is essentially to place oneself in this false position with regard to the world and to God. 'Original sin' consists in mistaking the limited ego for the real Self which is rooted in God, acting as though the ego were unlimited and the centre of the world. It tries to understand the creation as functioning only to fulfil its own appetites and desires.

So, in an analogous way, the non-human world is also open to possibilities of development and the actualisation of potentialities.

"Natural history shows that if other creatures isolate themselves from the future, immunize themselves against change and break off communication with their fellow creatures, then this leads to self-destruction and death...the concept of fatal self-isolation can lead to a wider

understanding of the "slavery of the whole creation to futility" of which St. Paul speaks in Rom. 8:19ff" (MOLTMANN p.126).

What exactly is Moltmann saying? Is it that the beasts are subject to original sin, as we are, in the sense that they try to affirm their limited selves as though they were each the world's centre? That they don't surrender to a transcendent Self beyond the narrow concerns of the ego? Animals are often characterised as blind appetite (as opposed to reason or spirit), as manifestations of this desire to make the world subservient to their needs. They are incapable of an outlook which would truly acknowledge another creature as an "I" carrying equal weight to their own self.

As an allegory of the human predicament perhaps this kind of analysis has some use, but as ethology it is simply wrong. Most animals, to begin with, have a strong sense of social identity - it is the group which is primary, not the individual anarchically pursuing his own desires (which is why we can also accuse of having merely a "herd" mentality those who never strive to attain full personality development). Moreover, it is the contention of many ethologists and philosophers that non-humans have only a very limited concept of the self (if they have one at all). If they pursue things, as the predator chases its prey, it is only to satisfy immediate needs - for they are also reckoned incapable of long-term plans or expectations. The beast, in fact, is not

a being of unlimited desires, is not subject to power complexes, does not labour under a misapprehension that he is the only creature in the world of any importance, and is not driven by an insatiable longing to possess for possession's sake. All these things seem to be significantly human corruptions.

But perhaps Moltmann is handling the idea of 'isolation' in a different way. He means by it, rather, an unwillingness to change - or, better, an inability to adapt fast enough where environmental signs are that this has become necessary for survival. The world is in a constant flux and the apparent stability of eco-systems does not imply a resistance to change. On the contrary: the failure to continually adapt, as conditions around one alter, means the risk of extinction. 'Slavery', in this case, is given distinctly conservative overtones, whereas the release from futility is virtually identified with evolutionary success. It is the opportunistic and the versatile that are blessed by God (thus, among others, homo sapiens).

Where Moltmann speaks of 'openness' perhaps we should be thinking, more broadly, of an overall keeping in balance with the environment. This is what is meant (maybe) by 'communicating' with one's fellow creatures - an ability to sense changes in population or climate and act accordingly, as best ensures one's own survival and the survival of the group

(or genetic survival - depending upon what it is one considers to be the basic units of evolutionary selection). An example of sin in the natural world would then be a set of over-efficient predators who so reduced the numbers of potential prey that they quickened their own destruction. They were not sufficiently 'communicative' with other creatures, not aware of environmental messages which were being sent to them.

Prey-predator relationships do often allow a certain stability between species numbers. However, if the species or wider group is conserved by this kind of 'openness', individual members are not. Communicating with the environment can mean death for a rabbit where the environment happens to be a weasel. Perhaps, then, it is this that constitutes the real slavery in the natural world, that

"the opening up of closed systems and the overcoming of their separation and isolation can only take place through the acceptance of suffering" (MOLTMANN p.127).

Life can only come about through death. Moltmann does not say whether he feels such slavery to be a necessary part of there being a natural world at all, nor does he suggest what redemption might consist in, given his definition of sin in nature, but he does hold that what we now see the natural world to be like need not be understood as its final reality. Christ, too, accepted this life-through-death as the pattern of His own life, and it is this which allows us to hope for

the full coming-to-life of animals.

(2) Keith WARD (p.189) writes:

"Evil basically consists in the facts of pain, frustration and opposition, in all that obstructs or hinders or opposes human flourishing, or indeed the flourishing of all sentient creatures".

It is not clear whether what he partly means by 'flourishing' is the multiplication of individuals. We can only increase our numbers at the expense of the numbers of other creatures, and what is evil is that the natural world presents us with this moral contradiction, of good only being attainable at the expense of another good. If the natural restriction of numbers is an evil, it would seem to be implied that, in order to strive for the good as far as is possible, we should seek to bring into existence as many creatures as we can. Undoubtedly, though, there will be painful decisions about priority cases for species multiplication, since the finite nature of the earth could not allow all forms to increase their numbers indiscriminately. On this view, the predatory system would, once again, seem to be an evil, since it reduces (or, at least, restricts) numbers.

Whether or not Ward thinks it an evil not to be able infinitely to multiply the number of creatures in the cosmos, he certainly holds it to be an evil that Nature shows an indifferent care for those already in existence. Not the thwarting of the flourishing of the gene bases of creatures, then, but the stunting in growth of already existent

creatures. It may count as opposition and frustration to such beings to be prevented from leaving offspring, but this is still only a part of a creature's telos (even if an important part). The general consensus is that individual animals are not simply 'gene bearers' (contra R.DAWKINS): it is organisms which are primary in evolutionary terms, not genes.

Hindrances to the flourishing of sentient creatures occur at the natural level, quite apart from human interference. If it were the case that all opposition to animals reaching their natural telos stemmed from human intrusions into the natural world, then one could say that although sin has contaminated most of the earth (for humans are to be found in most places), the natural world is not itself fallen. But these sorties into nature are often justified on the ground that we, too, are animals, and only acting as the beasts do - to eat animals is to show our love for the natural because it is copying what they do (or some of them do)(SEYMOUR AND SEYMOUR). To some extent we do act only as we suppose nature to act: we choose to be 'realistic' about nature - that is, we deal death wherever we go, as though this were how animals behaved (CLARK(1) p.179). But there is some truth which lies behind this attitude, or else it would not have gained such a widespread subliminal acceptance, and it must be said that there is much that hinders the flourishing of animals in the natural world, quite apart from humans.

(3) RUST (p.234) speaks of:

"the great wastage in which the generative powers of nature seem involved, the internecine warfare in which nature seems red in tooth and claw, the seemingly meaningless and even evil forms of organic life which the process of nature has produced, the unending struggle for existence which underlies the whole natural order".

As an encapsulation of what is often felt to be wrong with the natural world this is an accurate account. One might question some of the phrases, though. It is not obvious that an 'unending struggle' is what 'underlies' nature. Spencer's use of such phrases as 'survival of the fittest' and 'the struggle for existence' to interpret Darwin's ideas have been misunderstood to suggest an emphasis where none was intended - that is, on the predatory side of life. Darwin did not just mean, 'If you're a good predator you'll survive', but much more 'If you're a good predator and leave enough offspring and can nurture successfully'. All of these abilities are important for the continuation of the genetic line, and not just how many prey you can kill. Still, even if it does not underlie nature, in the sense of being the supremely important element in it, it is certainly one part of nature.

To speak of the 'wastage' in nature is more problematic, if only because to do so is very much to beg the question. Out of millions of pollen seeds only one pollinates - do we have to think of this as a failure on the part of the natural processes, as 'wastage'? Could we not equally think of such a

spawning of life as just a delightful excess in creating on the part of the Creator? It is certainly true that proportionately, very few potential life-bearers are actualised, but is that to be thought of as an evil? Perhaps we tend to think so because we straightjacket the concept of 'telos', whereas there is no reason why there should be only one telos for any particular life-form. Or rather, if there is just a single telos there are a large number of ways which have evolved to ensure that it is reached. Acorns grow into oaks, they fertilise the earth and they are eaten by squirrels. We could argue that only oaks can count as the telos of acorns, since only if there are oaks can there be more acorns. But in a design-orientated universe maybe there are also acorns because squirrels pouch and sometimes lose them.

If we look now at animals, understanding them as experiencing subjects, we can clearly make sense of this notion of reaching one's telos as the good that is sought, and the failure to reach it as an evil. Failure here will often involve an awareness of one's deprivation, of having 'missed the mark' in life. In many Third World countries the chances of living to the age of five remain no more than fifty-fifty (GEORGE p.31): if this is to be thought an evil, are not similar odds in the animal world equally so?

Christian theodicies have often argued along the lines

that there will be good emerging from the creation which will more than justify and warrant the pain in the world -

"one wants to know if there is an end-state which will put certain sequences of events before it into perspective, as means to achieving it" (K.WARD p.89).

The Christian vision is that there is purpose involved in earthly life, and an end to be sought. This does not consist in the restoration of an original perfection, an identity between beginning and end, as in the Origenist scheme (an idea anathematised in the fifteenth anathema of Justinian (SHERWOOD p.91 n.40)). It is rather a development towards a unifying end fixed by God in His creation - in biblical terms, the 'Sabbath rest'. It is a movement of growth which presupposes the establishment of a created world with its own identity - separated from God but at the same time orientated towards Him.

The trouble is that the natural world seems to be about the frustration of purpose, a place where the full actualisation of potentiality is very rare. Most 'potentia' remain 'potentia' only. However, the notion of being able to fulfil all one's potentialities is one that is extremely hard to make sense of, at least in terms of a finite world. After all, I could devote my life to helping the starving (potential A), or to furthering the progress of astronomical knowledge (potential B), but I cannot fulfil both possibilities in my lifetime, even if both are latent in me. All life forms will

have many potentialities left unfulfilled and this for the simple reason that all beings are finite. If I choose to do x rather than not-x I am leaving unactualised a world in which I choose to do not-x rather than x. Thus, during my lifetime there are countless worlds being left unactualised - every time I think or choose something I am making the (largely unconscious) decision not to actualise all the worlds in which I thought or did something different. Perhaps it is enough, though, that someone does x: one could hold that the same potential will be realised if any one of my kind does it. Or perhaps all these worlds already exist and it is for me merely to choose which world I would like to instantiate. What we think of as potentialities in life are realities in some Ideal existence, and our picking and choosing from among them does nothing to increase their reality but simply reproduces them in the phenomenal world. All possibilities for evil already exist, all crimes are eternally present in the Godhead. But on any reading, it remains difficult to see how the failure to actualise (or instantiate) all one's potentialities could be considered an evil.

Perhaps what is evil about the natural world is not that each creature does not fulfil all its potentialities, but that many individuals are denied fulfilment of any, or most, of their genetically programmed potentialities i.e. none of the possible lives which would realise such a programme are

fulfilled. When children die soon after their birth there is a sense of a life having been 'wasted' -so much energy was expended on the creation of a life which was then denied its fulfilment. One is left with a feeling of that life being unfinished. There is no reason why we should not take the same view when confronted with a piglet dying soon after its birth.

Death

There would seem to be an inverse relation between the goodness accorded to creation and one's estimate of the misfortune of death. Where creation, and life itself, are seen in essentially pessimistic terms, death will be considered less of a tragedy and more of a liberation. Conversely, where creation is held to be good, death must be viewed more as an evil in the midst of goodness. The very presence of love leads one to encounter death as a tragedy:

"To love a being is to say, 'Thou, thou shalt not die!'" (MARCEL II p.171).

But every being does die. Love seems to promise an eternity and is mocked by death. As Aquinas said, death is an evil, since by it one is robbed of what is most lovable: life and being (Disputed Questions: On Truth 26,6,ad.8).

It is a view with which the Christian tradition on the whole concurs. Even though in some parts of the Old Testament room is made for the idea that death at the end of a good and long life is not something unqualifiedly evil, the thought

that the dead can praise the LORD is consistently rejected (Pss.6,88,115), and the very fact that death is not seen as a total evil is, one suspects, only because it is not felt to be the end of everything : one lives on in one's children, or one's memory is held in the wider community. But it was a general act of faith that

"God did not make death, and takes no pleasure in the destruction of any living thing; he created all things that they might have being"(Wis.of Sol.1:13).

Life is the natural, death the unnatural. This is made even more understandable if some sort of animistic belief was predominant then, for in such a system one does not start, as many moderns do, with the presupposition of dead, inanimate matter and then try to justify the presence of 'life' within it; rather, one begins with the assumption of there being life, and less than this means a falling away from what is truly real.

Certainly, by the time the New Testament was written, death was considered to be very much a part of the Evil One's repertoire, even a personal enemy. The most prominent trio in Paul's writings, from which the first Christians were taught that they had been redeemed, was that of sin, the demons and death. That Paul considered that physical, as well as spiritual, death had been overcome seems clear from his puzzlement as to why believing Christians (i.e. those united to the deathless LORD) had actually died (1 Cor.11:30f).

Death entered the world only through Adam's sin, but Christ, the new and better Adam, had come to restore what was lost. Everywhere in the New Testament the pivotal point of the gospel message is seen as the resurrection, the triumph of Christ over the power of death.

It was this message, of the redemption of the world from decay and death, which was emphasised just as strongly by the early Fathers. The consensus was that if Adam and Eve had not sinned they would not have died (ATHANASIUS(1) sect.3 and 4; AUGUSTINE(1) XIII:3 and 19). Their bodies were made of matter, but this matter was incorruptible (THUNBERG pp.152ff).

Such doctrines as these may seem little more than fairy-tales. After all, is not death the most universal and natural thing there is about the world? In one sense death is 'natural', as is anything which usually or regularly occurs; death is something which happens to all living organisms. When we use the word 'natural' in this context, though, it is not just a description of biological processes which is being asked for; we are also considering whether something 'fits in', or is consonant with, the nature of living beings. But, in this sense, how can death be viewed as natural when humans and animals alike resist it, fight against it and so obviously fear dying? Death, then, is at once natural and unnatural. Nature is at war with herself.

One way in which death has been understood within the

Christian tradition is therefore as a punishment. Whilst being something evil which happens to a person, punishment is also a response, and is related to previous culpability. Though it is an evil it is at the same time just and so also a good (or, better, it restores a good (cf. AQUINAS(1) II,II,164,1,AD.1)). Just as death is both natural and unnatural, so punishment is both a good and an evil. For what is death seen as a punishment? Some of the early Fathers saw it as a response to primordial sin. When Adam, with free-will and in clear consciousness, turned away from what he knew to be the true meaning of his life, death was sent as a punishment. This is not to imply that Adam in paradise was held to be immortal by nature, for the ability to die was his even before the Fall. PIEPER (pp.70f) summarises Aquinas' position on this question:

"The gift [of God] would have consisted in the spiritual soul's having so effectively infused the body with its formative power, and thus made it alive, that this body-soul unity would not have dissolved against man's will".

The soul is the vital principle of life and 'immunises' the body against corruption. It 'intends' the body to life. So it is this gift of paradisiacal deathlessness that the soul has lost - its ability to keep the body in life by its innermost intention.

It might be objected that this Thomist account of the soul, drawing on the Aristotelian notion of form, is confused.

On the one hand he is saying that the form (soul) of humanity is that by which a human is a human, form being related to matter in the role of formal causality; on the other hand he is making the form (soul) causally responsible for the life of the body - the notion of efficient causality. The soul is being seen as the animating principle of life, something which is more in line with Old Testament accounts of the soul as 'pneuma'. There are thus two quite distinct notions which are being combined here. It may be, as KENNY((3) p.48) suggests, that this is not a coherent account. However, it should be noted that the same dual function is often attributed to genes: they are seen as productive, copying entities (efficient causality), and at the same time as determining the structure of the organism which is reproduced (formal causality). If the two roles can be successfully combined in genetic theory, perhaps they can be in soul-theory as well.

But whether or not sense can be made of the idea of death as a punishment in the case of humans, this is surely beside the point as regards animals. They cannot be punished in this way for their sin since they are incapable of sin in the first place. To think otherwise one would perhaps have to adopt a theory of metempsychosis whereby the soul would be understood to inhabit either a human or an animal body according to its spiritual state. Within such a system, each piece of suffering and each death could be seen as the working out of

karmic forces, the inevitable results of former ignorance and immorality. A similar system was proposed by Origen: all creation once enjoyed the Glory but some creatures fell away by their own act of defection - and Ramsey, in the eighteenth century, also suggested such a thesis (see D.P.WALKER pp.239ff). The creation of the material world followed this, a warped hierarchical universe which was a poor parody of its heavenly archetype, and where each successive level represented a certain degree of punishment. The world is thus a vast moral structure, with the lowest existents being those who have been punished the most heavily and those higher up the scale of being the less culpable ones (Hom.on Ezekiel I.5.3ff). Origen is reluctant, though, to say clearly that animals, as well as human beings, are the vessels of immortal spirits which are undergoing punishment - mainly perhaps because it was so close in conception to the (supposedly) Pythagorean ideas on metempsychosis which some of the Gnostics embraced (GALLOWAY(1) pp.91ff). So he resists the idea that animals are also rational spirits, encased in bodies further fallen than humans. The idea of death-as-a-punishment would not seem to be applicable even in his system. In any case, the Origenist scheme was quite firmly rejected by the orthodox church.

Perhaps if we cannot understand death in the natural world as a direct punishment for sin, we can still see the

beasts as sharing in the effects of the rebellions by the rational spirits. This was what we postulated when we looked at the question of animal suffering: can we say the same about animal death? Is death an evil for animals? There are three distinct things here which might be thought of as evils.

(1) The suffering involved in the movement towards death .

This is perhaps the most obvious evil. Most moral systems consider pain and suffering to be intrinsically evil (Stoicism is one exception), just as pleasure and happiness are a good (even if pain is not for that reason always to be avoided, since there might be a choice between the evil of pain and some greater evil - only a utilitarian would consider that the greater evil must actually be a greater pain). Death can be defined, in naturalistic terms, as the slow or rapid wearing out of the mental and physical organism. What is evil, it is being suggested, is not the end result of this process (i.e. death), but the process when, and only when, it is accompanied by pain. It is painful dying that is an evil, not death. So it is often presented that we may kill animals so long as it is done painlessly (unfortunately, a rare achievement: stunning in modern slaughterhouses is notoriously inefficient). If there is no moral problem about our killing animals then there can be none about God having so structured the world that animals have to die. The pain involved in dying calls for a theodicy, but not death itself. At the very

least, then, the mental and physical suffering which so often accompanies animal death is an evil.

(2) The painful effects on other animals when one dies . Here again, it is not death itself which is seen as intrinsically evil. Moreover, the death of an animal, seen in terms of its effects upon beings other than itself, will always be capable of being considered as a good and/or an evil, depending upon one's viewpoint. In the widest terms we can say that the death and decay of organisms release key materials to the community at large. There is only a limited supply of 'food' for life, and without organisms dying so that important compounds can be released for others, life could not continue. Some species have found it convenient to gather such essential compounds from the living, so that the prey-predator chains have evolved; but whether death is by predation or decay what is important is that through death life is enabled to continue elsewhere.

In narrower terms the death of a creature may cause suffering to others - for example, where a mother animal dies and young are left unnurtured. So it can be an evil as well as a good.

(3) The loss of that individual creature . Whilst we may view the suffering of an animal as an evil, we are not so inclined to think of the death of an animal in itself to be such. Indeed, despite constant official and unofficial protestations

to the contrary, it is unlikely that many of us normally regard the deaths of humans completely unknown to us as an evil either. It is difficult to feel emotionally disturbed by the death of a person when the life of that person had no noticable effect upon us. If we are honest we will admit that it is also difficult to be moved by tales of the suffering millions when those millions are many miles distant. We are (mercifully no doubt) saved from having too wide an emotional reach.

But where it is a case of either a human or an animal that has been known and loved by us we do tend to experience death as an evil. This is surely because we put a value on life independently of whether there is suffering involved in dying (which is not to ignore the fact that if the suffering is intense we will also experience the death as something of a 'happy release').

We are reluctant to extend this feeling of an animal's life having value more generally, but GODLOVICH has argued persuasively that we have to place some positive value on animal life or else, given the negative value we accord to suffering, and given that all animals undergo some suffering during their lifetime, we would be bound, logically, to painlessly exterminate all non-human sentient existence. That we do not do so can only be because we do, after all, place some value on animal life, and to the extent that it has value

death must be an evil for them.

If animal death, as well as suffering, is an evil, then we can ask whether it would make sense to see them as being redeemed from the curse of mortality as well - the creation being set free from decay, as St. Paul held.

Chapter V

REDEMPTION

Animal immortality is not mentioned explicitly in scripture. But this need not preclude further discussion: it is an argument from silence, which is further weakened by the late appearance, in terms of the history of Judaism, of a clear belief in human immortality (LEWIS(4) pp.124f). Moreover, as we shall see, prophetic hope often involved the idea of the earth's restoration, which must surely include animals.

The lack of obvious species divisions causes problems for any idea that humans alone might inherit eternal life. It is possible that some human descendants would be difficult to classify as homo sapiens: would that exclude them from any immortal destiny? And our evolutionary past causes similar problems:

"if man alone is immortal we must say that one generation of hominids were so ape-like that at death they passed into oblivion, while the next generation was sufficiently man-like to be heirs of eternal life. What would the children think of this? Would they know that their parents were 'only animals', while they themselves were a new kind of being?" (BADHAM p.47).

The Christian tradition has not, in fact, confined the concept of immortality within species bounds: humans will, at the least, be sharing the heavenly realms with the angels. These latter are candidates for eternal life not because they are

human (which they obviously are not) but because they are rational. But if rationality, rather than species membership, is to be the criterion for entry into eternal life, then further problems can be raised: the Catholic Church ordains the baptism of embryos, of whatever degree of maturity (G.D.SMITH II,790), but it can hardly be held that fetuses are fully rational individuals.

Perhaps it is the potential for rationality which is important. And perhaps it does not matter whether this potential is developed on earth - it can just as well be developed in another life; and personality development is only a matter of degree anyway, for even those who experience a growing maturity in the use of their rational powers until the end of their lives are faced with the realisation that

"The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless"
(ELIOT p.179)

Fully to accept Eliot's point would mean accepting that rationality can be only one of Immortal Virtues; other things are at least as important, in particular the capacity for wonder: might not the beasts share that with us? But even if rationality remains the supremely important criterion for having an eternal destiny, we have to ask who can count as being 'potentially' rational. On the one hand, within the human species, there is certainly a sense in which 'I' go right back to the moment of conception: it was at this point

that my unique DNA code came into being, and we have noted the Catholic position that this is when the immortal soul is joined to the body. But it has been estimated that about 70% of zygotes develop little further than this (BADHAM p.42). If it is acceptable to regard these zygotes as potentially rational beings then we would surely have to say the same of our ape-like ancestors, who almost certainly had a high rational capacity, as well as many other mammals who show signs of 'personality'. To the argument that it is the giving of an immortal soul which gives the potential for rationality in the first place, so that we can know that those without such souls cannot have a greater potential for rationality (thus excluding all non-humans after all), it can only be replied that this entirely begs the question of how we can know so securely that only humans have been granted immortal souls. Was the giving of these souls to homo sapiens a gift of grace completely unrelated to previous evolutionary development, so that God could equally have chosen giraffes or mice? In which case may He not equally make such an uncovenanted movement of mercy towards other species than ourselves - perhaps at the moment of an animal's death? And perhaps we were not always the arbitrarily Chosen Species: with the passing away of the sabre-toothed tiger God happened to chance upon an obscure descendent of Ramapithecus. Perhaps we shall be sharing eternity with stranger creatures than we

have allowed. But if we accept that the giving of immortal souls bears some relation to the evolutionary process, then we have to be willing to examine any evidence we have of potential or actual rationality in other species than our own.

Immortality and Theodicy

Any theodicy which is willing to take animal suffering seriously points towards immortality for animals. This assertion can be supported negatively by noting that part of the appeal of the Cartesian view of animals as automata, and so incapable of experiencing pain, was that it removed this felt problem of animal suffering. For, argued numerous Cartesians, if animals are not rewarded in heaven it would be an obvious injustice on God's part if they were to suffer. From this they drew the rather radical conclusion that therefore they do not suffer. But if we reject the idea that animals are insentient, then by a simple application of modus tollens we can see that if animals do suffer it would be an obvious injustice on God's part if they were not rewarded in heaven.

The existence of evil in the universe can only be reconciled with a belief in a perfectly good and omnipotent God if its possibility is a necessary condition for some otherwise unobtainable good; given also that the good gained must far outweigh the evil. Moreover, we argued earlier, if God is just He cannot ultimately balance out the evil suffered

by one creature with the good enjoyed by another. It is not just a matter of making some vast utilitarian calculation.

JENYNS' (pp.60f) remark,

"I am persuaded...that the sufferings of individuals are necessary to universal happiness",

is unacceptable without at least some further reference to the final destiny of those suffering individuals. There must be the possibility of an overwhelming good for each creature, and not just for the Whole. But since in this life many creatures do not enjoy any kind of supreme good, one needs to suppose the possibility of a further existence, offering such prospects for happiness and fulfilment (cf K.WARD pp.197ff).

One can approach this point from a slightly different angle by considering Kant's argument for belief in an immortal human soul. His main argument rests upon the premise of there being a justice to the universe which corresponds to our own moral intuitions. It is impossible, he held, for a rational being to approve of a situation in which another being who both needs happiness and deserves it should nevertheless be unhappy. Clearly, though, it is often the case that this situation does arise. Therefore, he argued, this phenomenal world cannot be all there is to reality. There must be a noumenal world in which justice is finally achieved. If we cannot believe in the triumph of justice our morality must be undermined.

Because there is not this justice in the world we

experience things as morally out of balance. We feel intensely

"The necessity for a reward, the need to receive the equivalent of what we give" (WEIL p.10).

Simone Weil, it must be said, would not accept this as an argument for immortality. Rather, it is this longing for justice for oneself and for others which must be given up: the believer must be satisfied that there is eternal joy in God. One can understand her warnings against making immortality into yet another confirmation of self-importance, where eternal life becomes one more thing that the superficial ego tries to appropriate for itself; in the same way, the Buddha was reluctant to confirm the reality of an eternal Self partly lest it become an object of 'grasping' and place the seeker further than ever in illusion. But whilst accepting that selfishness in any form, even for spiritual things, cannot, on any religious understanding of things, lead one any closer to beatitude, it could still be argued that a just and good God would want to share His eternity with His creation.

We feel that the 'balance' has been upset not only in cases of moral virtue going unrewarded and moral vice going unpunished, but also when we are faced with the suffering of the innocent, especially perhaps in the case of children and animals. We feel the need for some kind of recompense to be made quite specifically to the one who is suffering, and not just to some greater Whole. If this is not achieved in the present world then it seems to point towards another where

such justice will be meted out.

Immortality and Resurrection

There are various types of immortality which we might look at, which have been held to be valuable. The first we could call 'Immortality of Name'. Much prized in antiquity, it often functioned as an incentive towards goodness.

"I am persuaded that all men do all things, and the better they are the more they do them, in hope of the glorious fame of immortal virtue; for they desire the immortal" (Plato: The Symposium 208d).

Immortality is public honour in perpetuity. This purely human account of immortality has now fallen into disrepute. It is recognised that we can only count on this form of immortality in so far as we are able to trust the integrity of those who give it i.e. the Public. The conclusion has been very much that the Public are not to be unreservedly entrusted with one's own immortality - indeed, we cannot even count on the indefinite survival of humanity. Again, in terms of fame, it is arguable that the evil have a more dependable immortality than the good. But, in any case, as Aristotle pointed out, the honour bestowed by others cannot itself be the good, for it rests in those who bestow it rather than in him who receives it, whereas the good must be one's inalienable own. Moreover, we seek honour for our virtue, which by this admission is shown to be the primary good (Nicomachean Ethics 1095b 22-30).

Is it possible that it is an adequate form of immortality

for animals, even if not for humans? But from whom could they receive their immortality of name? If we say, 'From humans', then we meet all the problems we have already raised in the context of immortality for humans, with the added point that animals are most unlikely to be remembered by members of another kind (though no doubt some, such as Balaam's Ass, have been granted a kind of life beyond the grave). But we are also likely to be contemptuous of any alternative suggestion, such as that the beasts themselves might hold and respect certain memories of past heroes and heroines in an unbroken tradition.

A second type we can call Immortality of Influence. This is content with the anonymous survival of one's work. In the first chapter the idea of the world as a vale of soul-making was examined, and we might characterise the type of immortality proposed there for animals as being one of 'influence'. They are remembered in our salvation as having provided the invaluable background for our souls' development. Similarly, the pre-Christian Jew was often content to seek his lasting honour in his sons and grandsons - a genealogical immortality. Others have sought perpetuity through their art or scientific achievement.

A lesser type of immortality of influence is equally available to all that exists, from the human person down to the merest atom; that is, by being a link in the causal chain,

an undeniable part of the temporal sequence of events (which may, after all, be everlasting), having an undoubted 'influence' upon what follows one. The duration of individual existence counts for nothing on this scheme, for a split second's worth of existence registers one for a place in the sequence. Indeed, on this reading, the inanimate might be granted immortality more easily than the animate if they are held to be the primary and most basic constituents of existence, and if all else is merely the by-play of these elements. These lifeless forms are the real influencers in life; they are the Immortal Ones. But if one is seeking any immortality of influence beyond this bleak concept then one runs up against problems similar to those noted when we looked at the idea of an immortality of name. Human civilisation is not infallible in its judgements of value; neither is it eternal.

An immortality which relies upon one's being remembered (or one's work being remembered) by the human community is a vulnerable immortality indeed. Not so, some Christian thinkers have argued, if one is immortalised in the 'memory' of God. If God is outside time, then His 'memory' is unlike ours in that it is not a matter of recalling something long past. God's knowledge of me is an eternal one, beyond the categories of past, present and future. He can know that I lived after Queen Victoria and before Queen Elizabeth the

Fourth, but He cannot know that Elizabeth the Fourth is not now on the throne, or that it is now one particular time rather than another.

"He to whom all hearts are open remains evermore open to any heart that ever was apparent to him. What we once were to him, less than that we never can be, for otherwise he himself as knowing us would lose something of his own reality...Hence if we can never be less than we have been to God, we can in reality never be less than we have been...Death cannot be the destruction, or even the fading of the book of one's life; it can only mean the fixing of its concluding page" (Hartshorne, cited in HICK(2) p.219; cf PITTENGER p.51).

Against this, Hick argues that it is one thing to say that God 'remembers' us, that we exist after our death as we existed before it, in the mind of God, and quite another to say that we are alive to ourselves as well as to God after death. Hartshorne only affirms the first. There is a large difference between being remembered (even by God, and even if everything about one was remembered accurately) and actually being alive. Certainly, what we can say is that if this is what is meant by immortality, then it is shared by the whole of creation, and is not confined to humans alone. Trees, rocks and computers exist eternally in God's consciousness. In this sense RAHNER (p.444) can write of the whole history of the world entering eternal life.

We normally assume that neither rocks nor computers (nor probably trees) are in any way conscious, and so this account of the afterlife does not raise problems with respect to these

beings, but does it have the sort of problems which Hick suggests it does for creatures who are conscious? In my view, Hartshorne's account withstands the criticism which Hick brings against it i.e. that to be immortalised in God's memory is an impoverished understanding of immortality, and must be unacceptable in traditional Christian terms, since it does not seem to allow for the survival of individual centres of consciousness. His position is certainly ambiguous on this point, but it is possible to argue that creatures in God's memory remain fully alive to themselves. During my life I am aware of the image of a tree in my consciousness. How does this enter the eternity of God's memory? Is it that God is aware of the image of a tree in my consciousness, but I no longer am? But this would be an incomplete memory, since on any account which held to an irreducibly subjective element in consciousness, God must also be aware that I am aware of the image of a tree in my consciousness. A memory of me which neglected my awareness would not be a memory of me but of a lump of matter which looked like me and acted like me, but which could be said to have 'had' experiences only in the most impoverished sense. Still, if it is only a matter here of God remembering our experiences then these could be memories of things of which I was once aware, but am no longer.

The notion of eternal life as a remembering of our experiences by God is open to a further problem. If eternal

life is an exact transcription of this life, which knows of no change, then the suffering millions will be suffering eternally. There is no change ensuring that the first will be last and the last first: the last are eternally aware of being last. The Judaeo-Christian view of an afterlife has always linked it with the idea of transformation. It is, precisely, a salvation from present suffering and sin, not a fixing of it in eternity. Hope in God would lose its meaning if the only prospect were that God would keep our present lives in His ample memory. That would be no redemption for a veal calf.

However, it is arguable that the situation is different if it is a case of God remembering, not a series of experiences, but us: His remembering us is what it means for us to exist at all. We exist archetypally in the mind of God, as BERKELEY (II,254f) supposed.

We have mentioned the idea of 'transformation': this can lead us on to note that, strictly, language about 'resurrection' is more in keeping with the Christian hope than talk of 'immortality'. This does not mean that we need polarise the terms, as though they had nothing to do with one another, nor deny that in some sense they can helpfully supplement each other as well. Most (all?) Christian philosophers before Aquinas were Platonist, at least to the extent of defining man as a soul using the body as a musician his lute (GILSON pp.351f). "The soul is the man" (Plato:

Alcibiades 129 e 11). But this can lead to the impression that what is used gladly on earth will be used no longer in the eternal places, and it is this which Christianity has always resisted by its affirmation of the resurrection of the body.

The salvation of the body means, in addition, the salvation of the whole creation:

"God has decreed the resurrection of man's body, and thereby determined the eternal existence of a material universe" (G.D.SMITH p.1265).

Self-consciousness and Identity

I believe that my dog will, after her death, be raised to new life. But how do I know that it will really be her, rather than merely a dog like her, who will be raised i.e what is it that ensures that it will be her rather than a replacement? Theories of resurrection have come under attack as it has been suggested that there is nothing to prevent God from re-creating numerous David Willeys into immortality, and if this is possible then no single one will have any more claim to be the real David Willey than any other: they will all be (equally) replicas. Once bodily continuity is lost (so it is argued) there is no way of excluding the logical possibility of countless exactly similar individuals appearing.

The questions of how we 'spot' identity between beings, or establish that it is one and the same creature whom we meet

at time t_1 and again at time t_2 , are relevant, then, to discussions about whether life after death makes sense for humans, as well as for animals. It is not only a question of how I can know whether a dog in the afterlife is the same one as I know on earth, but also whether a person in the afterlife can be known to be the same person as the one I now know as my brother. How am I to know that this person (like the dog) is not merely a clever replica of the original? Again, it can also be asked how I, in a life after death, would be able to recognise myself as the same person, as identical with the one who is now writing this sentence. Is it possible to establish identity even across the gulf of death? It is readily accepted that a creature might change in many different ways and yet remain essentially the same being, but perhaps death robs the individual of all that would allow others to recognise him, in an afterlife, as the same person.

Questions concerning the criteria we normally employ to establish identity, and whether any are still usable in the face of death, are widely raised and discussed. I will not be dealing here with the whole gamut of such questions: obviously, if it is correct to say that personal identity is necessarily tied to (for example) bodily continuity (though see CLARK(6)'s 'oneirotokon'), then neither humans nor animals can have any prospect of an immortal existence in a life beyond this one. If it is not possible to believe that any

creature will survive death, then obviously animals cannot and there is an end to the argument.

I will, therefore, only be considering those arguments which suggest that humans can look forward to a life beyond death but that, for reasons concerning problems with personal identity, animals cannot. That is, I will only be looking at those positions which rely upon criteria to establish personal identity which (it is held) cannot be applied to animals.

These criteria revolve around questions about consciousness, and in particular about whether or not animals possess any degree of self-consciousness. Only those creatures who are to some extent self-aware, it might be suggested, will share the life of the Immortals. Though it might seem that those beings who are not self-conscious are thereby deprived of a great gift this is not the case: they can entertain no concept of a self which could be deprived. Humans (who are self-conscious) have a history, their lives constitute "stories" (O'DONOVAN p.50); animals, on the other hand, though they live individuated lives which are extended through time, are not selves but (to use Hume's terminology) bundles of perceptions.

Hume, of course, much doubted whether we were more than this, the change and flux of mental dispositions with no enduring self to whom they could be said to belong (HUME(2) 1,IV, sect.5&6). There is no empirical evidence, he held, for

the existence of a single, permanent self underlying human or animal perceptions, emotions, ideas and so on. If we introspect all that we are aware of is a continuous sequence of changing mental states, never of any immaterial Self which 'has' them. Indeed, how could we experience the perceiving self? If it is by a thought that we introspect then that thought, too, must be introspectable; and if it is by a thought that we observe our introspection then that thought as well must be observable by another, and so on. We would therefore have to accomplish an infinite number of synchronous mental acts if we would know ourselves completely (cf RYLE pp.156ff). Introspection is thus more plausibly considered to be immediate retrospection. Perhaps, as Ryle suggests, it is merely linguistic confusion to affirm the existence of the elusive 'I' which always seems to stand behind our knowing and which can never itself be known.

It might be agreed that the Self can never be the direct object of empirical knowledge, but still argued that it is nonsensical to presume that perceptions could exist without inhering in something: their existence lies in being perceived. But in that case there must exist individual spirits who do the perceiving. Perceptions 'inhere' in the self in just this simple sense, that the self perceives them. When we talk about self-consciousness, then, we do not mean to imply an awareness of some transcendent 'I', but rather the

ability to recognise certain acts and dispositions as belonging to me rather than to anyone else. It is this that I can do, but my dog (for example) cannot: her life is a series of sensations without any accompanying consciousness that they belong to one and the same creature, herself. Even if resurrected she would not be able to identify herself as identical with a particular animal who once lived on earth.

If this is true, then one of the arguments which has been presented as pointing towards the need for animal immortality, that justice and mercy together require an afterlife in which animals can develop their potential, as well as be compensated for their sufferings, is shown to be mistaken: a resurrected animal would not be able to identify himself as the same one who, in a former terrestrial existence, underwent great suffering, nor could he entertain any concept of a self unravelling through eternity its potential for growth. Animals experience only a sequence of events, without being able to conceive of themselves as continuing entities existing over and above such happenings. So, then, for a creature to be immortal it has also to be self-conscious. But animals are not self-conscious. So they are not immortal.

Perhaps those beasts who participate in a human community may be allowed a share in immortality in so far as they are 'taken' into the human self-consciousness. We can be aware of animals as belonging to our community, as being members who

need to be raised when we are raised if we are to be fully ourselves, if we are to be complete. Some animals, like some humans, can become important to us to the extent of becoming, in some sense, 'part' of us. It is humans, through their perception of certain animals, who will ensure that it is the same animal who is raised: it must be this particular animal if this particular relationship is to be redeemed, if this 'part' of us is to be redeemed. Those animals who share in redemption do so because they share in the human self-consciousness, and they share in this self-consciousness because they have become part of ourselves, so that a full self-awareness would involve an awareness of them. LEWIS(4) pp.127ff), who suggests something along these lines, admits that on this account animal immortality would only be available to those few creatures who formed close relationships with humans in their lifetime - wild animals are not so easily catered for.

A different response would be to accept that self-consciousness is necessary if we are to make sense of immortality, but contest the denial of self-consciousness to animals. Certainly, it is generally taken as obvious that none but humans are in any sense self-aware, but this conclusion does not always follow a serious examination of empirical evidence for such an assertion, nor a patient attention to arguments for such a position: it is simply taken

for granted. Part of the difficulty with this question is, indeed, deciding upon what can be taken as establishing the presence of self-consciousness. Perhaps we begin from the conviction of our own self-awareness, the realisation that we can establish our identity over time through introspection, and from there we argue, by analogy, that those who share in our humanity are also possessed of self-consciousness. The question then becomes whether we can also argue, by analogy, to the presence of self-consciousness in non-humans as well as in humans. Do other humans share my capacity for self-awareness because they are humans, or because they are mammals? (These are not the only possibilities, of course, and whether it might be because they are social is a question we shall be examining later).

It seems clear, though, that our knowledge of anyone else's capacity for self-awareness (if such we have) is different from the knowledge that we have of our own. Unless some version of functionalism is correct we have no Privileged Access to another's stream of consciousness in the way that we have to our own (which is not to say that there are no public signs of its presence). I cannot ultimately be certain that I am not the only being who is truly self-conscious - indeed, the only being who is truly conscious. I can be sure that I am not an elaborate, but mindless, machine because I am aware of my own inner realm, aware that I am aware. But I cannot be

aware of the awareness of any other being in the same way. This conclusion is Cartesian in so far as we seem able to be certain only of our own consciousness as real, though not to the extent of doubting the existence of external non-conscious realities. We may have empirical knowledge of a world which is real beyond our seeming, but what is questioned is whether such knowledge points to realms of consciousness (and self-consciousness) like our own.

Perhaps a theist could argue (as Descartes did) that we can trust God not to deceive us in this matter: He would not present us with so many signs of the presence of other minds, of the reality of other realms of subjective awareness than our own, unless there really were such. It is not clear, though, that this is a reassurance adequate enough to dispel all uncertainty (at least on Cartesian terms). After all, Descartes himself was committed to the thesis that God had, in effect, precisely deceived humankind in the case of the beasts: they behave as though they had sensation and a certain level of intelligence, whereas in fact (and contrary to all evidence) they are merely machines. If God thus allows me to be misled in the case of animals then I cannot be certain that He is not also misleading me as regards other humans' being conscious. It is not that God really deceives us, protests Descartes, but only that we err because we judge without knowledge. We are free to choose and interpret beyond what we

truly know: that is how error comes about. Thus, because our understanding is limited we misinterpret purely mechanical behaviour as 'evidence' for animal minds. But whilst such a response may vindicate God's goodness, it cannot expel our scepticism: it is possible that, as with animals, so also with humans, I judge rashly that certain forms of behaviour are definite signs of consciousness whereas I ought to be willing to preserve a careful agnosticism on this point.

I may establish my own identity through self-awareness, and so I at least am not excluded from the immortal sphere; but beyond that I cannot speak with certainty. I cannot know for sure that any others apart from myself could establish their own identity through introspection, and if the capacity for self-consciousness is a necessary condition for immortality, then I cannot be sure that any others than myself are immortal. Their identity (but not mine) may depend wholly on what is publicly verifiable, and perhaps I constitute the Public. If any beings other than myself are immortalised it will perhaps be only through their being included in my self-awareness, after the fashion which we examined earlier, where particular creatures can be spoken of as being 'part' of me.

But scepticism does not end there. Descartes argued that even if I don't really see a tree at least I can know that I seem to see one. Even, that is, if I am mistaken in

identifying the image of a tree which is in my mind with something external to it, the one thing that I cannot be mistaken about is that I seem to be aware of a tree. However, it is not clear that this is beyond doubt: perhaps not only am I deceived about the correspondence between the image in my mind and external reality, but I am also deceived about what image is really in my mind: I think that what I seem to see is a tree, but this is the work of the evil genius, and in reality what I seem to see is swans on a river. But in that case I cannot establish my identity through introspection, cannot be certain that I have ever really known the contents of my own mind. Perhaps I think that I am being aware of my own perceptions whereas I am really aware of the consciousness of another being: what seems to be self-awareness is actually other-awareness.

Perhaps, then, rather than begin from a position of (supposed) certainty about our own capacity for self-consciousness and attempt to move from there to a knowledge of which creatures other than ourselves are also self-consciousness, we should look at the social dimensions of consciousness. The sort of evidence we might look for, in trying to assess whether or not a given animal is self-aware, is its ability to place itself in a social world, locate itself in a community environment; in particular we might ask whether it was able to recognise other creatures as

individuals, since this would seem to be a necessary condition for understanding oneself as such (see CLARK(3) Ch.5 for an exploration of these issues).

Alternatively, we could argue the weaker thesis that, even if each member of an animal community is not individually self-conscious, we can still speak of the community as a whole being self-aware.

"A society of beasts is a collection of atoms, round, hooked, cubical or triangular, but always perfectly identical. Their personalities do not vary, and we might say that a single ego governs them all" (PROUDHON p.242).

Let us see how far this minimal conception of animal personality can take us. Just as it could be argued that we, as humans, gain a sense of self through being members of a community in which we can identify other selves, so animals, in being aware of each other, can be conscious of the one Community Self (which is also their own self) acting in and through their fellows. Animal societies are, to this extent, conceived to be monistic systems where the whole is a single self-conscious being. Where perceiver and perceived are identified as one and the same, consciousness and self-consciousness also amount to the same thing. Whether or not the entire universe is best thought of thus monistically is another question, but perhaps it is the best model for animal communities; for them, all is one Ego being self-conscious in every act of consciousness. It is the

animal community which will be raised, and which will be able to recognise itself at the moment of resurrection as identical with an earthly society.

What is the place of individuals in such a community? Is it important that the same individuals are raised to constitute the redeemed community, or is each individual essentially replaceable, so that the one Dolphin Ego will recognise itself as identical with earthly dolphins whoever the individuals are who make up its resurrected Form? Perhaps there is only repetition of the Type in the natural world, so that individual beasts may be substituted for one another without loss or addition.

Even if we regard animals thus, animals don't. One important learning function in birds and mammals is the development of personal recognition of specific individuals. The ability to respond differently to specific creatures is an essential pre-requisite for two of the fundamental features of closed animal societies: the distinction between members and non-members of the group, and the internal hierarchy prevailing between group members. Hen Agatha learns to act in one way towards hen Betty and in another way towards hen Clarissa. Each has her own place in the pecking order and in this way finds her identity in the community. If Betty and Clarissa were replaced she would have a different place in the whole, and to that extent a different identity. So if Agatha

is to be raised, Betty and Clarissa will have to be raised with her. This is not because animal communities are made up of clearly identifiable and unique individuals (on this view), but rather because they are made up of particular relations. Each member of the community can be exhaustively defined in terms of her relations with the other members (the idea is similar, in this respect, to Western Trinitarian doctrines, where each of the Persons can be differentiated from each other only in terms of their relations with the other Persons: the Father is the Father of the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Son is the Son of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and the Father, and so on). So it is a series of relations which must be resurrected.

But there would seem to be no reason why the Hen Ego should not choose to instantiate herself in an entirely different set of relations. The survival of the Hen need not depend upon any particular set of individuals continuing in existence, but only on there being some community of hens. Or if some specific set of relations is held to be (for some reason) vital to the Hen's existence, then there is still no reason why any one particular group of individuals should make up those relations. It need not be Agatha, Betty and Clarissa who form the set of relations R. R could equally as well exist in a community comprising Doris, Ethel and Gertrude.

Therefore, if it is only animal communities which are in any sense self-conscious there is no reason to expect that the same individual beasts will be raised, even if there are similar animal communities in the afterlife.

However, the same model might be held to be equally applicable to human communities. In specifically Christian terms we can say that the individual believer should be considered only in relation to the Body of Christ. We are communally that single Body and it is the Christ in each of us who knows and loves the other members of the Body. More generally, that which we know ourselves to be cannot be grasped in separation from the ways in which those around us know us. Thus with humans, as with animals, it might seem to be better to speak of the self-consciousness of the community rather than of individual introspection.

It need not be denied that there is also a level of individual self-awareness in humans; but how I understand myself to be is in turn dependent upon how society sees and understands me. We are, perhaps more than most creatures, exceptionally conscious of how we are viewed by others (or, how we think we are viewed by them), and tend to introject the values and self-image which others give us. So whilst there is an awareness of self, the contents of that self-consciousness cannot be understood apart from the society in which we live. The mere presence of others is sufficient

to alter the status which we assign ourselves - what we feel is true about ourselves depends in part upon what is available for comparison: in the presence of the devout we discover ourselves as shallow, in that of dedicated hedonists we find surprising depths in ourselves (MORSE AND GERGEN).

This position needs to be distinguished from any view which would completely collapse all ideas of personal identity into a wider community identity, transforming all natural processes into social ones, with personal realities entirely determined by reference to a sociological epistemology. On this latter view society itself becomes the supreme reality and there can be no true self-awareness which is not simply a reflection of society's awareness of itself:

"self-knowledge is best understood as the application of a conceptual system, inbedded as it is within the social system, to a given field of sense data" (GERGEN p.144).

What I call my 'self' is, on this view, only an agreed social picture, the way in which society sees me. My reality consists in the community's acknowledgement that I am such-and-such a sort of being. Just as it is sometimes argued that those propositions are true which are agreed to be such by the community of all language-users (or perhaps some intellectual elite), so my 'truth' consists in the accepted view of me by the community. I can never move towards a more accurate self-knowledge; I can only ever discover new social constructions, coming to a closer understanding of the

particular "intelligibility system" (GERGEN) on which the society of which I am a part is based.

This sociological approach often goes hand in hand with a non-realist account of truth. Thus: science does not give us an evolving representation of reality but only an evolving practice. Realists can admit that it does both; non-realists can admit only the latter. So, too, we do not come any closer to a true understanding of ourselves (understood in a realist sense), either individually or communally. All that happens is that the rules of interpretation change (in which case, of course, the non-realist rule is itself relativised and a different epistemological understanding may come about).

This analysis, which allows our perceptions of ourselves to be 'true' only in so far as they receive the acknowledgement of the wider community, is problematic in several respects - not least because it seems unable to deal adequately with those cases in which an individual's self-understanding is different from that of the society in which he is living (cf O'DONOVAN pp.23ff). Again, if only those propositions are accepted as worthy of belief which are consonant with the current rules of discourse and reason, how is it that beliefs change and that societies alter their 'intelligibility systems'? Aquinas' main objection to Averroes' hypothesis of a single intellect in all men would also seem to be relevant here: if there is only one intellect,

how is it possible to explain the diversity of intellectual lives and activities (AQUINAS(1) 1a 76,2)?

But the position being put forward here is less radical than this one. It is merely that individual self-awareness cannot be understood in isolation from a person's place in community, that how we see ourselves - indeed, how we are - depends upon our relations with others, so that the resurrection of the individual implies the resurrection of the community.

At this point one could argue that a person's self-understanding depends upon far more than just the human community, since each individual stands, directly or indirectly, in relation to all that exists (not to stand in any relation to some being x would be to place x in a different universe). A complete self-knowledge is one which takes into account one's place in the entire created order, which in turn implies the resurrection of the whole universe. One is still left with the question, however, of why it must be this creation which is raised, rather than another which is created in its place. The reason why it must be this same universe which is resurrected is, it seems to me, closely linked to the answer to an earlier puzzle. We asked: if an earthly Pido resurrected would be unable to conceive of himself as such, what reason could there be for resurrecting him rather than creating an identical replacement? It cannot

be out of a sense of justice to Fido who (let us assume) led a tormented earthly existence. He could not understand the heavenly life as "compensation" for this since (let us assume again) he has no sense of himself existing over time. Perhaps we could say that compensation must, nonetheless, be made: a law of cosmic justice is at stake. But if Fido is not able to recognise himself as being the same dog as the earthly Fido it would not be an act of injustice to create for a beatific heavenly life Fido 2 (if the balance of pleasure and pain must be made). Which individual is involved is irrelevant: all that is important is that some individual be given such a life (it need not even be a dog: why should it be?).

But perhaps this is to misunderstand the nature of the afterlife. The Christian vision is not primarily one of balancing deserts and punishments, pleasure and pain, nor even one of compensation. Rather, it cannot be isolated from what a Christian theist understands as the reason for creating at all: to give glory to God. The created universe is to show the Uncreated. But, as we have seen, it is fallen and stands in need of redemption. By redemption, then, is understood bringing all that is created to the place of manifesting God as perfectly as possible. This is the reason why it was created. It is this particular creation, and not some other, which God has willed to exist to manifest His life and which He wills to redeem for this purpose. Thus, it is also this

creation (and not some other) in which I find my place and full self-understanding, because my place, also, is to be a part of the showing of the Divine. That it will be my dog who is resurrected and not a replacement does not depend, then, upon her capacity for self-consciousness, nor upon my or anyone else's consciousness of her, but upon God's intention to transform and redeem this creation rather than create a different one. This is, of course, the same and only reason why I can hope for my own redemption.

The World's Redemption

The doctrine that the whole world is to be saved, and not just human souls, is deep in the Christian tradition: it occupies a key position in the theologies of, among others, Tertullian, Justin, Hippolytus, Miletus, Commodian and Lactantius (HARNACK II pp.295f). These Fathers were, in turn, merely taking biblical convictions on the subject quite seriously: for Jesus, the coming Kingdom of God simply meant a time when God would rule all His creation - heaven and earth, man and beast alike (FENTON(2) p.18; SCHURER II pp.537f). Thus we have, for example, Irenaeus' impressive scheme of creation and redemption. He sees the historical process as a narrowing of the scope of salvation - after the Fall only one nation was chosen to carry the message and task of salvation, then one Person was chosen to represent that people. But, with the Incarnation (the narrowest point), an ever-widening

movement of redemption has begun as the Church grows to include all the nations. This movement, he thought, will not be completed until the whole universe has been 'recapitulated' and transformed (Against Heresies: 5.32.2; 5.33.3f; 5.35f).

In holding that the creation would be 'recapitulated' Irenaeus was in agreement with the early church's establishing of a firm link between protology and eschatology. This was partly an anti-gnostic move, but it went wider than just that. The renewal at baptism was seen as a new creation, conforming to the patterns of the old one, and the idea that God will make 'the last things like the first things' (Barnabus VI:13) was used as a general hermeneutical principle for the right reading of Genesis (DAHL p.424). So the idea of restitution is there - the things which existed at the beginning will return: Paradise, the tree of life, and so on (Rev.2:7;21:14ff; 1 Enoch 24f). The first things have been kept safe for the end of the world; the 'sabbath rest' means that creation is in some sense finished already, and exists as a heavenly reality, though some have still to enter it (Heb.4:3-6). But the new creation is not only restitution, it is also transformation, and Paul clearly stresses the superiority over the first things of the coming incorruptible state (1 Cor.15:35ff).

Maybe this is not yet to say that the new creation will be 'perfect', if by this we mean the simultaneous existence of

all possible values, since they are often incompatible with each other.

"Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody poor" (Blake: Songs
of Experience).

However, this does not mean that we have to reject the idea that the world is fallen. If God desires the actualisation of as many positive values as possible, one can still make out a strong case for saying that certain aspects of the world - the predatory system, for example - produce more evil than good. Whereas the intended creation was one of mutual co-operation, in which all forms of life are nourished and supported by all other forms, as in the economy of the human body, the present world is a horrible parody of this -

"Fish and Bird and Beast and Man and Metal and
Stone live by Devouring, going into Eternal Death
continually" (Blake: Jerusalem 50:5).

We must now turn to consider the question of how we are to live in the fallen world.

Chapter VI
WAR AND PEACE (1)

However grand and impressive any vision of the future might be, we are locked for the time being into a fallen world in which different rules must operate. The Kingdom has not yet arrived and it would be naive, and even suicidal, to live as though it had. The "god of this age" (2 Cor.4:4) has little time for our futuristic longings, and we would be opting out of the very real war between good and evil which is being played out all around us if we tried (impossibly) to evade the practical and ethical responsibilities we have in this complicated and corrupted world in favour of some ideal realm. The strong one must be bound before his house can be spoiled (Mk.3:7), and this time before the New Age arrives is one in which evil must be overthrown. As the Islamic poet, Rumi, has it:

"All around us one vast hubbub,
Candles blazing, torches hurled;
For tonight the world's in travail,
Bringing forth the eternal world"
(R.A.NICHOLSON p.142).

The New Testament also uses the language of childbirth in order to express both the glory and the pain of deliverance. Our times are the times of pain, though hints of the glory to come may be vouchsafed us.

We have to recognise that, in the world as it now is, the

beasts will normally be our enemies (as will much of the natural world), not our friends. We remarked earlier that it seems a perfectly cogent doctrine that there may be free spiritual beings of great power who have chosen to live in opposition to the Good, and that they have involved the world in their own anarchy. It was necessary to hold something like this if we were to believe that there is evil inherent in the universe apart from, and before, human contact with it.

Such views, in one form or another, were widespread in the multi-cultural setting into which Christianity was born. According to many popular astrological beliefs in the Graeco-Roman world, man becomes a victim of fate as he enters the sphere of nature - his life is pre-determined (principally by the stars). Certainly, the Creation narrative in Genesis Ch.1 plays down the significance and status of the stars quite considerably (they exist merely to mark the seasons and the religious festivals), and we have seen that there was also a sense in which Judaism held that nature has become victim to the human fate, rather than the other way around. Nonetheless, in the Hellenised Judaism of Paul's time the idea was prevalent that when a man is born he becomes subject, if not to the stars, then to the 'elements' of this world which rule the cosmos (Gal.4:3f).

In the New Testament, then, the world is seen as burdened by sin, both as the result of the Adamic fall and the

pre-Adamic angelic fall. Evil powers now hold the world in subjection. CULLMAN(2) p.192) writes:

"Whatever our personal attitude towards this view may be, we must conclude...that these powers, in the faith of Primitive Christianity, did not belong merely to the framework 'conditioned by the contemporary situation'. It is these invisible beings who in some way...stand behind what occurs in the world".

There is no need to label any such view as inevitably Manichaeian, in the sense of holding that the natural world is evil in itself. It is not - but it is enslaved (MACGREGOR). According to the gospel accounts, Christ was firmly of the belief that evil spirits influenced (even controlled) the world. The wilderness temptations in Matthew and Luke record the devil as offering Him all the kingdoms of the world since "they have been delivered to me" (Matt.4:8f; Lk.4:6f), and the battle with evil continues through the various exorcisms, healings and 'nature' miracles - the stilling of the storm, for instance, is almost certainly to be read as a casting out of demons from the sea, for the language used is one of 'rebuking' and 'obedience' (SCHNACKENBERG(2) p.84; FENTON(1) p.130). In the patristic period the belief was held, similarly, that demons may take charge of the natural world: animals, plants, stars, the sea, all these lie within their possible sphere of influence (Origen:Hom.on Job 10:6; Nemesius:On the Nature of Man I:7). Again, in medieval times it was widely taught that animals could be instruments of the

powers of hell, that at any moment they could be possessed. This might harm none but the animal in question, of course, and disease and injury were often thought to be traceable to demonic influence (or witches, their visible agents (THOMAS(1) pp.519,553)). But the possession of animals might also have effects on human well-being, and the movement was more normally from an observation of something being harmful to humans to a seeking out of its cause, and identifying it as demonic involvement, than the other way around. An animal must be an agent of Satan because it showed itself inimical to human welfare. Accordingly, legal action taken against non-humans was believed to be, in reality, taken against the devil (ARMSTRONG p.204 n.34; E.P.EVANS).

There are some interesting parallels here with Zoroastrianism, where wolves and the entire cat tribe were considered to be the direct creation of Ahriman, the destructive spirit. Some animals belonged to the Good God (for example, dogs, birds and hedgehogs) and some to the Evil Spirit. The way in which the servants of the Evil One were treated is predictable -

"they count the man fortunate who has killed the greatest number of them" (Plutarch, cited by ZAEHNER(1) p.124).

Between Ahriman and his creations no distinction is made - by association with the god such beasts were thought inevitably evil and had to be destroyed. But this is a point where

Christian theism must draw apart from such clear-cut dualism. No animal life is of the devil in this way, even if it may be temporarily possessed. Action taken against such a beast may be an indirect attack on the empire of evil, but it is a solution only open as a last resort since the Christian attitude has always been to distinguish between the goodness of the creature and the force which may take charge of it. Theophan the Recluse wrote to one of his spiritual charges about the question of humans being used by the devil:

"Your idea that people who bring trouble may be tools of the enemy is right. So whenever anyone causes you trouble, always assume that the devil stands behind them, inciting them and suggesting offending words and deeds to their minds" (WARE(1) p.213).

That is, if the devil is using a creature the implication is that the creature must be loved all the more, not attacked in turn. One must get rid of all irascibility and anger towards those who oppose one. If this is the suggested response to a human who is assumed to be the momentary victim of the evil one's promptings, then it would seem to apply all the more to non-humans - not having free-will, these latter cannot even be presumed to have temporarily "allowed" themselves to be used in such a fashion. Francis supplies us with an example of this attitude towards the non-human world. Two years before his death a plague of mice is reported to have irritated him intensely. He was suffering from a severe eye infection and so was nearly blind and the mice ran over him day and night,

taking advantage of this lack of resistance that they found. Francis prayed for grace enough to be able to endure this testing, regarding the mice as the instruments of the devil on this occasion. But there is no mention of his waging a campaign against them to be rid of them. As unwitting servants of the powers of evil they were to be pitied (The Mirror of Perfection: 100). Hagiography provides us with many more examples where those animals suspected of being possessed were treated with care and compassion: the most appropriate action was thought to be to cure them, not to kill them (St. Jerome: The Life of St. Hilarion, Ch.23).

The biblical precedents for understanding animals as agents of good should not be forgotten either. GALLOWAY((1) p.11) writes that for Amos

"the whole realm of physical disaster - for us a purely contingent element disrupting the unity of history - is brought within the pattern of God's judgement".

Natural disasters, animal pests and the like, are used by God as His agents, wreaking their work of destruction on sinful humanity. It is perhaps only natural that we should prefer the picture of animals as Satan's unwitting servants.

But if they are unwitting, can we justify our warfare towards them? Most ethical theories which apply themselves to questions of the morality of war assume, reasonably enough, that the aggressors will be morally responsible agents. What sort of ruling can we make when this is not the case, where

one is dealing with an army of the insane, a children's crusade - or animals? We may note an important difference between the approach taken by Augustine and that by Aquinas.

"While to Augustine the injury itself provides the just cause for war, Thomas Aquinas demands some fault on the part of the wrong-doer for his subjective guilt rather than his objectively wrongful act" (J.van Elbe, quoted in BAILEY p.10).

If subjective guilt is to be a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for war, then one cannot justly wage war on the beasts - unless one holds them moral agents enough for such adjectives as 'innocent' and 'guilty' to be sensibly applied to them. But, again, if they are possessed then even if they are normally to be counted moral agents they cannot be in this case: one possessed is not accountable for his actions.

In Christian 'Just War' theories, however, the concept of innocence is used to mean, roughly, 'harmlessness'. It has nothing to do with the metaphysical question of the capacity for moral guilt or innocence. Therefore, under the scheme of conventions governing a just war, children are normally automatically held to be innocent (i.e.harmless). Guilt is a matter of doing harm to someone. As ANSCOMBE (p.45) put it, such a one is

"engaged in an objectively unjust proceeding which the attacker has the right to make his concern; or - the commonest case - should be unjustly attacking him".

The notion of innocence as used by Aquinas has various

unpalatable implications when applied to war situations: it justifies the killing of a harmless, but morally wicked, grocer, but not a morally pure aggressor (NAGEL(1) pp.19f). So combatants are to be distinguished from non-combatants on the grounds of immediate threat or harmfulness. If animal pests are ruining one's livelihood one may treat the situation as one of war and the beasts themselves as guilty aggressors. Their status, as innocent or guilty, is not fixed, but alters according to their actions and the effects they have on human welfare. A purely objective account of animal behaviour is all that is needed in order to determine whether or not we may go to war against them. It thus becomes, incidentally, quite by the way whether or not it is coherent to suppose them actually possessed: a functionalist description is adequate for the purpose of deciding upon the question of war, and we need not pursue questions about whether there may be demons 'behind' animal actions.

The Description of War

Can the relation which holds between humans and animals be accurately described as being one of war? It is not as simple as that, of course, for there is not a single principle governing all human dealings with animals, but a vast and complex set of interactions. Nonetheless, we might find ourselves in agreement with NASR's view (p.135) that, throughout periods of both war and peace between humans, there

is yet a never-ending tendency towards war with nature:

"in both the state of war and peace man is waging an incessant war upon nature...whether one pollutes water resources in a single bombing or does so over a twenty-year period is essentially the same...in both instances man is waging war against nature."

War is described here as a 'state'; it is something continuous, a constant background to human affairs. HOBBS (I,13), writing about the relationships between humans rather than the interrelation between man and nature, also held war to be something similar to a general 'disposition', which could exist even when war was not being physically conducted in any obvious way:

"For WARRE, consisteth not in Battell onely, or in the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of Time, is to be considered in the nature of Warre...(it) consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE".

War is more than a series of isolated events, it is a whole atmosphere; and this state of war, in the sense of a tendency towards warlikeness, is present in both the period that we would normally classify as 'war' and that of 'peace'. We live a perverted peace because of a not fully converted heart, and until conversion takes place physical war is inevitable: we have made it part of our thought and action (cf BARTH III,IV,452).

Ecologists and non-ecologists alike frequently use

war-like imagery to describe the ways in which humans treat the natural world. Man is said to 'ravage' nature, to 'assault' and 'exploit' her. Rachel CARSON (p.214) speaks of "our chemical attack...weakening the defences inherent in the environment", and BRUBAKER (p.183) writes more mildly of "environmental insults". The images are very often sexual as well, nature being a feminine principle, and feminists have recently become aware of some interesting parallels between some aspects of their own cause and those of the ecology movement (MERCHANT; RUEHER).

But it is not always humans who are considered to be the aggressors. Rather surprisingly, George Marsh, the early American ecologist, asserted man's dominion over nature as a right and a responsibility in very war-like tones:

"The life of man is a perpetual struggle with external Nature. It is by rebellion against her commands and the final subjugation of her forces alone that man can achieve the nobler ends of his creation" (cited in LOWENTHAL p.37).

Here nature is seen as the dominant power, and man must rise up against her tyranny. Aggressive language is also used to describe the response of nature to human 'attacks'. The balance of nature is seen as a balance of power, so that nature 're-asserts' herself or 're-establishes' her positions when she is attacked:

"Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our victories over nature. For each such victory it takes its revenge on us" (Engels, cited in PASSMORE p.25).

War imagery is being applied here to show that we cannot treat the environment simply as we please; we have to realise that "we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people". And as LEWIS((5) pp37f) perceptively noted, 'power over nature' often means, in fact, the power of some men over other men - and Nature ends as the conqueror as the apparently victorious individuals find themselves governed by their own irrational impulses. What seems to be man's conquest of Nature turns out to be Nature's conquest of man, through a few chosen individuals.

But is it really possible to speak sensibly in this kind of way of the natural world responding to human aggression, of it 'fighting back'? Perhaps it is. The natural world sometimes appears to become 'hostile' and dangerous to humans only because of, and through, prior human agency. In response to the use of a given chemical which is designed to eradicate a certain form of insect pest the whole complex of living biological communities around the area in which the pesticide is distributed will finally adapt. Sometimes this will be in ways which are harmless to human endeavours; but occasionally the response will be more unpredictable and then one sees the "explosive power" of a species to reproduce once the resistance of its environment has been weakened (CARSON p.215). Nature is fighting back.

"The wisdom of princes will be too costly for

the world if they persist in learning from experience how dreadful war is...The prince will understand some day that it was useless to extend the territory of the kingdom and that what in the beginning seemed a gain was (in reality) tremendous loss" (ERASMUS p.250).

In destroying plant and animal species we are destroying our environment. In the war against nature, as in all wars, the question has to be asked whether in defeating the enemy we are not also acting in a way which is self-defeating; where our livelihood depends upon the cooperation and health of that enemy the question becomes all the more acute. Not that war on animals or the environment will always be detrimental to human well-being: high productivity on intensive farms is quite compatible with the ill-health (both mentally and physically) of most of the animals, provided physical health does not deteriorate too far (M.DAWKINS p.32; BRAMBELL sect.30). Many of the ways in which humans and animals relate to each other seem better described, in fact, as 'massacre' rather than war. The possibility of casualties on both sides does not arise: there is no danger facing the owner of a veal farm.

In the case of intensive farming the analogy of war seems a less applicable one. In what sense can a battery hen be said to be 'fighting back', or even putting up a show of resistance? Perhaps within the overall model of war one could consider farm animals as prisoners of war - although slavery is a closer analogy: pigs are not captured, they are born into captivity. Still, to hold absolute power over the life and

liberty of another is to put oneself into a state of war with that person (LOCKE II 23f).

The war model does not break down just because animals are often not in a position to fight back. Certainly in general war is reciprocal, but this does not have to be the case. It may be that just one society sanctions the use of lethal weapons against the other without there being a similar recourse to action on the other side. If we are using the word 'war' in the wide sense of a state of mind and an attitude, as well as a set of actions, then this is easier to understand. Hitler, arming Germany, was in a state of war by preparation and intention long before the countries he attacked. But even if we limit the use of the concept of war to the occurrence of physical violence it is still conceivable that an aggressor might declare itself at war with a nation inspired by the ethics of non-violent resistance: only one side would be at war.

There is a further interesting parallel between modern war and the ways in which many animals are treated. In the twentieth century warfare is an organised activity in which all the vital decisions are made by a very small number of people whilst a vast number are actually affected by the state of war. To a certain extent this has always been true of war - its effects generally reach far beyond those actually involved; but with the advent of the possibility of a nuclear

war we are faced with a situation in which any war will be conducted by only a very few people whilst millions take the consequences of their actions. In the same way, the large-scale war against animals for food is conducted, in Western societies at least, by comparatively few. But millions are affected by it - they benefit from the spoils of war.

Perhaps we should not draw too sharp a distinction between those actually taking part in the war and the wider society who reap the benefits war brings - and thus, by implication, support the action.

"Warfare exists if the conflict is organised, and socially sanctioned and the killing is not regarded as murder" (MEAD p.215).

The idea that war is socially sanctioned is a clear indication that those killed, the 'enemy', are not considered members of one's own group - for a single group hardly sanctions war against itself (a civil war is one where what was once seen as a single unit has divided itself into two separate factions). Warfare of any sort, therefore, depends upon some prior group identification, so that intra-group and extra-group killings can be distinguished. There are nearly always fewer taboos governing warlike behaviour towards those outside of one's own particular charmed circle. In an important sense, therefore, any ideas about war are dependent upon how the concept of community is being used. Questions about the nature of

community will be tackled in the next chapter, where we will be considering, in particular, whether it might be envisaged that the whole sentient universe (or even the whole universe, animate and inanimate) be seen as being 'within' the group, so that the war model be dispensed with: is a cosmic community a viable concept? For the purposes of this chapter we shall consider that the answer is 'no' and see what follows if we assume that the war model is the best one to operate.

The History of the Idea

(1) Biblical. In the Old Testament there is found the idea that there can be a 'just war' against the beasts. To Noah and his sons God said,

"The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea" (Gen.9:2).

The language which is used here is that normally found in explicit war situations, where a conqueror is slaughtering a routed army or pillaging a fallen city (J.A.BAKER p.96).

Elsewhere in the Bible animals are themselves used as symbols of war and destruction. God promises not to clear the Canaanites too quickly from before the path of the Israelites, lest the wild beasts multiply and the land grow desolate (Ex.23:29f). Where humankind is absent chaos and wilderness follow, civilisation is lost and the beasts resist any attempt to reinstate it. When Babylon is overthrown, only the wild animals will be left:

"wild beasts will lie down there,
and its house will be full of howling creatures,
there ostriches will dwell,
and there satyrs will dance."(Is.13:21f)

So, too, when Edom is destroyed only the animals will live there. The redemption of Israel, by contrast, means precisely the exclusion of animals from the community (or at least wild animals) (Is.35:9; Ez.34:25).

Like famine and the sword, the wild beasts also figure widely as general symbols of destruction. The devouring of human corpses by beasts was regarded as the height of shame: it was evidence that one had been forsaken by God (Gen.40:19). We have already noted that nature was occasionally pictured as God's avenging agent, sent to punish Israel or Israel's enemies for their sins. But the value of the wild beasts seems to be confined to this negative function.

It is taken for granted that many kinds of animals are 'natural' enemies of man (Amos 5:19), and this enmity towards certain species was carried on not least at a profound symbolic level. In Daniel Ch.7 the evil and destructive world-authorities are seen as beast-like figures, as powers hostile to man. Again, and surely significantly, the anti-Christ in the book of Revelation is the Beast.

However, animal symbolism in the Bible is not entirely hostile. In some places animals are included quite definitely in God's covenant with the world (Gen.9; Hos.2:18f), and the lack of them rather than their presence is what spells

desolation (Jer.33:10). This ambiguity in the use of animal symbolism can be seen most clearly in the relationship between the Lamb and the Beast in Revelation. The Lamb is the Christ-symbol, the symbol of all that is good, noble and God-like; the Beast is the symbol of the anti-Christ. Perhaps the most instructive way of looking at the relationship between them is to see the Beast as a parody of the Lamb. Worship of the Lamb is the true worship (Rev.5:12f), whereas that of the Beast is false (13:4); the Lamb is going to the Holy City for his marriage (19:7), but the Beast has only a drunken harlot (18:4). Even the characterisation of the Beast's life span is a parody of the Christ's eternal reign (1:17f,17:8), and the mysterious number of the Beast (666) is possibly best understood as a parody on the perfect number (777).

This idea concerning animal symbolism, that when it is used to suggest evil and war-likeness it is not performing its true function but a perverted form of it, is supported by other evidence. For instance, although the fallen supernatural beings are often described at least partially in terms of animal symbolism, this can also be seen as a corruption since descriptions of the cherubim, seraphim and the angelic hosts also draw on such imagery.

(2) The ancient Greek background. Aristotle was quite convinced that there could be a just war against the beasts.

Nature makes nothing without some end in view, and wild beasts are made to be hunted ('made to be' in the strong teleological sense). Hunting is one part of war, and warfare should be conducted against the beasts and against those men who by their nature are slavish and intended by nature to be ruled over - though in their ignorance they might resist. This sort of warfare is, by nature, right (Politics I:8). Not only is war against animals right, an "innocent" war (COWLEY p.52), it is also necessary for survival. At first man was wholly unprotected against these formidable enemies and was devoured at will by the beasts. The gods had apparently forgotten that humans need protection, and they were defenceless until they banded together and learnt the art of politics - the skill of war being a vital part of this education (Plato: Protagoras 322).

Isocrates also felt that there can be a just war against animals. Speaking of those who governed Athens in the fifth century, he said:

"... second only to the war which we carry on (in alliance) with all mankind against the savagery of the beasts, that war is the most necessary and the most righteous which we wage (in alliance) with the Hellenes against the barbarians who are by nature our foe and are eternally plotting against us" (Panathenaikos 163).

That is, the war against the beasts is even more necessary than that waged against the barbarians. The whole of mankind, even those normally at war with one another, are united

against this vast foe, the Beast. PLOTINUS (III, 2:15) was also aware that there rages amongst animals and amongst men a "perpetual war" without respite or truce - although the passage is ambiguous as to whether he means between animals and men, or only within each separate kind.

(3) Some Modern Views. William James discussed ways of abandoning war between humans whilst retaining and preserving the positive and manly values which often accompany war. He wrote that we should have, instead of this war between factions and races,

"a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against Nature ... They would have paid their blood-tax, done their part in the immemorial human warfare against nature."
(JAMES(2) pp.12ff)

James is using the word 'nature' to cover much more than the natural environment - part of the war, for example, is to be waged against human poverty - and in many respects he is offering a noble ideal. However, there is little doubt that all this is to be achieved very much by battling against the non-human environment, conceived as hostile. It is an analysis which sees civilised human life as dependent upon, or even consisting in, an overcoming of Nature.

Two powerful twentieth century influences, Darwinism and Freudian psychology, have also tended to lend their weight to the opinion that it is necessary to wage war against the natural world. Darwinism could have brought with it an

intensified sense of kinship between man and animals, and a more compassionate outlook towards the non-human as the realisation of the common origin of man and beast found greater acceptance. However, in the nineteenth century it was typically interpreted as simply confirming the belief man already had that nature was to be overcome and was at root an enemy. Humans had struggled out of an ignorant and coarse past and could afford to despise their distant cousins. Spencer argued that not only did man have to struggle with nature in order to survive, but also that this survival showed his moral superiority (PASSMORE p.23). With an outlook such as this war becomes not a regrettable inevitability but a serious ethical duty.

Freud, in 'Civilisation and its Discontents', held up as the human ideal

"combining with the rest of the human community and taking up the attack on nature, thus forcing it to obey human will, under the guidance of science" (cited in PASSMORE p.23).

Freud's general attitude towards nature seems to be closely linked with his predominantly negative view of the unconscious as that which is merely unacceptable to the conscious ego. In his triad of ego, super-ego and id the ego has the task of reconciling the sphere of morality (super-ego) with the powerful appetites and natural urges of the id. The result is inevitably a compromise. The Freudian picture emerged, then, of the human person (and thus of the human community) being at

the centre of an endless battle between nature striving for its fulfilment, and all that is morally and aesthetically worthwhile having to oppose its satisfaction. There is no sense here of Grace building on Nature: the two are implacably opposed. We shall be seeing later that Jung's more positive approach to the unconscious allowed him to take a more balanced view of the place that should be given to all that is not obviously part of human civilisation. Even though it is possible, as we have seen, to describe man's relations with animals in terms of martial imagery, perhaps we should be looking for ways of replacing it, for there is no doubt that the language which we use to frame and organise our apprehension of reality very much affects the way in which we perceive the world.

This metaphorical structuring is far more prevalent than is often thought. Thus, keeping our attention on the question of war, we use the metaphor 'Argument is War' (LAKOFF AND JOHNSON), saying, for example, 'I shot down his argument', 'he attacked my position', and so on. But this influences the way in which we understand the nature of disagreement and the whole field of discourse and exchange of knowledge: trying to 'win' becomes more important than trying to understand. This is not to suggest that metaphors are arbitrarily imposed upon fields of discourse, totally altering the way they are seen; we like our opinions to prevail over the opinions of others in

any case, and warlike metaphors to describe conversational methods have not brought this situation about. Nonetheless, it would also be wrong to ignore the ways in which the metaphors we live by reinforce certain ways of looking at things (thus, note the importance attributed, by those campaigning for an end to hunting, to the general use of the phrase 'blood sports' rather than 'field sports': the emphasis moves from the idea that something is an outdoor sport to the fact that the aim is to kill something). In the same way, although the use of warlike images reflects one aspect of the many ways in which humans and animals relate to one another, to suggest that we can use such images as typically accurate would seem to mean risking losing the knowledge that other kinds of relationship are also possible.

However, various arguments have been employed attempting to show that the war metaphor is the only realistic one, and that it can, and should, be used in quite a blanket fashion to cover human-animal relationships. It is to these arguments that we must now turn.

The Defence of Civilisation

This is the view which holds that human civilisation depends upon a certain antipathy towards animals. It has been a fairly popular thesis that the origins of human society lay in the combination of men to protect themselves from the beasts:

"When they were attacked by wild beasts they, taught by self-interest, came to one another's aid; and after they had thus been led by fear to gather into groups, they presently came to understand the signs they made to one another" (Diodorus Siculus, in LOVEJOY AND BOAS p.221).

The negative outlook as to what inspired the beginnings of social grouping - fear, mutual protection, self-interest - are typical of the Epicurean standpoint, seeing the 'polis' as basically an artificial arrangement originating in some sort of crude scheme for enhanced protection - against other humans as well as animals, of course. There is no sense here of the Aristotelian thesis that humans (like most other mammals) are naturally social creatures. On the contrary, an extreme individualism is postulated: humans form community not out of mutual attraction, but through fear of the Other.

Often drawing upon these myths about origins, many Stoic writers went on to insist that animals could not now be allowed any place in human moral thinking, arguing, in addition, that if man once considered himself bound by moral obligations in his relations with animals he would have to, for instance, recognise that it is wrong to kill them for food, or even harness them for work in the fields. This is, of course, unthinkable. As one of them commented, aphoristically,

"We shall be living the life of beasts once we give up the use of beasts" (cited in Plutarch: *Moralia* 964)

Our civilisation will totter if we dare relinquish flesh

foods. But the opposite is true: in practical terms alone, and ignoring any moral dimension, it has long since been established that a vegetarian diet is at least as healthy as any alternative diet containing flesh, and that it is far less wasteful in terms of the earth's resources (LAPPE; GEORGE).

"It has been said that the world could not have either gold, sugar or coals but at the expense of human blood and liberty. The world in that case ought not to have either gold, sugar or coals...But the assertion was fallacious and unfounded" (LAWRENCE, in CLARK(1) p.18).

Some of these themes will bear further attention and in the next chapter we shall be considering, in particular, what moral status animals might be allocated within a predominantly human community.

Warlike Genes

There has been growing concern for some time about man's still often unembarrassed war against the environment, and against animals in particular. It is argued that he is the most dangerous predator because he is also the least controlled.

"Regular day-to-day predation helps to keep populations in check, or in balance with their environment, but does not at any time result in a catastrophic or very rapid reduction in numbers. It is only when man comes upon the scene, with his proverbial incapacity to regulate his actions in accordance with environmental conditions, that any large species of mammal is actually endangered by predation" (L.BROWN p.94).

This type of remark over-states the case. It is not true that no species is ever endangered or forced out of existence

except through human mismanagement. When a species becomes extinct it is not always easy to apportion blame between humans, other competitors, and climatic and environmental conditions in general, but humans cannot be held solely responsible for ecological upsets. Dinosaurs did not disappear through man's doing. Again, even apart from this qualification, it could be argued that all one is really saying is that humans are more versatile than most other species, taking their chances as and when they arise. This does not make them particularly wicked, for they are just acting out their species pattern - although it does go some way to explaining the human success. Conflicts arise, both between humans and animals and between different groups of humans, because homo sapiens is, like the raven, opportunistic and non-specialist. Specialised species can co-exist far more easily because each has its own particular place and role in the working of the Whole.

If we were to make political analogies we could say that those ecologists who condemn man's adventurous experiments with the natural world are advocating a model of the earth which corresponds to the view that in a society each has his own role which should be fulfilled and that the outlook of such a society should be conservative and discourage change. The ordering of society is a static one. By contrast, the pseudo-Darwinian view of the natural world as one never-ending

conflict into which humans must throw themselves wholeheartedly in order to survive, has its political parallel more in the libertarian ideal of laissez-faire and unrestricted entrepreneurship. I call this view 'pseudo-Darwinian' because Darwin himself did not portray nature in such antagonistic terms: it was left to some of his followers to misinterpret his work by doing that. So a Nietzsche-type 'Darwinian' approach would tend to advocate little humanitarian intervention in a community, since this would mean supporting the useless weak, those who in evolutionary terms were doomed in any case; and on a larger scale Darwin's theories have seemed an ideal model to promote the concept of progress through conflict in terms of national struggle - nations are conceived as living organisms which grow healthy through successful conflict. Homo sapiens, then, is a non-specialist species, and is consequently bound to be at war with other kinds.

Genetic considerations also provide a second reason why a certain amount of warring on other species is inevitable - even desirable. The protection of altruistic tendencies within a group seems to depend upon its treating all non-group as enemies to be resisted (this is something which applies to many species). Group altruism works best when it is combined with hostility towards outsiders (EIBL-EIBESPELDT p.123). A group, in order to maintain its level of altruism, needs to

keep itself distinct from other more egotistically-minded members, either by means of geographical location or by direct hostility. Otherwise such strangers will take advantage of the altruistic members of the group and may finally outbreed and outnumber them. The altruism within the group will then be lost. It behoves all species to be as wary as serpents as well as innocent as doves. SINGER((4) p.21) cites experiments conducted on rhesus monkeys which showed that introducing a strange member of the species into the group produced more aggression than either the limiting of food supplies or over-crowding had done. There seems to be an unfavourable-reaction mechanism towards non-group members which is inbuilt in many species and exists to protect the group's altruistic behaviour patterns.

Thus, if humans, who have a highly-developed moral sense, were to continually sacrifice their interests for beings who do not share their understanding of moral behaviour, thus giving such non-moral creatures (by our standards) an evolutionary advantage, the long-term result would be that less of such behaviour would survive.

Even if this is true, though, it is possible to point out that this kind of argument has little bearing on much of the human war against animals, where it is not a matter of a dangerous escalation of the number of beasts that need be feared if the war were eased: we massively increase the number

of farm animals out of all proportion of what might be expected in some natural state in order to satisfy our dietary requirements - there are not millions of turkeys around at Christmas because they want to join in the festivities, but because we want them to (HARRIS).

Still, this does not cover human relations with wild animals, and here at least it could be argued that

"when the community is attacked from outside at least the external danger fosters solidarity within"
(DOUGLAS(1) Ch.9).

Not only do external intruders have to be warded off from the point of view of mere survival, but the very act of doing so fosters and promotes altruistic tendencies within the group, and such attitudes and actions are therefore to be welcomed as the lesser of two evils. But it seems one thing to allow that altruism can happen to be encouraged in this way incidentally, as it were, when defensive measures against outsiders seem inevitable for the group's safety, and quite another thing to suggest that group altruism should be deliberately cultivated by the conducting of superfluous campaigns against the harmless, or even by a pretence of war.

Perhaps it will be argued that our genes are completely 'selfish' (in the sociobiological sense of seeking only the continuance and advancement of our own genetic line (see SINGER(4) pp.126ff)), and that, further, it would be unrealistic to attempt to plan ethical courses of action which

might subvert this powerful genetic inheritance. R.DAWKINS (p.3) suggested that we

"understand what our selfish genes are up to, because we may then at least have the chance to upset their designs, something which no other species has ever aspired to"

but, given his understanding of genes, it is difficult to see how this ploy is anything other than our selfish genes' adopting a new strategy, one which is more conducive to our survival than our previously militantly aggressive approaches. Perhaps a prudent approach at the present time, from our selfish genes point of view (and there is, on this understanding, no other view which could underlie our actions), would be to seek more peaceful relations with the environment. But if we are merely gene-bearers, and if these genes are entirely selfish, then the choice between war and peace is really an illusory one. There is only war between the different genetic lines, and the most we can hope for is a Cold War. It is not only towards animals that genuinely altruistic action is impossible on this reading: we are unable to act altruistically towards any except the tiny minority who actually share our genes. It is not only peace with the environment which is an impossible option, but also peace with most other humans.

It was argued earlier that we are a non-specialist species: one corollary of this is that we are more adaptive than most other kinds. We would therefore seem to have a prima

facie duty to make way for creatures less adaptable than ourselves where a choice has to be made between humans or animals altering their lifestyles. The Just War theories are insistent that the road to war must only be a last resort after all other paths have been tried: humans have many paths open to them. Being non-specialist also means that we have evolved as creatures capable of a wide understanding of, and sympathy with, other species (these are characteristics which the idea of man as a microcosm of the world has been able to emphasise). We think ourselves able to imagine, to a certain extent, what it must be like to be members of other species than our own. One could propose that the evolution of such an ability fits in with the selfish gene model: it is advantageous for a species to be able to understand some of the springs of action in other kinds than its own, particularly in the case of close competitors. Our capacity for sympathy, as well as the other values we hold to be important, can be traced back, via some speculative leaps, to our immediate ancestors and pre-human kin and to their experiences of community living.

Those who find such expositions unrealistic in terms of the way in which we do seem to act must conclude that either our genes are not wholly selfish or that they do not entirely determine our behaviour (or both). Moreover, unless we are willing to jettison any idea that we are moral beings we must

feel that there is a difference between partially, or wholly, 'explaining' our value systems, and the justification of such values. In the same way as being persuaded that all religious experiences originate in neurotic guilt still tells one nothing about the validity or otherwise of such experiences in terms of an objective reference, so tracing the origins of our moral sense is independent of any justification or discrediting of it. We cannot pre-judge questions about the inevitability or otherwise of war with the beasts by an examination of our genetic inheritance.

Psychology and War

A further argument for the inevitability of constant war with the beasts looks at human psychology and finds there an innate need to be at war with someone, or something. If this is the case, then better the animals than man. To argue that to kill is not an instinct but a socially acquired trait (DUBOS p.47) is merely to evade the issue. For if aggression is socially acquired and found in all social interactions, then unless it is denied that humans are 'naturally' social, aggression must be considered 'natural' as well. To find the origins of aggression in society is, by inference, to find it in humans, since it is humans who make up society.

There is a genuine psychological need, so the argument continues, for an enemy of some sort:

"Even our most imaginative science fiction writers continue to deal either in the fantasies of

other planets, against whom the inhabitants of earth can unite; or superordinate and unbearable forms of world organisation against which humans must finally rebel" (MEAD p.224).

Wyndham's novels are some of the most typical in this respect, as also in tending to treat of nature as a force which is lawless, unreasoning and uncontrollable (R.WILLIAMS identifies a similar trend in modern cinema and fiction as a whole). Such themes are not universal - consider LeGuin, and C.S.Lewis' science fiction trilogy with its saintly hnau (rational extra-terrestrials), which depicts humans as the cosmic threat - but they are certainly common.

There is a general feeling which pervades the human consciousness of a humanity beleaguered by the forces of the non-human, and what is imagined to be the extent of necessary war with the natural world tends to reach mythical proportions. Thus, for instance, there are more than half a million species of insect in the world, and since human evolution only a tiny proportion have actually come into conflict with human welfare, either as competitors for food (as the locust), or as carriers of disease (as the mosquito). In terms of the numbers of creatures who are actually threatening, then, humans need be in conflict with only a very few of them. Even in some of those cases conflicts could be avoided: to ensure better sanitation is automatically to lessen the danger of disease-carrying insects (DUBOS p.121), and less intensification and specialisation in farming methods

normally means less need for agricultural chemicals to be used against insect colonies (CARSON).

Because of this 'feeling', this human need to find outlets for innate aggression, we have to accept that war with animals is a necessity. Better to hunt foxes than live in a state of frustrated aggression which could turn at any moment into a desire to hunt one's next-door neighbour. An organised struggle against the forces of untamed nature is the best substitute for human war (HALDANE p.45); and Fenelon thoughtfully suggested that there should be reserves of ferocious animals kept in remote areas of the world so that over-aggressive humans could expend their energy by fighting and killing them rather than their fellow citizens (Traite de l'existence de Dieu I:2). However, the way ethologists generally use the concept of 'aggression' is not as meaning that all creatures classified in this way are constantly seeking war or a similar outlet, so that any less destructive way than this into which such fury may be channelled is unequivocally a good; rather, 'aggression' is used to cover any "display or threat or carefully inhibited contest" (CLARK(3) p.83). The point of such displays is to establish a position in social life, to carve out a place for oneself, but it is not a senseless seeking of conflict. Is it that we are trying to impress upon the beasts our superior position in the cosmic hierarchy? Hunting with hounds is partly to do with

affirming a certain social position in the human sphere, it is one of the complex sets of displays humans make towards one another to assert their social standing (which is undoubtedly one reason why it faces so much opposition); but perhaps the huntsman is also telling the fox to keep to his place in the social strata - hunting demonstrates in a practical way man's dominion over the brutes (AUSTIN p.32, cited in CLARK(1) p.19).

Perhaps there is a connection between the war waged against animals and human warfare, but it works in the other direction. It is not that one is a substitute for the other: rather, one provides the training for the other. We exercise the 'manly' side of our natures by hunting leopards (ORIGEN 4,78), which is a necessary preparation for the time when we must fight our fellows. Significantly, Plato disapproves of hunting by night or with nets, but approves of coursing and killing with spears (Laws 842a) i.e. those forms which provide the closest possible analogy to cavalry and infantry fighting. The fox would be extinct if it were not protected by the gentry for the sake of necessary warlike exercise "against the time of a foreign invasion" (HARVEY p.34) - this in 1618. A typical medieval argument concerning cruelty to animals was that it was wrong primarily because it could inspire cruelty towards humans as well: clearly, whatever we think of the sufficiency of this argument, there is an acknowledgement here

that violence towards animals and towards humans are two very similar things - the gradation is much easier than may be imagined and the example is contagious (LAWRENCE). Those who hold animal life cheap are not likely to see human life in very different terms. The numerous speculations concerning a possible connection between the origins of war between humans and the termination of the primeval peace between man and the beasts (see Porphyry: On Abstinence: IV,1,2; POPE III,167f) seem less fanciful; indeed, there is a biblical precedent for their close association (Gen.1-11).

Warring against animals leads to warring against humans. And not only against other men and women but also against those aspects of humanity which are shared in common with the beasts. The labelling of animals as inferior, as pests, as vermin, and of no moral account, can be argued to have led to an impatience with those numerous qualities which we share with them. In practice, it has also meant that certain human groups have been seen as exemplifying all the despised beastly qualities and have been treated correspondingly badly. It has never been difficult to find such groups:

"the human brute, without arts or laws...is poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation" (GIBBON V p.314).

When we construct a picture of the natural world, contrasting the human and the non-human, we are at the same time providing ourselves with an analogy for the contrast between the member

of our particular group and the universal stranger (DOUGLAS(2) p.289; HOGDEN). But despite the constant attempts to make scapegoats of certain human groups who will carry away our unwanted qualities, these characteristics are hard to dispel completely; each must also war upon his 'lower' nature.

The psychological 'need' for an enemy, then (if such a thing exists), belongs to humanity in its fallen condition. I have an inability to be at peace with myself, to accept my own condition, and so I objectify this war. In Jungian terms, I create a 'shadow self' which I impose upon the outer world - often upon animals, who are then seen to exemplify these aspects of myself which I find the most hateful. Or I affirm my limited ego, which I define as 'me', and am then bound to protect it against all that is not-me, in particular against all that threatens my status and happiness.

If I am bound to be at war, then, it is not only with the animals, but (potentially) with all things. I suffer from a spiritual disease which Buddhism places at the heart of its analysis of the human condition. The teaching of 'no-self' is given as a help towards liberation from the deep-rooted attachment to this delusory self which is the fatal source of all such passions (CHANG p.75). So also in Christianity the primal sin is the attempt to deify the phenomenal self divorced from God. Since this is impossible the spirit acquires "a hatred of being, a frenzy to destroy" (LOSSKY(2)

p.82).

There is no quick way out of such blindness, but learning a loyalty towards, and a love for, the natural world in the process is a better route back to unity within ourselves than warring against her:

"we can perhaps hope to survive in all our prized diversity provided we can achieve an ultimate loyalty to our single, beautiful and vulnerable Planet Earth" (WARD AND DUBOS p.298).

Cosmic War

War with the beasts is an inescapable part of our lives, though, since the cosmos is built on a system of conflict, so that it is natural that there should be conflicts of interests between different species. With Heraclitus

"One must realise that war is shared and Conflict is Justice, and that all things come to pass (and are ordained?) in accordance with conflict" (KAHN Fr.82).

If we are wont to class certain human actions towards animals as unjust that is only because we have not yet appreciated this most basic of all laws: "Conflict is father of all and king of all" (KAHN Fr.53). One could label the human war against animals as unjust, but it is no more unjust than any other aspect of the cosmic war, and it would seem to make more sense to change one's ideas on the nature of justice than to call the whole universe corrupt. If we are going to think seriously about adopting these kind of notions as to what can be considered just and unjust, we will have to remember that

they apply to human relations as well as human-animal interactions. According to Aristotle, Heraclitus criticised Homer for the words 'May strife disappear from among gods and men' since if conflict is the universal law and the definition of justice this must encompass human society as well (BALDRY p.27). War between humans is as inevitable a feature of the cosmos as human-animal war.

Why is there universal conflict? One answer we could give is that of Anaximander, who held that things

"pay the penalty and recompense to one another for their injustice, according to the assessment of time" (cited in BLACKER AND LOEWE p.203).

The world is made up of judgements continually being enacted on all creatures. For each crime there is a necessary revenge, but this in turn must be revenged, and so on. Each act of justice is at the same time a fresh act of injustice which calls for recompense, and to this sequence there can, by definition, be no end. Such ideas can be found underlying the plot of many Greek tragedies. There is no way in which we can evade being part of this never-ending nightmare, since we, too, are called to perform acts of justice, to exact retribution for crimes done to us.

Or perhaps there is a way out. The gospel accounts portray Christ as the one who takes injustice and vengeance upon Himself, and in so doing breaks the chain of reprisal and counter-reprisal. His teaching on the necessity for

forgiveness was based upon the conviction that only in this way was it possible to break into circles of retribution, offering (in moral terms) a new beginning to a sequence of events, so that the wheel of vengeance cannot operate. Thus, even if the world does run within a framework of cosmic enmity such as Anaximander suggested the followers of Christ are called upon to introduce a different dimension.

Another account which is offered as an attempt to show how conflict could be considered 'justice' is that of Empedocles. He held that it is only whilst the contrary forces of Strife and Love struggle with one another that life itself can continue. These forces are actively opposed, and should it ever be possible that one of them gain absolute sway, the break-up of the cosmos must inevitably follow - or, better, life would simply cease since there would be no more activity. In part, all that Empedocles seems to mean by 'strife' and 'love' are the forces of attraction and repulsion - they are "mythical names" (GUTHRIE II p.155); but they are not wholly neutral categories in moral terms. Love is also the cause of goodness, whilst strife is the cause of evil, and there is thus a necessary moral, as well as a physical, dualism in the universe. In physical and in moral terms strife is the drawing apart of the unity which love tries to ensure; it is the state of disorder and disunity (see also Aristotle: *Metaphysics* 984b 32). There must always be a

balancing of the powers, a swinging back and forth with no final victory. Cosmic justice, in fact, is precisely that neither of the opposites ever gains a final advantage over the other: each has its turn, and each its re-turn. Neither war nor peace will finally conquer, since that would be a cosmic injustice.

Perhaps the Christian tradition can make something of this kind of position, though not quite in these terms. God's justice is not to be seen as primarily a matter of recompensing and compensating, but as a "distributing, a giving justice" (BUBER). God bestows upon each of His creatures what belongs to each one, and so allows it to be itself. He does not discriminate between good and evil but gives to each creature its measure, within the "boundary" marked out for it. The book of Job can be read in this light: cosmic justice means that each has his chance for flourishing, but none are given preferential treatment. Human and non-human alike have their place in this pattern and it is not for us to judge that one is more worthy of life than another or to see justice as a matter of "desert". Much of Jesus' teaching is along the same lines: God, in His justice, makes the sun to shine on the good and the bad alike, and He rewards the labourers equally, though they have worked for unequal periods. The justice of God is mercy, a matter of utter and indiscriminate giving.

Moreover, perhaps we could understand the Heraclitan opposites not as conflicting, but as complementing each other (this supposition is supported by Aristotle's citing the relationship of the sexes as an illustration of his thesis (Eudemian Ethics 8:1)). It would help to explain why he saw the constant interaction of the opposites resulting in harmony and not in chaos. So, then, we are to accept the diversity in the universe, including the opposite and the unusual, learning to live with and admire the rich possibilities of relationship between different kinds. It is only in this acceptance of the apparently alien that we can come to know more of the Spirit underlying us all.

At the same time it must be remembered that the Judaeo-Christian tradition has always been concerned to take the difference between good and evil absolutely seriously. Whilst it may be only just to balance the interests of varying types, it is not true justice to balance good and evil, for where evil is present there can be no justice. The righteous and the unrighteous must be distinguished and the latter cast into outer darkness. God's justice consists in making sure that goodness pays and that evil does not. In the last chapter some of the issues involved in the idea of compensating beasts for their misery were examined. But we might feel that there is something slightly unsatisfactory about just seeing all this as a matter of balancing the

opposites of good and evil again, so that the evil suffered on earth is balanced by good enjoyed in an afterlife. Does this mean that animals who are happy and fulfilled in this life are to be tormented in the next ('Woe to ye that are happy now...')? Is that what God's justice is like: making sure that each creature has the same balance of happiness and unhappiness, that none has too little but none too much of either? This conception ignores all that the tradition says about the Father who loves to give freely and takes delight in ensuring the well-being of His creatures.

Whether these two strands concerning God's justice - on the one hand as an indiscriminate giving and on the other as the rewarding of goodness and concern for its triumph - can be reconciled to give an overall more satisfactory and coherent account, I shall not be investigating. It is enough for the present to recognise that both are a long way from any understanding that conflict is justice or the ultimate law of life. If this latter were the case, non-violence could never be adopted in any sphere of life:

"If love or non-violence be not the law of our being, the whole of my argument fall to pieces"
(GANDHI(2) 1,121).

Gandhi often asserted that it was vital for a satyagrahi (i.e. one consecrated to the non-violent defence of truth) to have a strong faith in God and be convinced that goodness would ultimately triumph over evil.

Animals Beyond the Realm of Justice

That war is waged on the beasts is incontrovertible. But even if conflict often means injustice (contra Heraclitus), it is not unjust if directed towards animals. It is no crime because they stand outside of any recognition of justice (and therefore of injustice, since this word only has meaning as a contravention of justice). They are incapable of just acts, let alone of pursuing Justice as an ideal in life, and they therefore merit none from us.

"For the son of Kronos fixed this law for men, that fish and beasts and birds should devour one another, since there is no justice in them, but to men he gave justice, which is by far the best gift" (Hesiod: Works and Days:276ff).

It is justice which distinguishes humans from animals, and that the latter are not within the realm of justice is clearly shown by the carnivorous habits of so many of them. Animals are outside of any genuine moral sphere.

This has not always been the conviction of the mainstream Western tradition. RODMAN has traced the way in which animals were gradually deprived of their place in the scope of justice, until they were finally classified as standing outside of the 'jus naturae' (natural law). Until the seventeenth century, Ulpian's definition of 'jus naturae' as "that which nature has taught all animals" (Justinian: Institutiones) was the generally accepted one and had some influence on political theory. 'Jus gentium' (the law of the

nations) and 'jus naturae' were not to be thought of as coeval (CARLYLE AND CARLYLE pp.33ff). But in the Renaissance period in particular there was a move to exclude the beasts from the realm of justice, Grotius' 'Concerning the right of war and peace' (1625) being one of the most important influences.

If non-humans are outside of justice then we may war with them without guilt and kill them with impunity. They are constantly at war with one another, and it makes little difference if we join in as well - even the bees, who have traditionally been granted a special place in Christian thought as examples of goodness and innocence, are at war (ORIGEN IV,81ff; see also MIDGLEY p.45).

Is the world of nature founded so completely upon the law of conflict, even if we are not? The common impression that the only law of nature is that of the 'survival of the fittest' has helped to create the idea that all non-humans are totally beyond the whole sphere of justice. Yet, as we have seen, Darwin himself used the phrase to mean something far wider than just the idea of animals killing each other. He insisted on the term being taken in its

"large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny" (C.DARWIN p.116).

Unfortunately, many followers of Darwin saw the situation very differently, reducing the notion of a struggle for existence

to its narrowest aspect, and perceiving the world as one of perpetual struggle among savage creatures thirsting for each other's blood:

"how false, therefore, is the view of those who speak of the animal world as if nothing were to be seen in it but lions and hyenas plunging their bleeding teeth into the flesh of their victims! One might as well imagine that the whole of human life is nothing but a succession of war massacres" (KROPOTKIN p.48).

The beasts are not entirely bestial. Indeed, Theophrastus went so far as to suggest that some animals might be capable of quite a high level of reason and so, like humans, of being divided into just and unjust (BALDRY p.145): a 'civilisation test' could be applied to animals as well as to Greeks and barbarians. No doubt it is true that the beasts cannot pretend to act upon concepts like 'justice' consciously, but then neither can most humans. There is no great difference there. Indeed, it may be that the brutes are already in that state for which Jeremiah prayed (31:33f), when the LORD would write in the hearts of His people the inner law, so that they should know instinctively which way to act.

But even if we cannot see animals as full moral agents, weighing responsibilities and prima facie duties before each action (although only situation ethicists, if there are any, do this with any real regularity), we can still quite sensibly talk of laws and rules of conduct operating in animal communities. There are codes which may be offended against:

"A bigger bird who drives a smaller from the latter's nest is not absurdly described as 'violating the victim's rights', for property is generally acknowledged by members of the same population" (CLARK(2) p.174).

There are definite standards of conduct to be kept in any animal population, normally with associated penalties for those who fail to keep them, and certain performable actions which may therefore be conceived as 'wrong'. Again, there is no reason why such mutually accepted standards need be considered more closely analogous to our 'rules' of popular etiquette than to moral precepts, especially if calling something a matter of etiquette implies that it need not be kept in earnest.

The biblical tradition is generally loath to make any sharp divide between the human and the non-human, either in the physical or in the moral sphere. The Wisdom of God is the immanent guide of the natural processes as well as being the inner counsellor of humans. The source of practical and theoretical reason is one and the same. Wisdom 'orders all things well' (Wis.8:1), and definite links are made between its inspiration of the moral life of man and its cosmic scope (MACK).

How should humans conduct themselves in a world where there is still much conflict, even if animals are not thought to be totally beyond the realm of justice? According to some versions of the just war theory, if there are serious

injustices being perpetrated upon one nation by another, one is justified in waging war upon the country judged to be in the wrong, since one thereby protects and upholds the rights of the innocent (or relatively innocent). But with regard to the natural world the situation is not so easy:

"A spider prides itself on capturing a fly; one man on capturing a hare, another on netting a sprat, another on taking wild boars, another bears, another Sarmatians. Are they not all brigands?" (AURELIUS 10,10)

Perhaps they are, the spider included. If this is the case, then to follow the spider, even with respect to other spiders, is to cease from any pretence to moral action oneself. In practice, of course, we do interfere: because of our special interest in certain species and their survival (often their survival in large enough numbers for us to be able to hunt and kill them without danger of their becoming extinct) we persecute their predators and competitors. If we once decided to take antelope farming seriously, lions would be counted vermin and treated accordingly. Ought we ever to interfere in this way, perhaps for more compassionate reasons? A case can be made out for certain isolated instances - to save a goose from a fox might be right since the fox will kill beyond immediate necessity. Still, even here we would not know whether the goose in question did fall into such a category; but in any case this is not to be thought of as licencing our saving all potential victims from the fox: that would be

injustice towards the fox.

"Sometimes, if we do not take care, we may find ourselves shooting Indian wild dogs to preserve deer and simultaneously shooting deer to preserve trees" (CLARK(4) p.183, after EHRENFELD p.165).

How are we to act when faced with conflicts between humans and animals? Surely in such situations it is not immoral to prefer human life to animal life - the charge of speciesism cannot be brought against such a rating unless one is at the same time going to charge a national leader with racism for seeking to further the interests of his country in an international dispute.

We might not blame a leader of a country acting in this way - after all, at least in the democratic tradition, this is the normal understanding of what a leader should do in the international sphere: he represents the national interest. However, it is one thing to speak of representation of this kind, as also of a natural tendency to favour one's own closest kin and social group in any dispute; but it is quite another to say that an obligation to country, friend or kin should automatically override any other sort of obligation one might have (e.g. the obligation to speak truthfully, or to abstain from killing). In addition, such a position entirely begs the question as to what should count as constituting one's group or kin - by what criteria do we decide upon the limits of the group, upon who is included and who is not?

It might be better to say that we have broadly similar

obligations towards group and non-group, except that at each level the obligations towards the group are to be taken all the more seriously. This is particularly the case with 'positive' obligations - things we ought to do, as opposed to things we ought to refrain from doing. Thus, I have a strong obligation to provide the basic necessities of life for my children since they are dependents. But it is harder to focus on the exact nature of my obligation to humans in general, or indeed to any particular human outside of a very limited number. Certainly I have no universal obligation to provide for any human being the necessities of life. On the other hand, I would have for the person who appeared starving on my doorstep.

With regard to negative obligations (those things I am obliged to refrain from doing), there is no such wide gap (is there a gap at all?). I must not torture my children; neither must I torture the universal stranger. Even if in some sense it is more important that I should not torture my children (since this would mean the breakdown of one of the closest of human relationships) still I must not torture at all. It is far easier, then, to extend negative obligations beyond the bounds of the immediate group (however that group is defined), for they are more obviously applicable to all who share the relevant qualities. All those of whom it makes sense to say that I could torture, I should not. The exact nature of the

relationship which holds between my positive and negative obligations is difficult to identify, but one could say that normally my positive obligations towards whatever group is being considered should not override my negative obligations which are owed to all. I should not steal from my neighbour in order to furnish my children with extra toys. It will also depend, of course, upon the nature of the obligation: strong positive obligations (such as saving the life of a friend) will overturn weak negative obligations (such as not lying). It will not always be right, then, to prefer the interests of, say, the human group to the animal group, even if I have more positive obligations towards humans.

But why should there be this expectation of constant conflict between species? It is very easy to forget that there are more likely to be conflicts within any given species than between two different kinds, since most take place over such issues as the distribution of goods, the choosing of mates, questions of authority and leadership, and so on. Conflicts only arise when two creatures (or two groups) have enough in common to consider the same thing worth fighting for: I do not challenge a tiger to pistols at dawn for having given offence to a lady-friend. Evolutionary competition, the whole process of natural selection, is something which takes place mainly within a species rather than between two different species. So, then, there is more likely to be struggle between like and

like than between like and unlike, since only the former will be trying to reach similar goals. We need not be surprised when BALDRY (p.20), writing of sixth century Greece, says that

"hostility between Greek and Greek, whether between rival cities or conflicting classes, figures more prominently than antagonism towards the non-Greek".

Concurring with this line of thought, Dicaearchus, after listing the major causes of danger to humans (floods, famines, pestilence, beasts), comes to the conclusion that the greatest threat to man is man himself, through his constant warring (BALDRY p.146). This is not because humans are especially wicked compared to other species, though they have developed their destructive potential vastly beyond any other kind; rather, that humans are their own worst enemy is only what we should expect. Evolutionary selection occurs within species boundaries.

Conflicts and disagreements do not make community living impossible, however. Indeed, without them one might suspect that there was no genuine interaction between those involved. The frequency of these clashes rather urges one to seek ways of avoiding explosive conflict situations, or of finding ways other than war of dealing with them. There is a certain amount of conflict between species, since two kinds will often be in pursuit of a limited amount of resources. One possible result of such competition is that one of the species completely loses and perhaps even becomes extinct. But this

is not the only solution to a conflict situation. A species will often survive by taking something which it already has and learning to use something better, or by adapting in some way to utilise a different resource (MIDGLEY p.24). The possibility of conflicts of interests arising does not, then, make community impossible and war inevitable: rather, such conflicts are a sign that there already exists a measure of community.

Humans, perhaps uniquely, have been gifted with justice. They alone, in circumstances of conflict, can follow a way higher than the beasts. They alone, because of this gift, can seek the good even of those with whom they find themselves at odds. The soul has entered the world of shadows, the place of change and decay, not to seek its own good (for that lies in a higher realm), but in order to care for it (Plato: Phaedrus 246b). The implication of such superiority is service. As Thomas Tryon wrote, man's rule is to be such

"as it best tends to the helping, aiding and assisting those beasts to the obtaining of all the advantages their natures are by the great, beautiful and always beneficent creator made capable of"
(cited in THOMAS(2) p.155).

Humans alone are rational, and they alone have the gift of right action. Yet it is a paradox noticed by many that, in practice, most do not act rationally - that is, they deny the logos common to all and show little inclination for living according to the demands of justice.

"What intelligence have they? They trust the people's singers and use the mob as their teacher, not knowing that 'most men are bad, and few good'" (Heraclitus: Fr.101; see also LOCKE I,58; II,94).

But whether man be good or evil, just or unjust, the way in which he should act remains the same. What is important is still that we avoid murder at all costs, not that we prevent it at all costs (NAGEL(1) p.12). Even if the natural world is at war with itself it is not for us to join in. In waging war against the animals we are imitating nature. The chemical warfare we resort to is itself a product of nature: fly killer is derived from chrysanthemums (LOVELOCK p.108). Similarly, Bulstrode Whitelocke eventually overcame his doubts concerning the morality of hunting by representing to himself that hunted creatures are by nature continually in fear and dread, "and that when they are not hunted, as well as when they are" (cited in THOMAS(2) p.161). He felt free then to follow the way of nature. But the way of nature need not lead that way. To follow the way of nature may just as well mean making space for our own feelings of sensitivity and pity:

"What Christian heart can take pleasure to see one poor beast to rent, tear and kill another?" (FURNIVALL p.96).

Even if animals cannot be considered moral agents in any sense, and even if they stand beyond the realm of justice, the important point remains that we are and that we do not. Because of this, the beasts cannot be beyond the realm of decent treatment. As Chrysostom wrote,

"Even in the case of creatures which lack reason and perception men ought not to deviate from the considerations of what is just and unjust" (cited in RODMAN p.8).

Chapter VII

WAR AND PEACE (2)

The Pacifist Option

Is it a serious possibility that man could adopt and sustain a pacifist attitude towards the natural world? War is recognised as an affront to the gospel, and just as the early church before the conversion of Constantine was almost entirely pacifist with regard to other humans (BAINTON) so also it might be considered that no conflict of values (not even the defence of innocent life) can ever legitimise the use of violent force against the natural world.

Historically, pacifism has often arisen in dualist sects of one kind or another, which consider the material order to be either evil or totally irrelevant to the work of the spirit's redemption. In theory it would seem that such a position could result in either a complete as possible detachment from the world, or else an amoral immersion in its affairs, such affairs being of no consequence. In practice, although the latter approach has been charged to some brands of gnostic Christianity (and there is little evidence except polemics to show how just such accusations were), dualist religions have tended towards abstinence rather than indulgence. The Manichaeans, regarding the world as dominated by Satan, abstained from participation in its processes as far

as possible - notably from war and flesh foods (RUNCIMAN).

However, this does not mean that all pacifists have regarded the world as evil, and are pacifist by contempt. It is also possible to adopt such a position out of a dedicated love for the world, perhaps in an attempt to exercise a redeeming influence on it. When it has appeared in Christianity it has often been accompanied by marked revolutionary or apocalyptic overtones, presenting itself at the same time as an acceptance of the goodness of the world, but a rejection of certain world structures: the world is seen in the light of the coming Kingdom. So BARTH (III, IV, 354) sees a place for both vegetarianism and a more general pacifism with regard to the natural world in such a context, as a prophetic anticipation of the coming kingdom of peace (cf KUNG p.96). There is no question of the practice being generally valid as an ethical stance, but there is this limited place for it. Such people act as reminders that man

"must never treat this need for defensive and offensive action against the animal world as a natural one, nor include it as a normal element in his thinking or in his conduct".

There is a place for the Jains, and for St. Francis, who would not even put out a fire which had caught light of his clothes because he did not feel it right to deprive Brother Fire of his meal (The Mirror of Perfection:116) (fortunately for him someone took a different view and threw water over him). Francis, in a way that has disturbed some (e.g. SINGER(1)

pp.215f), seems to have drawn little distinction between the animate and inanimate categories of being, but perhaps, as he supposed, what we call the inanimate world is alive in a way few of us guess. Certainly it seemed clear to Francis that animals possessed rights, most notably the divine dispensation of life, and that this had definite implications for the ways in which humans ought to act:

"Holy Charity overcomes all the temptations of the devil and the flesh. Holy Obedience overcomes all carnal desires, and keeps the body under discipline, ready to obey its brother in the spirit; it renders a man submissive to all things in this world, not only to men, but even to wild beasts, so that they may do their will with him in whatsoever way God may permit" (quoted in ARMSTRONG p.146).

Neither is Francis as exceptional as many suppose in his attitudes towards the natural world; he is rather an outstanding example of something which is found in many of the saints - particularly in the Orthodox (ALLCHIN p.84) and Celtic traditions.

But there are two ways, that of the saint and that of the ordinary Christian (so the Latin church, at any rate, has tended to hold), and one may be forgiven for thinking that total pacifism with regard to the natural world is something reserved for the saints. As a general stance, a complete pacifism is simply unrealistic - even GANDHI((1) p.67) felt forced to instigate an attack upon a small group of monkeys who were destroying vital crops, and Jains and Buddhist monks alike depend upon someone's being willing to farm the land.

However, it is one of the unintended results of pacifism that it makes the only alternative appear to be an equally total war, whereas in fact many 'pacifist stances' with regard to animals (for example, vegetarianism) are actually ones that most people can make without having to regard them as works of supererogation. Much Christian thinking has gradually come to accept that there is such a thing possible as a Just War. This is not to deny that most wars conducted in practice are certainly unjust - indeed, it is difficult to find a single instance of an actual war which has unequivocally met the criteria laid down in the Just War theories; to this extent one may agree with ERASMUS (p.249):

"(consider) how disastrous and criminal an affair war is and what a host of all evils it carries in its wake even if it is the most justifiable war - if there really is any war which can be called 'just'".

But whilst a healthy scepticism is required as to whether actual, or proposed, wars really meet the requirements of a Just War, nonetheless, it can be argued, if certain rules are followed as to what may and may not be done when at war, and when deciding whether it is permissible to wage a war at all, then that war may be 'just' (which is not, of course, to say that it is a good, considered in itself, but only that it may be the lesser of two evils). We shall now turn from pacifism to the Just War theories and explore how far they can contribute ethical guidelines for the human war with animals

and the natural world.

The Just War: Causes

One of the fundamental tenets of all just war theories is that the cause for which one fights must be a just one. Wars may not be fought to gain economic dominance or to extend one's political power. Whereas early Christian theorists normally held that one should only fight if it were directly a matter of saving life, mediaeval thinkers sometimes argued that a war could be fought over an issue of ownership. In practice, of course, the two issues may be closely linked: to lose one's land might mean penury and starvation.

WASSERSTROM (pp.317f) has distinguished between two different ways in which the notion of a just cause of a war can be used in order to show whether or not a particular war is morally acceptable. One way is to look forward to the consequences of a war - for example, 'if I go to war this oppressed people will be set free'. As Wasserstrom rightly remarks, it is often dangerous to reason in this way since the line between morality and prudence is not easy to draw. In addition, how far is such a principle accepting that the end will justify the means, and does that not therefore undermine any attempt to establish a morality within a war? Again, from a practical point of view, one can question the predictive ability of individuals and governments, and their use of power: can we really know that the 'oppressed people' will be

better off if the war is won? Will the end situation be significantly better than the beginning position? History is littered with instances of the liberator becoming the new tyrant within a short period of time (as, for example, where the injustices of the Tzarist regime were replaced by those of the Bolshevik party). In the application of just war theories to the human treatment of animals the same kinds of problem arise: it is difficult to predict with accuracy the effects of pesticide use, the employment of animals in medical experiments in attempts to eradicate diseases, and so on.

The other way is to look backward. The war is justified because of something that happened in the past - typically, an act of aggression by a neighbouring country, or a broken treaty. It is this backward-looking criterion which is most frequently used by countries as a justification for their going to war. However, in the human war against animals, it is only very rarely that this can be appealed to - very few of the animals which are killed by man have been from attempts to defend themselves against unwarranted aggression from the beasts. Certainly we cannot apply this criterion to the cases of the battery hen or pig; nor to the vivisected rat or purpose-bred mouse; nor to the hunted whale or trapped ermine. Again, even if, in fantasy, there were an 'animal farm' uprising of the beasts from their slavery it is not clear that a war against them would be just -

"Why must it be wrong to strike the first blow in a struggle? The only question is, who is in the right" (ANSCOMBE p.44).

But, in any case, there are very few examples of self-defensive actions against animals (and we shall be considering this category more closely when we look at the question of just 'means' in war). Again, most of us would kill even human beings in self-defence. But

"if animals do no harm to their fellow creatures and have no natural disposition to do harm, it is presumably no less wrong to slaughter them and put them out of the way, than to kill men of such harmless character" (Porphyry: On Abstinence II,22).

It is wrong to wage war on those who constitute no threat to our well-being, who do us no harm, and this applies equally to human and non-human. Even without a complicated principle of justice, even without a carefully worked-out structure of duties and obligations, we can agree that war should not be conducted against the harmless.

What about those cases where an animal is found to be (or suspected to be) dangerous, either to humans directly, or to their livelihood? How can one decide whether it is right to go to war? NAESS has written of the relations between bears, sheep and humans in southern Norway, or the conflicts which sometimes arise out of their differing interests, and of the various 'rules' implicit in the way that farmers and hunters try to decide whether or not a particular bear needs to be killed. Various questions concerning the killing of the sheep

are asked: how many were killed? Did the bear kill quickly or 'cruelly'? Did the bear kill for food or was the sheep found uneaten? Did the bear come into sheep territory or did the sheep stray into bear territory? That these kinds of questions can be asked shows clearly that there are analogies between this and the settling of human social and political disputes. It serves as a good illustration of the fact that sense can always be made of the question, 'Is this particular killing justifiable?' The exact criteria for justification will vary from instance to instance in their practical details, as is the case with human war, but there are similar kinds of rules that can be followed in each of them.

It does not follow from this, of course, that the animals in question (e.g. the bears) have actually broken the rules by which we choose to operate. We do not wage war on the beasts because they have broken treaties, promises or the like. Indeed, it is often claimed that animals do not qualify for rights of any sort partly on the grounds that they are incapable of drawing-up or recognising treaties (e.g. RAWLS). But if they cannot contract a treaty with us, or bind themselves by a promise, then it makes no sense to suppose that they can break one either.

One of the Just Causes often urged as a reason for warring with animals has to do with population control -- especially with regard to so-called 'pests'. It is held to be

necessary to kill certain groups of animals, birds or insects, in order to prevent population explosions, thereby also preventing radical imbalances in the local ecosystems. It is worth looking closely at some of the reasoning involved in this particular example, in order to understand more clearly how one might go about deciding upon whether a certain war is just.

To begin with, and lest the 'necessity' for all such wars be over-rated, it is as well to remember the ancient idea that the gods introduced war amongst humans in order to keep populations steady (Chrysippus, see BAINTON p.21). War is necessary in order to prevent overcrowding and the diseases and starvation which follow. So, too, in the Bhagavad-gita it is Krishna's will that the entire Kshatriya class should perish in order to relieve Mother Earth of the burden of a vast over-population. Neither is this just an idea confined to ancient polytheists and authors of certain Hindu texts: it is a fairly familiar hypothesis with anthropologists that population-control is one of the 'functions' of primitive warfare (VAYDA). Again, it is part of the Malthusian position that war may be one of the forces which controls population growth when other 'natural' factors such as disease, poverty and deprivation fail. The same principles of population control apply to man and beast alike:

"Elevated as man is above all other animals by his intellectual faculties, it is not to be supposed

that the physical laws to which he is subjected should be essentially different from those which are observed to prevail in other parts of animated nature" (Malthus, cited by YOUNG p.129; see also PALEY pp.432f).

With all this in mind we can turn to the question of the regulation of the numbers of non-humans. Serious doubts have been cast upon many of the still officially-approved methods of control, since it is argued that in the long run they cause as many problems as they solve (CARSON) - pesticides can have dangerous environmental effects (though it has also been argued that one can exaggerate the problems: PIRIE (pp.72ff)). Some effort is now being made in an attempt to ensure that less harm is done, both to humans and the natural world, than has been the case in the past - for example, the use of cropdusting planes which spread the pesticides unevenly and leave much of the material in the atmosphere, is now less widely tolerated. However, on the negative side, too many pesticides are still being used which affect a large number of organisms, even though the principle target is often just a single pest. The high use of certain compounds like this continues because of their low cost when produced in large enough volumes and their widespread effectiveness (BRUBAKER p.117). As in so many cases, private gain means public cost, the principal public here being the wider environment. This type of saturation attack is really comparable to saturation bombing in wars between humans, with the inevitable killing of

the innocent as well as the guilty.

Various forms of biological control of pests are probably safer, although the type of control which involves the introduction of a predator into an area is one which has to be used with great care (WARD AND DUBOS pp.110f). Another biological technique is to introduce a greater variety of crop into an area with pest problems in order to encourage likely predators. Again, humans have learned to use other methods than war to control their own populations - celibacy, periodic continence and artificial contraception being some of them. If populations do need controlling it would be more humane to use contraceptive methods than to 'cull'. Contraception, even if an evil, is a lesser one than killing; moreover, it leaves the genetic stock intact and is reversible. Successful experiments have also taken place where sterile male insects have been released into a population, in order to compete with other (fertile) males for the females, and the birthrate is brought down (BRUBAKER p.118).

It has been assumed so far that there is an extensive need for such control. However, it is easy to forget that for the most part population control is carried out by the "resistance of the environment" (CARSON p.217) without any intervention on man's part. Again, in the agricultural sphere, one alternative would be to simply learn to live with the pest in question. This would mean some loss of yield and

would therefore imply an increase in acreage if the total produced was to remain constant. It has been estimated that the effects of a 70-80% reduction in insecticide use in the United States would be offset by a 12% increase in farmland (BRUBAKER p.118). Whilst this may seem a lot, the waste involved in feeding so much of the world's grain to intensively farmed animals could be saved by redirecting much of it to feed humans directly. In itself this would do much to offset the yield loss resulting from a much lower use of pesticides.

The Just War: Means

The rise of Just War theorising in the Christian tradition was not as an aid to legitimising war - though to some extent its effects did work in that direction; much more was it an attempt to place some kind of decent restraint on wars. They are not theories to licence retribution, but to limit reparation. There are rules to be followed in wars.

One of the rules, for example, is that certain kinds of weapons are altogether forbidden, are outlawed on humanitarian grounds. Here we can see that a close analogy can be drawn concerning the ways in which humans war on animals. Where killing is found to be necessary, the most humane method should always receive priority, even if this means some loss in effectiveness. The least painful rat poison should always be chosen.

"Even in a just war certain forms of violence are strictly inadmissible; and where a country's right to war is questionable and uncertain, the constraints on the means it can use are all the more severe" (RAWLS p.379).

Certain means of waging a war are unacceptable in any case: if I must kill an animal I may not torture it first. And the less certain that one is that the killing of the creature is necessary at all, the more severe are the moral constraints upon one's actions.

There are those who disparage the whole idea of having rules in war, allowing the necessity for victory to override all other considerations. If my enemy is in the wrong why should I be bound by moral codes in the way I treat him, since he has forfeited any such right to consideration by putting himself in the wrong? Any war is total war. So LOCKE (II,18) held that one can retaliate in any way one chooses to a thief, even to the extent of killing him - by stealing from me the thief puts himself into a state of war with me. Such an injunction as this stems partly from Locke's perhaps excessive concern for property as a whole, and partly from his presumption that someone who will not hesitate to harm your interests by stealing from you will no more hesitate about killing you either. But the just war tradition, by comparison, holds that one's defence must always be in strict proportion to the attack (of course, if it were true that thieves invariably killed as well as stole then Locke's

position would be more justifiable). The tradition out of which Locke is speaking here is more that of the 'realist', who sees in rules of war only impediments to the outstanding priority of gaining victory. A famous exponent of this position is Machiavelli, and what he says of the necessity to put oneself and one's state first in any and every conflict might well be applied to those who envisage no rules in the war against the beasts. His sentiment can be slightly altered to read,

"When it is a question of the safety of the species, no account should be taken of what is just or unjust, merciful or cruel, laudable or shameful, but without regard to anything else, that course is to be unswervingly pursued which will save the life and maintain the liberty of man" (Principe XVII).

Just war theorists, on the other hand, have always held that the rightness or wrongness of a war does not depend solely on the rightness or wrongness of the cause for which a war is fought. Morality within a war is a separate but equally important part of a just war. Merely because a cause be agreed to justify going to war does not mean that anything at all is permissible in order to win the war.

How can one construct a moral system within such a blatantly immoral framework as that of war? Surely, though, one could say that even if all wars are unjust, there may still be acts within such a system which are more or less immoral: a war in which few combatants are killed is, *ceteris paribus*, less immoral than one in which many are killed

(WASSERSTROM p.316). It is, in any case, a strange argument to be made by war's 'realists', for if war itself is so overwhelmingly evil that nothing moral can be made of it at all, then there would seem to be no justification for waging war in the first place. If no means in war can ever be more just than alternative means because all are bound to be totally evil, so that no end will justify any means, then the proper conclusion is that no war should be waged at all, for any reason, since any alternative is preferable to its total evil. As we noted earlier, the pacifist's position is very close to that of the total war position.

NAGEL((1) p.4) distinguishes between the utilitarian, who is concerned primarily with what will happen in a war, and the absolutist, who is primarily concerned about what one is doing in a war. Just war theorists are concerned with both categories. On the one hand if a war is to be just it is necessary to be certain that substantially more good than evil will come out of it; on the other hand there are strict limitations on the means to be used, and these must be followed come what may. To that extent one may say that the ends, even if worth pursuing, must be subordinate to the means. The just war position is closer to the absolutist than to the utilitarian, in that like the former he may be expected to try to maximise good and minimise evil, as long as this does not mean that he has to transgress certain absolute

prohibitions, like that against murder (cf NAGEL(1) p.8).

Wars in Self-defence

As to the means which may be employed in war, it is a general principle that more is allowed when the war is waged in self-defence. What may be done at such times is more open to liberal opinion than is the case with wars where one is the aggressor. The classic formulations of just war theory have normally distinguished between self-defence as an individual and self-defence on behalf of a group. We will consider the individual first.

If, while walking through a forest, I am attacked by a tiger, and if the attack is unprovoked, I may use means sufficient to save me from death or serious injury. None may reasonably condemn me for the way in which I seek to save myself from this aggressor. Nor is it relevant that the tiger's act was not pre-meditated (if it was not), nor springing from the malice of an evil heart. I may in my own heart lament that this creature is forcing me into making a violent defence of myself, but I may defend myself in the same way that I would against a psychopath with an axe (for this principle in Anglo-american law see KADISH). Following the Thomist principle of double-effect, I may say that I intend my own safety and not the hurt of the tiger. Or I could appeal to the Lockean understanding of the law of nature, where the right to violent self-defence is seen as one of its

implications: where all life cannot be preserved, it is the life of the innocent (i.e. in the sense of harmless) which must be preferred (LOCKE II,16).

But perhaps it is not as clear-cut as this. Augustine and Luther, in their expositions of just war theory, ~~both~~ forbade the use of violent force to save one's own life. They did not base their theories of just war on the principle of individual self-defence, but on that of the defence of others (RAMSEY pp.38ff). There are problems with the idea of killing in order to defend oneself, which have to do with the principle of proportionality of response. For, say the Aggressor and the Victim have an equal right to life, then why should it be that the Aggressor does not have the right to take the Victim's life, but that the Victim does have the right to take the life of the Aggressor? How is it that the Aggressor has lost the right to life (or the Victim has gained the right to take life)? The argument that by his action the Aggressor has forfeited his right to life is an unconvincing one - after all, he has only attempted murder, not succeeded (THOMSON); indeed, he may only have feigned the threat and the Victim have been mistaken as to his intentions (RYAN). The right to life, therefore, does not imply the right to take any actions necessary to secure that right. The proportionality principle, (i.e. that in defence of one's rights one may take actions whose severity is equal to, though not greater than,

the threat against one), becomes increasingly suspect as one approaches acts such as killing. May I torture another in order to prevent another torturing me? The answer to such a question is at least in doubt. Again, it is well-known that Christ, while accepting that "an eye for an eye" had been a means of preventing disproportionate harm being perpetrated in self-defence, appealed to His followers to go further and renounce the claim even to a proportionate response to harm done.

The war waged upon animals which would fall under the category of individual self-defence is extremely small. When we turn to the question of self-defence on behalf of others an important issue is that of the defence of the group's food supplies. In extending the principles of just war theory to cover the protection of property as well as life, medieval thinkers were coming to terms with the most basic of all reasons for war, according to some ethologists (e.g. EIBL-EIBESPELDT): human war is a form of intergroup aggression that is useful in allowing groups to acquire land and natural resources. War, then, is about territory. One may fight to recover property, or else to prevent its being vandalised (so Aquinas: BAINTON p.106). If it is held that, in theological terms, the whole earth belongs to humans, then this principle could be made to cover a vast number of the instances in which humans kill animals. It would not seem to justify the

deliberate breeding of animals only in order to kill them, on the pretence that they were consuming resources which rightfully belonged to humans. A decision to breed them in the first place would undermine the force of such an argument. In any case, it appears to me quite clear that, in theistic terms, the earth belongs to God, not to humans, and that any jurisdiction which humans have been allowed is only exercisable under strict moral conditions. On a more moderate scale, however, one could justify the idea of humans defending their food supplies, or waging a self-defensive war in this respect. A war against locusts in order to save vital crops also means, in the long run, saving lives as well.

But even in a defensive war on behalf of others there are severe limitations put on the means of conducting it. Especially important in this regard are:

(1) One cannot act in self-defence if steps could plausibly have been taken in order to avoid the aggressor's action. This is a particularly relevant point with regard to human dealings with the beasts. As BROPHY has said, the thing to do with a crisis situation is to learn to circumvent it; and Wescott challenged any too easy acceptance of crisis situations as being unchristian. On the question of animal experimentation he wrote,

"If the world were the work of an Evil Power...it would be at least possible that we might gain results physically beneficial to ourselves by the unsparing sacrifice of lower lives. But if He

who made us made other creatures also...then I find it absolutely inconceivable that He should have so arranged the avenues of knowledge that we can attain to truths which it is His will that we should master only through the unutterable agonies of beings which trust in us." (quoted in FRENCH p.317)

In any case, one cannot act justly in self-defence if one has lived contentedly with unjust social structures. If a man kept a family dog locked permanently in a small shed, and it one day attacked him through extreme frustration at such a deprived life, then he would not be able to claim to be acting justly in self-defence. Measures could have been taken to prevent the attack from occurring. It is not clear, in any case, that in such circumstances the dog should be considered the aggressor: how non-aggressive is an act which deprives a creature of its liberty and of the chance to any kind of natural fulfilment? One cannot quite deliberately create a problem and then seek to justify war-like action in 'solving' it. One may not breed foxes to hunt, where the grounds of hunting them are that they are pests.

(2) No more force should be used in self-defence than is reasonably necessary to prevent the infliction of similar harm, for to use more force than this is to do more than defend oneself (WASSERSTROM p.321). One has to be careful not to think too much in terms of self-defensive reactions being 'natural', almost automatic, responses, so that any form such a response takes may be justified on the grounds of extenuating circumstances. That would make some sense if one

were thinking in terms of personal situations - if I, or one close to me, were unexpectedly attacked I would probably follow my 'natural' instincts to respond violently, and would not be too careful about using only as much self-defensive action as was absolutely necessary. But this type of response cannot be applied to nations or to whole species, as if such were similarly understandable behaviour.

Double-effect and the Primacy of Good

The principle of double-effect, a favourite among Thomists, distinguishes between the intended and the unintended results of any action. Thus, for instance, when we plough a field to plant a crop we do not intend to kill any of the worms in the field. All that is intended is to plant a crop; the deaths of any worms are unintentional. But looking at the question from a wider point of view one could say that, in the course of animal husbandary, no animal's death is strictly intended. What is intended is that food should be produced. I do not intend, for example, that pigs should die, but only that bacon should be produced. The case of the pig and the worm are equivalent: the pig's death is the unintended, but inevitable and foreseen result of an intention to eat bacon, just as the cut worm is the unintended, but inevitable and foreseen result of an intention to plant a field. Perhaps all killing of animals for food can be placed under the doctrine of double-effect.

But in fact there is a significant difference between the two cases. According to typical Catholic thought on this point, one has to be careful to distinguish between the intended and the foreseen results of any action. An individual is responsible for the former and answerable for it, but not for the latter in the same way. Where there is a close connection between the two, however, it is not easy to distinguish the two. It is here that one can note a genuine difference between the cases, so that the killing of the worm does fall under the doctrine of double-effect, whereas the killing of the pig does not. The question that has to be asked of both cases is: is X a non-logical means to Y, or is it just a by-product of Y? Would one eliminate X if one could? The pig is very much a means to the end, pork; whereas the killing of the worm is a by-product of the action of ploughing a field.

The final point to be discussed in this section is that which holds that there must be more good attained by the war than there is evil caused. The evils which the war creates must on no account be greater than the evils which the war is designed to correct. War is waged to counter evil, to turn it into good, and as little as possible evil should be used to reach this end. One must also be careful not to count 'absences' or 'needs' as evils too quickly, although of course they may be genuine deprivations. It might be argued that an

absence of pate de fois gras is an evil; but it cannot be convincingly argued that the amount of evil involved in producing this speciality is less in total than that eradicated by its appearance on menus. Even if many humans had a quite monstrous delight in the product the scales would not be tipped that way.

One ill-defined, but prevalent argument felt to favour the use of animals in experiments is based on this kind of principle: that by waging war now much good will follow (one day). So, by causing a certain amount of pain to animals in experiments now, much of what people would have otherwise had to suffer in the future will be reduced or even eliminated. If such good were a certain future event the rules of the just war might allow the infliction of present pain. But by the very nature of the case most experimental medicine is, precisely, 'experimental': that is, future results are sometimes completely unpredictable and nearly always at least uncertain. The just war principles do not allow the commencing of war in such circumstances - it would have to be certain that future good would (far) outweigh the expected amount of suffering which would be caused were a war started.

If such a limitation, based on the as nearly as possible known results of good to emerge from any war, were not placed on the deliberate infliction of pain to cause such good, then one would be likely to end up in the position of merely

increasing the overall sum of suffering and injustice. Present moral action cannot be profitably built upon future speculation. No doubt some scientific breakthroughs have been the result of 'chance' intuition and experiment, but it would be unwise to conduct scientific procedure in reliance upon such happenings - and immoral to do so if one were in this way causing needless suffering.

War for the sake of Peace

The purpose of war must be to lead to a lasting peace (AUGUSTINE(1) XIX,12), and we must behave in war as those do who expect to be friends again someday (cf Plato: The Republic, 471). In the context of human wars this is a fair enough assertion, that one fights with the aim of securing an ultimate harmony, a state where a right ordering of things might prevail. A just war is always one inspired by one's vision of the end to war. But perhaps in the natural world peace can only ever be thought of as a temporary lull between the testing and conflict which improves the type, a period of stability which has evolutionary use only in being a resting place before a renewed struggle and development.

Such a thesis cannot draw straightforwardly on the 'evidence' of the evolutionary process, for it is itself a theory as to how evidence should be interpreted. It is making a presumption about the ultimate teleological nature of the natural process, and such statements and explanations, like

causal ones, are always made against the background of a theory - here one as to what are the preferred states. It is imposing on evolution its own theory of the process being a constant struggle towards the development of the type, with the struggle also being conceived as having no end, no final resting-place. But this kind of description, of a constant warring to achieve the betterment of the gene, without the postulation of a final state of peace, is perhaps, after all, nonteleological. This is because one of the commonest ways of distinguishing teleological from nonteleological systems is to assess the frequency with which the former attain or maintain certain preferred states. There must be clear goal states to be reached, and they must be reachable. If it were held that no species is ever perfectly adapted to its environment one could widen the test to include the frequency with which the goal state is approached, even if rarely, or never, attained. But there would still have to be a clear concept of the goal state, since otherwise no sense can be made even of approaching it. We have to have some idea of x before we know whether x has been attained, or nearly so.

Not only the gene and the species, but also the whole universe, might be conceived as an endless state of war without final destination. The Whole is one of repetitive cycles of recurring states of war and peace. But there is no lasting peace, at least within this temporal scheme, only a

constant flow of life and death, of building and tearing down (see ELIADE(1); JAKI pp.115ff). Not only Hinduism, but also the two Hindu heterodoxies, Jainism and Buddhism, have accepted in broad outline this vision of immensely long and ever-recurring world periods.

On the other hand, could not the course of evolution just as well be interpreted as a struggle towards some end point of fulfilment and stability, war being for the sake of peace? Traditionally, the Christian vision has been clear that there is an end in which all things share, one which completes history in the sense of being the fulfilment of its potential. There will be an end to all warfare, a time of peace between humans, and between humans and animals. History is not discarded in order that this end be achieved. Yet perhaps the Christian vision is not so different from that of the Eastern religions after all. Certainly the former does not think of the Kingdom as being the last point on a temporal sequence, an end state which we are steadily working towards. There is no intimation in the tradition that as the world grows older it will become either holier or more peaceful. Any hope that the passage of time will automatically convey benefits, either material or spiritual, is difficult to trace back to authentically Christian roots (ATTFIELD Ch.5), and is perhaps even heretical in its presumptions (BAILLIE). Teilhard de CHARDIN((1) p.275) wrote,

"The dream upon which human research obscurely feeds is fundamentally that of mastering...the ultimate energy of which all other energies are merely servants; and thus, by grasping the very mainspring of evolution, seizing the tiller of the world. I salute those who have the courage to admit that their hopes extend that far; they are at the pinnacle of mankind".

Unless we share de Chardin's rhapsodical confidence in the course of evolution, espousing some theory, as he did, that it is tending inevitably towards the Omega point, and that therefore neither world history nor the human race can possibly suffer a fundamental setback, we may well find this kind of talk disturbing. There is nothing in the Christian tradition which encourages us to think that, in evolutionary terms, either the preservation of humanity or the triumph of goodness is assured. Quite the reverse: the time before the Kingdom is one of intense suffering and martyrdom. There is discontinuity between the present and future Ages.

Whilst the temporal sequence of events does not lead smoothly into the 'Sabbath rest' which awaits creation, still the vision of that end has to determine present action. War is for the sake of peace, just as the changeful is for the sake of the unchanging (Aristotle: Politics VII), and the task of the moment is "the restoration of an order of life which is meaningful and just" (BARTH III, IV, 459).

Living by the Vision of the End

War between humans usually involves the de-personalisation of the enemy, so that he is seen as less

than fully human. Indeed, he is often viewed as an 'animal'. This appellation need not signify something entirely hateful (although it often does carry that significance as well), but it does communicate that he is less than oneself, that his interests need not be too seriously considered. In the same way, it would be a mistake to imagine that all war with the beasts was the result of a strong anti-animal feeling. We don't live in a society where its members need fear attack from wild beasts - most people living in modern Western society will never see a 'wild animal' in the flesh (except at a zoo), let alone be attacked by one. This lack of contact with such animals does mean that their 'beastliness' can, in fact, be exaggerated. But the animals with which we have to deal in our own culture are not the types that lend themselves to violent fantasies of this sort - cows, sheep, ducks and so on are not inordinately aggressive creatures. We wage war upon these animals without too much obvious guilt not because we feel afraid of them, or a great antipathy towards them, but more likely because we feel very little at all. The war is essentially an impersonal business. The animals we eat spend their lives hidden away on intensive farms and most of the time we are under no pressure to connect what appears on our plates with living flesh. In many ways this is very similar to the phenomenon of modern warfare:

"in our own technologically sophisticated society, it is readily apparent that it is possible

for half of the national budget and a substantial proportion of our young men to be mobilised to fight an enemy seen by few and rarely recognised even when seen. Lethal weapons are employed by technicians who never set eyes on their human targets" (WALLACE p.178).

We are able to conduct a war without pity partly because we do not focus upon personal targets. War does not require hatred, and is able to arise without the push towards it being inevitable through outside circumstances. So also with animals we create war when it is far from necessary and are able to do so because of the lack of any felt emotional tie.

There are many recorded instances of the experience of suddenly becoming aware of the close bond one has with others, the intensity of the experience making one realise that previously one had lived in a world of objects in which there was no fully alive creature except (so it was assumed) oneself. In practical terms we live most of the time in a solipsistic world, only rarely waking up to find it occupied by others who are experiencing subjects like ourselves, and to whom we appear as objects. MERTON((2) p.153), after years of monastic life, writes of such an experience:

"In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the centre of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world".

In the situation of war, similarly, there are many instances

of the realisation that one is not just fighting 'soldiers', but actually killing humans . In Wilfred Owen's poem, 'Strange Meeting', he writes of the one he killed in a battle meeting him after they were both dead, and recognising in him a person with the same kind of hopes and yearnings as he had - "I am the enemy you killed, my friend".

So, too, there are moments in the human war on animals when caricatures are seen for what they are and the beasts are recognised to be curiously similar to ourselves - sentient, warm-blooded mammals, home-builders and creatures who also care for their immediate kin. In the mystical literature of the world there are vivid descriptions of the sudden realisation of a previously unknown kinship with other creatures, and at the same time a love for those creatures, for "only the existence of those we love is fully recognised" (WEIL p.56). To experience this kinship is to have oneself wake up to the vision of the Kingdom, to glimpse for a moment that transfiguration of relationships which marks the end of war.

To seek out and discover this vision a war must be fought: but it is a spiritual war, against the hosts of destruction in the heavenly spheres (Eph.6:11ff). In the New Testament all the imagery connected with warfare is applied to this spiritual battle, "for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly" (2 Cor.10:14). In this application the images

undergo profound transformations - the 'success' of the Christian life lies in 'failure', its 'power' is found in 'impotence', its 'victory' in an acceptance of 'defeat' (cf 2 Cor.6:9f). These paradoxes of the spiritual life convey truth not least because of our own disunity, because of the fact that we are in some sense the enemy of our own better self. The spiritual battle is fought against our fallen selves.

"War and Hunting, the Two Fountains of the River of Life, are become Fountains of bitter Death and of corroding Hell" (Blake: Milton 35:2; Jerusalem 43:31),

and this because we have chosen to carry out these exalted activities in a debased form, on the earthly plane. Our wars, instead, are to be

"wars of life, and wounds of love with intellectual spears and long winged arrows of thought" (Blake: Jerusalem 38:14).

By waging such a war transformation occurs. JUNG((1) p.112) found that the passions were normally represented by animal figures in the dreams and fantasies of his patients. It is a point familiar to anyone with knowledge of the Christian monastic tradition. St. Anthony, for example, experienced terrifying assaults on himself by demons coming in the form of beasts - lions, bears, reptiles, bulls, leopards, and so on (Athanasius(2) Ch.9). In Jungian terms one can understand these as various archetypal figures flooding the consciousness with the power of creating a seemingly external reality. They are images which represent the beginning of the

process of transformation (JUNG(2) pp.151ff).

"tho' it appears Without, it is Within, in your Imagination, of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow" (Blake: Jerusalem 71:15).

ATHANASIUS((2) Ch.53) develops the theme of the demons appearing as beasts and draws a parallel between Anthony's ability to deal with the demon beasts and the traditional image of the holy man dwelling at peace with the animals about him. The one who has come to terms with the beast within can learn to live at peace with the beast outside himself. The inner and outer worlds are seen as intimately connected. Inner purification must accompany the preparation of the world for the receiving of the Kingdom. Even now, St. Bernard said, Christians need to be citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem through living an orderly and virtuous life (LECLERCQ p.68). Or, as Maximus the Confessor has it, they need to mediate between earth and paradise (THUNBERG pp.405ff): Christ has already removed the difference between the two, and when He appeared to the disciples after the resurrection it was to manifest this restored unity between them. The way is open for humans, in union with Christ, to reestablish this paradise by following the path of virtue. It is also a 'labour' of asceticism, both in the sense of restraining the will from concupiscence and an acceptance of the pains of earthly existence; but out of such labour will come a love for all God's servants.

None of this is to commit oneself to the idea of realised eschatology. The monastic life, in particular, does come close to such a position, but it is still recognised that although all things have been reconciled in Christ, it is a salvation yet to be made fully manifest. But neither is salvation only future - the New Age is already present, as yeast in dough, even if not complete. Some of the early Fathers held that salvation was a purely future event and that until a sovereign act of God inaugurated the Kingdom one was completely locked into the fallen world. A different ethics, more 'realistic', should be adopted in accordance with this. With Christ's second coming one could expect substantial changes in the natural world and then new relationships (including with the beasts) would become possible (cf Irenaeus: Against Heresies 5:24:2). However, the view which gradually came to predominate was that the present period was that of the millenium and one did not have to wait until the coming of Christ before working to improve the conditions of this life. We do not have to wait for eternity, for it is not a duration yet to appear and succeed time. Every moment is a gate to eternity (cf AQUINAS(1) 1a,X,4). None of this means that the relations between humans and the natural world can be completely free from difficulties, but the world is not shut off from the possibilities of change and redemption. The Christian can never devote himself enough to transfiguring

this life (MARITAIN(2) p.110).

Chapter VIII

COMMUNITY

Can we dispense with the war model? In the last chapter we noted that it depends upon a prior identification of the limits of community, since war is contracted between two different communities. If what we choose to call 'our' community is coeval with the human species, then we may be seen as warring on the beasts. But if animals are better seen as sharing with us in some Earth Household, the society of all living creatures, then we must find the war model inadequate: whatever the divisions, disagreements and conflicts there may be in a community, we do not speak of members 'going to war' with other members. It would be more appropriate to think in terms of faction than war (Plato: The Republic, 470b). Humans and animals alike would be seen as members of the single earth community, whose rationale is worship of the Creator; as such, all are "fellow subjects of th'eternal King" (SMART 1,227).

But unless one means by the appellation of 'community' no more than the physical sharing of space and the mere fact of causal connection the word is surely a misnomer. Perhaps, indeed, we are not awed enough at the interrelatedness of things, of the subtle links which can be traced between the most disparate objects. The creation, after all, might have been very different from the one we have, it might have been

one of unchanging physical monads. Not only do the table at which I am writing, the chair on which I am sitting, and myself together form a 'community' in this sense, but each of us is also a community of molecules. What we are inclined to think of as individual objects can be analysed into further elements which make them up; and again, these chemical arrangements can themselves be considered each a community of neutrons, electrons and protons. What the Ultimate Communities are, the elements out of which all other communities are constructed, we can only guess (if indeed there are such: quantum theory suggests that isolated material particles are merely abstractions, that elementary particles are themselves best seen as relationships which cannot be considered apart from the Whole of which they are a part (CAPRA pp.135ff)).

Certainly many objects share with us in a deeper sense than just that of relating through external causality. It is not just a matter of the 'outsides' of things relating to one another, but also the ability of many creatures to replicate their environment in an inner realm, so that they have a picture of the world and their own place in it. So a bat, for instance, can be said to belong to a wider community in so far as he carries a 'picture' of that community within himself (see GRIPPEN pp.8ff; THORPE). Still, computers are also able to be programmed so that they can take account of some

features of the outside world, and unless one is willing to accept them as community members neither is this criterion in itself enough to warrant one speaking in terms of humans and animals sharing in a community.

There seem, in any case, to be severe difficulties with such an idea. Humans, but not animals, contract into a society with each other. Humans also share certain basic ends in common, the pursuit of which alone can explain their joining together in a community, or else can explain the telos of the community. But the beasts seek different ends, or if they overlap, then they still do not consciously seek or pursue them as we do. Intentional language may be the most useful to use regarding animals but it should not blind us into imagining that they therefore share community with us in any significant sense. But even if conscious intention can be properly attributed to them still they cannot be thought of as sharing in a society of free individuals who together choose their form of common life. Again, animals are unable to recognise obligations or fulfil the demands of charity.

In what follows I shall be attempting to deal with these problems and will arrive at the conclusion that none of them present insuperable difficulties to seeing humans and animals sharing as members of the same community.

It is necessary first to tackle what is perhaps the most basic of all the problems: it could be claimed that all

communities depend for their inner cohesion upon there being fairly distinct boundaries, realms which can be classified as outside of the community. Without a sense of the other there can be no sense of the self; and just as it is a common thesis that an awareness of self must begin with the awareness of outwardly-directed acts rather than with introspection, so it might also be held that a community only gets its sense of identity from directing its attention onto what is not-community.

Communities and Boundaries

A community can be likened to a body. The Greek word for body, 'soma', does not appear to have been used in pre-Christian Greek writings in any political sense, though the world was often likened to a body - in Stoic thought in particular. However, after St. Paul's extensive use of it as a metaphor for the Christian community it found currency with nearly all the early Christian writers and has since remained in vogue. The metaphor was of the greatest importance for mediaeval political theory, which unanimously assumed that all humans formed one body (e.g. AQUINAS(1) II,1,81,1), and it has been adopted as a potent symbol for society far outside of Christian circles.

One of the important points about a body is that it has quite definite boundaries. It marks off, separates from what is other than itself - "the body is a model which can stand

for any bounded system" (DOUGLAS(1) p.138). If, therefore, one adopts this model as the most apt for a community, is one not excluding in advance any question of its having a cosmic dimension? Must there not always be animals outside of its limits, upon whom it makes sense to suppose that we go to war? Not necessarily: at the most this argument (if correct) shows that there must be something outside of the community, but there is no reason to suppose that this something must be the animal kingdom, or any of its members.

Some animals are firmly inside the community, the privileged ones we call 'pets', who can be considered honorary members of the human society. Once inside the boundary they can assist us in our wars against the rest of the non-human world, as terrier dogs are used to unearth foxes and catch rats. Such beasts have been accepted into our world. But the boundary remains. Some animals, confusingly, can be found on different sides of the boundary line in neighbouring cultures (or within the same culture, given a certain amount of racial diversity). Horses are eaten on the Continent, whilst the English have always proved extremely resistant to the idea of consuming their flesh (for better uses of horses than as food see LOVELOCK (p.150)). Still, there is a fairly clear distinction made between 'tame' and 'wild' animals: "The dog was one of man's best friends; it could not be food as well" (THOMAS(2) p.115).

Traditionally many events in the natural world have been deemed ominous precisely because they appeared to blur such crucial categories. If a wild bee flew into a cottage or a jackdaw flew down a chimney such events were not greeted with happiness that the formerly wild was becoming tame, but rather with suspicion and distrust. The encroachment of wild animals into the human domain was felt to be alarming. Such creatures in many ways share the ambivalent status which fairies have often been accorded: they live in a world connected to our own but in a peripheral way, and they disturb rather than please since they show no clear sense of allegiance towards us.

We noted in the last chapter that coming to a sense of community with animals involves discovering our kinship with them: one sees that one has certain important things which are valued in common. It is this which encourages one to expand the limits of the group. Saying to another, 'I've got feelings as well, you know!' is asking for a common sensitivity to be recognised; one is asking to be incorporated into the group. We tend to take it for granted now that the human race is a unity, a single community, and that the kinship between all humans is an obvious fact - at least in theory. But this has not always been the case. For most ancient cultures there existed a vast gulf between their particular group and 'all the rest', and there was often no compelling reason to seek any ground of unity (this was

reflected in the language used: a great number of primitive tribes simply referred to themselves by the term for 'humans', thus radically distinguishing themselves from all outside the limits of the group (LEVI-STRAUSS p.46; PAGDEN pp.16f)). Outsiders are portrayed as cannibals, as lacking in intelligence, goodness, civilisation, or even in souls -

"not too long ago there were stories of Amazons, people who lived in trees, others with their heads between their shoulders and their feet on backwards. The assumed species 'Homo monstrous' did not become extinct as a scientific notion until the last century" (ARENS p.33; see also MALEFIJIT).

In a situation where human groups consider themselves each to be harmonious and ordered moral wholes, facing a world of unrelieved chaos and darkness, the first priority for missionary Christianity, it might be argued, must be to inculcate a sense of the kinship humans share with one another rather than seek to break down the boundary between human and non-human. Perhaps we ought to be forever trying to widen the circle but until we have achieved a World Government in the human sphere we ought not to be thinking about badgers, mice and octopuses. The inclusion of animals in our community, as with the regulating of ethical concern towards them, is best seen as an overspill of our way of acting towards persons. We owe a certain type of conduct to persons and there is an initial overspill onto those species members who are not classifiable as full persons (i.e. foetuses and the severely retarded), and after that onto some non-humans (DEVINE). The

idea of community should be seen as a series of concentric circles: one begins with a limited human group, moves out to embrace the human species as a whole, and only after that concerns oneself with non-humans.

Such a model does not deny that, in time, one may be able to think and act in terms of all living creatures sharing a single Earth Household; but it does deny that it is either possible or desirable to do so at the moment - or in the foreseeable future (the world seems little closer now to realising such a perfect human unity in practice than was the case at the beginning of recorded history). However, it is far from clear that this kind of model is the best one to adopt in looking at the relationship between humans and the natural world. It can be justly claimed, after all, that it is not only other human groups which are caricatured or seen in an unbalanced way. The prevalent tendency, over the last few centuries in particular, has been to drain away all that is spiritual and immaterial from the natural realm, reserving it (if at all) for humans, who are placed in metaphysical isolation from the rest of creation. Humans have claimed as their own unique endowment much of what was previously considered common to all sentient life, and one often now has to defend the according of consciousness to animals against the charge of needlessly multiplying entities. If we can explain a set of actions in neurophysiological terms without

recourse to talk of consciousness, purpose, intention and so on, should we not do so? How can such talk add anything significantly 'extra' to what has already been said? The simple answer must be that it adds itself, a dimension of subjectivity. If we reduce the significance of any kind of talk (x) to something else (y), it can always then be asked, 'Then why have y plus x rather than just y? What does x add?' The difference that is made by including x in our talk about the way in which we perceive animals is precisely x (cf KENNY(2)). Nature, then, has been gradually emptied of her contents: her spirits, her occult sympathies and antipathies, and finally her colours, smells and tastes. The result is poverty for the human mind as it faces an empty world:

"The mind, on whose ideal constructions the whole method depended, stood over against its object in ever sharper dissimilarity. Man with his new power became rich like Midas, but all that he touched had gone dead and cold" (LEWIS(1) p.4).

But reality need not be considered a threat which has to be kept down in order to exalt oneself, so that all significance and meaning must be jealously guarded within MY group. I cannot evacuate the world outside of the Spirit and hope to find Him in my own private realm. On the contrary,

"If He is absent from the Universe, He is absent from yourselves, and you can have nothing to tell about Him or the powers that come from Him" (PLOTINUS II,9,16).

Rather do other creatures furnish and provide the constantly

needed supplement to my own meanings. The world beyond me is wealthy and alone I am poor and incomplete. Other beings are the means by which I complete my incompleteness: we can know the world as an endless treasury of good for us. It is surely significant that the early Desert Fathers, reacting to a human society which seemed to them close to disintegration, sought to regain a sense of their true identity and of society in the desert, the place where they could find (amongst other things) a new kinship with the beasts (MERTON(1)).

The thesis with which we began this section, that we gain a sense of the self only through a sense of the other, can therefore be accepted as true - except that it is in conjunction with the other, and not in opposition, that we can better define ourselves. We can agree that rather than begin with the introspective and philosophise to the social we can start from the assumption of a shared world. Mankind is not composed of a multitude of unattached units which one has to join together somehow in a philosophical tour de force: no man is an island. In the same way, one need not begin with the the assumption of a series of human and animal worlds needing to be unified, but can start from a common world: mankind is not an island.

"According to the wise, Callicles, both heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by a sense of community and love and orderliness and self-control and justice, and this is why they call this universe a cosmos, a world of order, and not a world of disorder or licence."(Plato: Gorgias

507e-8a).

Contract and Covenant

But society with the beasts is impossible. Humans come into community with one another through the forming of contractual agreements which are felt to be to the advantage of all. Each, in giving up something of his right to self-determination by coming under the authority of the group (or of the one who represents the group) thereby gains the guarantee of protection and the benefits of a society in which mutual aid is offered. But the beasts make no such contract with us, and neither are they able to - part of the reason for the human contract, as was noted in the last chapter, was actually to gain protection from their ferocity.

As a historical account of the origins of human society one or other form of contract theory has proved fairly popular (e.g. Aeschylus: Prometheus Vinctus 442ff; Sophocles: Antigone 332ff; ORIGEN IV,80). It is difficult to be certain of how literally Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke meant their accounts of the original contracts to be taken. On the one hand, for example, LOCKE (II,100) is aware that there are no instances to be found of a company of equals who met together and formed a government on such a basis; but at the same time he can also plead that "government is everywhere antecedent to records". As a historical account the social contract theory is strangely at odds in some of its presuppositions with the

equally popular myths of a Golden Age when humans and animals lived peacefully together (LOVEJOY AND BOAS). There is, of course, also an acute lack of historical support for Primitivist conceptions of this kind as well. All evidence has so far shown war to have been a part of human societies from the start (EIBL-EIBESPELDT pp.126ff). It might be justly argued, though, that evidence is not to be expected - these tales are precisely about a period before historical record, a time when things were radically different. At the very least, such stories are themselves evidence for the pervasive conviction that there is something improper about disharmony between humans and animals, and that peace is a value worth seeking.

The 'realists' who opposed such Primitivist conceptions, in the picture they gave of human civilisation growing painfully out of a bestial past, tended to ignore the fact that most animals live in communities, and that humans are directly descended from an evolutionary line that has always been profoundly social. This approach also neglects to pay sufficient attention to the conspicuous testimony of history that humans have always (as far as we can tell) lived closely with non-humans. "Noone would choose to have all good things by himself" (Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics IX:1169b17f). What Aristotle says of the human individual we may also affirm of humanity in general. History bears out that humans like to

share their lives with the beasts, and this not only of necessity but out of pleasure as well. It appears, then, that humans have always and everywhere developed their civilisations with wider circles than just that of fellow human beings. There was not an original group of homo sapiens who gradually became less species-exclusive and began including horses, dogs and cats in their circle. Rather, there were always groups of men and women with their dogs, sheep and cattle. For many centuries the most typical form of farm accommodation in Europe was the 'long house', a combination of house and byre in which all lived together (THOMAS p.94). Species barriers have never been an insurmountable barrier to community.

If the accuracy of any historicist theory of social contract must be doubted, perhaps we can still find it acceptable as a theoretical account of society, a description of the underlying rationale of human community. Everyone who has the power to kill or to inflict harm should sign the contract in order to limit such destruction, and all will be equally protected by being signatories. In such a scheme, however, there is no place for those who will not, or cannot, sign. "The definition of INJUSTICE is no other than the not performance of contract" (HOBBES). This does not mean that animals will be liable to the charge of being unjust beings, since they are not capable of signing in the first place.

They do not make the contract with us and then break it: they never make it. This places them beyond the duties of fulfilling a part in society, but also beyond its protective scope (as it does children also). We may war on the beasts since they exist in a kind of moral no-man's land.

It need not be denied that animals live in relative harmony with members of their own kind, in obedience to the rules operative in their own communities; they, too, live by convention and agreement even if not by explicit promises (though that is also how we live, most of the time). Again, maybe only humans need to think in terms of contractual agreements in order to prevent war amongst themselves since most other species have more effective mechanisms for controlling aggression and self-assertion. Still, the point remains that they are unable to recognise and be obedient to human rules and morality, and so society with them is impossible.

Is that so? Hagiography is full of accounts of mutual aid being given between saints and various animal companions. St. Ailbe, for example, was reputedly abandoned as a child, being exposed on a rock. He was found by a she-wolf who suckled him. Many years later he saved this same wolf from hunters, saying to her, 'When I was feeble and friendless thou didst protect me, and now I will do the same for thee' (BARING-GOULD AND FISHER I,129). There are also a number of

tales in the Celtic tradition concerning stags who, having been saved by a saint from huntsmen, show their gratitude in some way, normally by helping to till the land (thus, St.Cynan, St.Tydecho and St.Neot - BARING-GOULD AND FISHER II,225; IV,10; IV,283). Such stories can be found with a surprising regularity and in large numbers in all the Christian traditions.

It has to be remembered, of course, that hagiographical writing is meant to edify as well as to recount remembered fact: the lives of the saints tell in vivid detail, with pointed morals, just what it means to be a saint in the Christian understanding (LECLERCQ pp.199f): the desire to praise God in the actions and lives of His servants is no doubt conducive to exaggeration. Still, it is significant in itself that the typical image of sanctity has normally included as one of its elements a close relationship with certain beasts and a respect for animals in general. But whilst some of the more astonishing among them are doubtless apocryphal, there is no reason why many stories should not be taken at face-value.

"A world which took the supernatural for granted...was used to seeing a holy man as a focus of power to which all needs, physical, mental, or social could be brought to be put into contact with the supernatural...so there are stories of the locus of the holy being so powerful that it extends to animals, in a restoration of man to the state of paradise" (Benedicta Ward, in RUSSELL p.43).

Too much concentration on the hagiographical traditions can, however, make us think of human-animal contracts as something unusual or reserved for those advanced in sanctity. On the contrary, there is a tacit contract between every pet owner and every pet that neither will hurt the other -

"And does not your favourite dog expect you should give him his daily food for his services and attention to you?" (E.DARWIN).

If we insist on understanding society in explicit contractual terms then animals cannot share in it. But also excluded from moral attention are all those humans who are not free rational beings capable of taking the prudent step of signing the non-aggression pact (i.e. the retarded, the senile and babies; and it leaves problematic the status of the unconscious and future generations). Human society is thus robbed of many of its members. It is possible to say that the free members who do contract can also represent those marginals in society, accepting responsibility for their actions and claiming society's protection for them. But we can equally represent some animals in this way: dog-owners are liable in law for injuries their pets may inflict on others.

But it seems an impoverished understanding of society to see it as based on a combination of power, rationality and the ability to inflict harm, as well as unduly cynical to suggest that we avoid warring on other humans only through the check of a contract and in recognition that it would not be finally

in our interest to do so. GREEN (p.61) asks whether it is just that

"any being with the capacity to pull the trigger of a gun, or to refrain from doing so out of obedience to moral rules, deserves our equal moral respect?"

There are surely more basic, primary groupings which underlie explicit contractual agreements - "Men are necessarily born in a family-society" (HUME(3) 3,1,151). If the keeping of peace between creatures is accepted as resting more on a foundation of implicit, or tacit, consent, then such language becomes just one way of describing the fact of cooperation both within and between species. Such inter-species contracts are not uncommon.

"When I am playing with my Cat, who knows whether she have more sport in dallying with me, than I have in gaming with her? We entertaine one another with mutuall apish trick, If I have my houre to begin or to refuse, so hath she hers" (Montaigne, in MUIR 1956).

There is a mutuality accepted here, a recognition that both parties have something to offer and something to gain, that there is a difference between contract and tyranny: contract is precisely to guard against injustice in relationships. "No compact or agreement, it is evident, was expressly formed for general submission " (Hume, cited in COPLESTON V:II,149). Being in community, then, is not just a matter of any kind of relationship with another. Where a creature has merely functional value he is not a member of a community but an

object for use.

It need not be doubted that tacit contract is a reality between humans and members of other species. Still, it is not something of which all animals are capable. Those beasts who have been successfully domesticated and live alongside humans are originally social animals, who have been able to transfer to human beings the trust which, in a wild state, they would have developed towards their parents, and then in later life towards the leaders of their pack or herd (MIDGLEY pp.112f). It would appear, therefore, that there are certain limitations to this process of human-animal society building. Those beasts who do not have this kind of innate capacity to respond to social signals in their own species situations also lack the ability to transfer their affections and responses to human beings.

The author of Job recognises as much, and of Leviathan it is asked rhetorically, "Will he enter into an agreement with you?" (41:4). But the primary contract, in Judaeo-Christian terms, is not that which humans make with one another or with animals, but the covenant which God makes with the world. This is unlike human contracts in that it is not one where the parties can mutually benefit by the arrangement: God covenants out of a free decision of love and not because He needs protection or could gain from the relationship. Creation can add nothing to the Creator, and anything which creatures might

offer to Him is His already, as are they themselves.

In biblical terms there is not just a single covenant, but many. The Davidic theology, which was developed mainly in the south of Israel, includes that of the 'everlasting covenant' (berith olam), and this was concerned with creation as a whole. More clearly than the Mosaic covenant, it is not based upon the contingencies of Israel's love and obedience but is an unconditional promise of stability, order and security in the natural world and the human world (McCARTHY). In addition, we may note the Noahic covenant which was made with the whole earth (Gen.9). God's care extends to all His creatures - "To both man and beast you give protection" (Ps.36:6). It is He who guarantees the unity of the Earth Household and with whom all contracts are ultimately made.

The Ends of Community

A community is a multitude of reasonable beings who are united by their agreement on the things they respect (AUGUSTINE(1) XIX,24). Without this there can be no prosperous or peaceful life. Society is restricted to humans and angels, for only they are capable of consciously striving towards a common end through uniform and harmonious activity. Animals are excluded on two counts: they are not rational, and they seek ends other than the ones we seek. They are thus manifestly unsuitable community members.

It is argued that it is not enough for there to be a

coincidence of common aims: all members of a community should be capable of severally choosing such aims for themselves. Thus, for example, the Aristotelian polis is an association of free men, a form of political organisation that is chosen and not just a political grouping which holds its members together in some kind of order. Despotism, by contrast, does not allow room for human freedom and rationality. Some sort of political order is necessary for every community, but not all truly respect human values (cf DE BENEDICTIS). There must not only be unity in the common life, but the unity must be consciously chosen by free citizens. The object of unity must be a task, an end aimed at, and must depend upon either the decision or the consent of the community members.

It is also held that the ends at which humans aim, and those pursued by the beasts, are too unlike for there to be any real community of interests, or any truly shared sympathies and goals. Aristotle distinguishes the life of pleasure from the life of happiness; it is wrong to imagine that they are the same thing, for the one is proper to the brutes and the other to humans. Men can be 'happy', but animals cannot - and neither can children, properly speaking, who are only to be called such for the hope of happiness that is in them. Happiness, that is, 'eudaimonia', is not a euphoric state of mind, but is rather making a success of life; it means flourishing in a distinctively human way i.e.

principally by the exercising of the intellectual faculties. It is this capacity for intellectual achievement which marks off the human life from the brutish, and in which eudaimonia can be found.

Ends and the Unconscious

In some respects, the insistence that common ends in a community must be consciously willed seems a rather arbitrary one. From the purely practical point of view of the ability of species to co-operate and live together it would seem to matter less that common ends be consciously pursued than that the pursued ends be ones held in common. This position also surely overestimates the ability of humans to formulate rational ends and thereafter to seek them consistently. It is no coincidence that the majority of the population in Aristotle's State does not possess citizenship.

If we wish to seek a wider basis for human community we could find it in that which

"precedes the determination of human intelligence and will, and which acts independently of them to create a common unconscious psyche, common feelings and psychological structures, and common mores" (MARITAIN(1) p.3).

Society and the State are not artificial additions, imposed on top of the natural man, but are manifestations of human nature. It is easier to see how this approach can be applied to a community comprising both humans and animals. Where it is defined as resting on a common emotional, psychological and

unconscious 'structure' there is less reason to see why animal populations should not also bear the name 'community', for it is these things which also underlie and determine the character of their groupings.

A community in which ends are rationally chosen, and one in which unity is assured more as a product of a common emotional and psychological nature, need not be opposed to one another. The ends which one is likely to freely choose are precisely those which are most consonant with one's own psychological make-up. Mention of the 'unconscious psyche' is also important. Long before Freud and Jung there were arguments from the teleology manifested in human and animal behaviour (and also in plants to some extent) to the existence of an 'unconscious'. For Schelling all of nature was an "unconscious Thinking", and von Hartmann agreed, describing the unconscious as the "all-unity" which "embraces the cosmos" (WHITE pp.52ff). The unconscious is a unifying factor, and recognising that it plays a part in the underpinning of community life helps balance the undue weight that has been given to the conscious ego (especially since Descartes' exaltation of the cogito, of the awareness of one's own consciousness).

In such a picture man seems especially fitted for community with the beasts. He may be viewed as the 'peak' expression of the unconscious, since it is most clearly in him

that it becomes conscious of itself and able to reflect upon the way it manifests itself in other life-forms. Man can understand animals as expressions of an "unconscious Thinking" in which he too shares. In this one can see links with the biblical understanding of humans as the stewards and guardians of life. Adam names the animals, allotting them their place in the cosmos because they are the manifestations of Thoughts present in his own psyche. In naming his own depths he is also able to name the beasts.

Political philosophy might be said to revolve around the problem of the Many and the One. In the context of a human-animal community it is not so much the question of how to reconcile the valid claims of both authority and freedom, nor just a weighing up of the rights of the individual against the suppression of private interests for the wider good of the Whole, but more the issue of how individual creatures, human and non-human, can live together as distinct beings who yet share their lives, being neither prisoners nor strangers. On the one hand there would seem to be a need for some kind of minimum concept, held implicitly or explicitly by the individual members of a society, of what constitutes the good of the community. Even a society 'run' on anarchistic lines must have the members of the society at least not objecting to the Anarchist Vision. On the other hand, though, it would be an oversimplified view of any political grouping to speak only

in terms of common ends and goals. Human societies are, on the whole, made up of extremely disparate elements, with few of the members consciously seeking any common good. Indeed, a libertarian might argue that each individual or small group seeks its own ends and has its own purposes, and these may or may not be identical with the ends held by others. There is certainly no guarantee that they will be equivalent. The only point held in common (and this is not so much an end sought as a prerequisite for this kind of community) is that each individual should be allowed to choose his own ends for himself (as long as they do not involve the harming of others). Each seeks his own individual good in his own way. Paradoxically, so laissez-faire economists argue, this model of a liberal society is also the best way of maximising the common good. Each, in seeking his own betterment, contributes indirectly to the common good. There is no direct pursuit of the ideals of justice or prosperity for all, no concern for a oneness of purpose: the only oneness is that each seeks his own good in isolation from the others. The invisible hand will do the rest.

Whether or not this is the best model for a human society, it might well be for the Earth Household. One could argue that in an ecologically viable community each element seeks the propagation of its own genetic inheritance and the end result is usually a harmonious balance. Again, there is

no conscious willing of common ends, no direct seeking of the good of the Whole; but if the 'accidental' achievement of them, via the invisible hand of market forces, does not prohibit one from calling a group of individuals a community, then the natural confluence of ends on the basis of an unconscious Nature must be allowed to count for as much.

Unity and Diversity

Turning to the question of whether humans and animals seek quite different goals or whether there are between them resemblances enough to be able to think of a community of interests, we can note that even if the Aristotelian distinction between pleasure and happiness is accepted this need not mean that human happiness is a completely separate thing from bestial pleasure. For one thing, Aristotle himself accepts that the majority of humans will not live far above the life of pleasure - there are those who are incapable of seeking the life of eudaimonia, being slaves by nature (Politics I.4, 1254a14-17), and those who are capable of happiness are so in varying degrees. Quite apart from that, though, many of the desires, the fulfilment of which go to make up the life of eudaimonia, are shared with the beasts. The pursuit of happiness can, and normally does, include the pursuit of health, the raising of a family, sexual satisfaction, and so on (KENNY 1973). Just as the life of virtue is one in which we balance the claims of many virtues,

seeking not only the good of temperance to the exclusion of all else, but also that of fortitude, chastity and so on, so we do not seek the good of 'nous' to the exclusion of other proper goods, many of which we have in common with non-humans.

"Our ultimate destiny is not merely an intellectual contemplation of God; if it were, the resurrection of the dead would be unnecessary. The blessed will see God...in the fullness of their created being" (LOSSKY(1) p.224).

The whole person shares in contemplation, not just the disembodied intellect. A Christian society is not one of pure spirits (no more than the Aristotelian State), but of creatures who share in the goods of material life as well as of intellectual achievement. We seek a multiplicity of ends. Often these ends will not conflict with one another, even if they are not neatly causally related - A leading to B leading to C and so on. But sometimes the ends desired will be mutually exclusive, either logically (I cannot choose to enjoy voluntary poverty and the pleasures of wealth simultaneously), or practically (I cannot choose the career of a concert pianist and that of an astronaut). But we accept such choices as a necessary part of what it means to be finite creatures: some conflict is inevitable. And many goods are often within reach - I may have good health and a good spouse and the good of contemplation. Ideas of a society having a oneness of purpose must not preclude a diversity of ends.

Conflict and Contemplation

All humans do not necessarily seek the same ends, and certainly humans and non-humans do not (though we have seen that there is some overlapping); but far from making community together more difficult this makes it easier. A common desire for a particular goal does not necessarily ensure harmonious relations, and if that good is a limited one it is likely to lead to conflict. If one is hoping to achieve peace and concord between individuals, something along the lines of RAWLS's "social union" (pp.520ff) is a better model to encourage. This is where each individual pursues a certain course in life, whilst at the same time enjoying the excellencies and individuality of others. So each form of life would have its own place in the Earth Household, and none could decide, "I have no use for you" (1 Cor.12), just because another member does not have our excellence, or admire the good we seek after as our fulfilment.

It would be wrong to pretend that there could be a complete absence of conflict in a human-animal society if only the ends sought might be diverse enough. But this is no different from a humans-only community. I am constantly constrained as to my choice of ends by the community I live in; I do not live in a world, or a society, which is orientated solely towards the satisfaction of my desires. In many respects the course my life takes is decided for me since I am bound to respect the rights of others to seek and possess

ends which I might like for myself. So I am limited by the choices others make and by the ends they pursue. I may have set my heart on being the first person to swim the channel using butterfly, but I cannot discount the possibility that another person is also in training for this and may gain that end before me. I may wish to marry Murgatroyd but this be denied me by her deciding to marry another. That is, particular goods may not be available to me because of the choices made by others. Still, the general goods of swimming and of marriage remain open to me. We can envisage circumstances, though, when even the more general goods such as these might be denied me because of the decisions of others - perhaps marriage is no longer an option since I have been selected as a guardian in Plato's ideal State and must find my fulfilment in my knowledge of the Good.

Human eudaimonia, though, as Aristotle held, lies in nous, in the contemplative capacity of man. Only through the exercising of this does he find true fulfilment, and if he fails to live on this level he fails to 'make a success' of life even if all other goods are his. Although this intellectual capacity is a distinctly human endowment, in a sense it could be said to embrace all other ends. Through the exercising of nous one possesses all other ends because one knows the world, and in knowing the world one knows the community of all creatures. The mind can know and possess all

things and the human telos is to realise this capacity in one's own life.

Idealist models of reality share this conviction of the mind's ability to know all things. Nothing which exists does so absolutely independently of anything else; but if the nature of each thing is inevitably bound up with the nature of all other things, then knowledge, in facing even the smallest piece of reality, is in some wise facing the whole of it at once. Some simple object may be engaging my attention: say, a cat. I can divide reality at that moment into 'the cat' and 'everything else', one is present and one absent. But 'everything else' is not wholly absent, although it may seem to be. Both things are 'facts', and to call them both that is to affirm that they both share in a single Being. They are not totally separate entities. And so in knowing the cat I in some sense know everything else as well. Not consciously, certainly, but that is due to my inattention to 'everything else', and this inattention is in turn an inescapable element of my finitude. Indeed, my act of attention which is directed towards the cat is itself the passing expression of the Will whose embodiment is the whole world of facts (see ROYCE).

The activity of knowing can assimilate whilst still leaving intact, as the scholastics often pointed out (e.g. AQUINAS(1) 1a, LXXVIII,4). This is one of the principle differences between intellectual possession ('immutatio

spiritualis') and physical merging ('immutatio materialis'), that the former does not destroy what it knows, whilst the latter often does. In the servitude of a world where ends conflict, and where life means eating or being eaten, the activity of nous reaches beyond the circle of life and death and the dilemma of choosing between ends. Although it is itself in one sense a single good, in another it is all good: the mind can so possess everything that it ceases to be one part in a total situation, or one particular occupied with its own particular surroundings, and, after a fashion, becomes the Whole (AQUINAS(1) Ia XVIII,4).

The idea that the mind could possess all things was rooted, for the scholastics, in the simple conviction that the proper object of mind is reality as such, and from there it was inferred that nothing real could be alien to it. Everything could be received by mind, no existent need escape it. This ties in with the idea of man as a microcosm: to know an object is to have something in common with it. We know earth because we are earth, fire because we are fire. Because of this we can know something of what it is to be a bat (NAGEL(2)) or a rabbit or a horse. The mind is not cast in the role of spectator, but knowledge is an operation 'within' reality. It is when the universe is held in the mind that the diversity of interests and ends sought can find their unity - in being personally possessed as a single whole. This is not

to say that it is a private possession, both because it is not held exclusively, so that other minds cannot also grasp the Whole; and also because individual minds do not exist in isolation from one another: each belongs to a common world, which is the condition of knowledge of that world. Intellectual possession, then, is beyond the reach of conflict. It is common to all and within the reach of all minds. The mind's happiness lies in contemplating the entire order of the world, the community of all things. In doing this it is contemplating the image of God, for the universe is a vast society which reflects the Trinitarian unity-in-diversity. Bonaventure sees the human vocation as that of contemplating in the world this mystery of the Trinitarian nature, the earthly society as a mirror of the Divine Community which is "united yet not confused, distinct yet not divided" (John of Damascus: On the Orthodox Faith I,8; DE BENEDICTIS pp.36ff). So there is a proper diversity of interests and ends as well as a unity. There are various forms of common life which are to be valued and which together may still be seen as making up a single community. Successful community does not require uniformity.

Altruism

A further problem which has been put forward with reference to any idea of a human-animal community is that animals are incapable of altruism towards any outside of their

own kind - and, therefore, incapable of altruism towards humans. But if this kind of behaviour cannot cross species lines, and if animals are also without any kind of moral awareness (and of the duties which spring from this), or respect for the values which we hold dear, then society cannot be bonded. True society is reciprocal: the links between creatures cannot be from one side alone. It is not enough that we be altruistic towards animals; the beasts must also be able to display such behaviour towards us. We have already noted that the model of the body has long been a favourite with political thinkers. One of the points one can see such a model as emphasising is that of the mutuality which exists in all societies between the different parts: in a body all the members cooperate together for the good of the whole.

We humans, then (it is argued), are uniquely moral, and owe benevolence primarily towards those who are capable of returning it and who value the things in life which we do. The fundamental ethical principle is then seen as: treat benevolently and of moral value those creatures who are benevolent and valuing creatures. If I put this forward, then as I am myself such a being this turns out to be a way of also ensuring benevolent treatment for myself. But more widely, it is also a principle which ensures that those other creatures who value value are themselves valued.

"When Socrates observed that a person must love himself to come to love others, he might have added

that mankind must appreciate the significance of its own existence before it can learn to appreciate what life can be to other living beings" (MACHAN p.204).

But it is not clear that we ought to be creatures who only value and treat benevolently those creatures who value value, although perhaps we ought to do that as well. Unless the only value which benevolent and valuing creatures accept is itself the capacity for being a benevolent and valuing creature, the principle itself presupposes that other things are valued in themselves. Valuing creatures like ourselves will value x (the capacity to be a valuing creature), but unless 'value' is defined in an entirely circular way things such as y (the care of kin) and z (the act of sparing the defeated) will also be held to be valuable in themselves.

It is not clear, then, that we ought to treat altruistically only those creatures capable of altruism, and it is even less clear that we ought to ~~only~~ consider as being within the sphere of our moral concern only those capable of showing us altruism. Many animals certainly do act altruistically (if we define this as benefitting others at a cost to oneself). The question as to whether this is a matter of 'instinct', or is 'really moral' might be allowed to lapse, not least because of the difficulties there are in defining such terms. 'Instinct' tends to be employed as a

"pseudo-explanation for any behaviour pattern which is self-evidently fitted for preservation of the species, and yet whose species preserving function cannot be explained on the basis of a

mental accomplishment of the type common in our own experience. Thus, 'instinct' has been from the very beginning one of those treacherous words which fit in just nicely where concepts are lacking!" (LORENZ II,126).

In most animal societies one finds both self-directed (towards the good of the individual animal who is acting) and other-directed (towards the well-being of the group) behaviour. Perhaps neither can be properly termed either egoistic or altruistic in the full moral sense of those terms, but many of the behaviour patterns do have a close resemblance to the moral actions of humans. One could cite many examples: the defence of companions by dogs, monkeys and others, jackdaws protecting the nest of a low-ranking bird against attack from a higher-ranking individual, or penguins moving in to separate fighting males (LORENZ II,153f). The important question remains, however, not whether such behaviour is found between members of the same species (the evidence for this is widespread enough), but whether it can, and does, transcend species barriers. We know that it can in the case of humans: spending money to take Tiddles to the vet is a form of altruistic behaviour. Do any other species practice altruism across species lines - and more specifically, do they practice it towards us?

They do. There are remarkable stories recorded in the hagiographical traditions of Christianity, exemplifying the principle that when faced with the power of Christ in one of

His servants "every brute beast is wise, and every savage creature gentle" (Sulpicius Severus: Dialogues I,14, cited in WALLICE-HADRILL p.7), as with Cerbonius, bishop of Populonia, who was condemned to be devoured by a bear for harbouring enemy soldiers. The bear was released, but as he approached the bishop he bowed his head in humble submission and refused to harm him (Gregory the Great: Dialogues 3:15). It is not impossible that sanctity can communicate itself to animals and find a ready response there. Still, tales of bears and bishops are exceptions rather than the rule as regards the normal relationships between humans and the fiercer beasts. Can altruism extend to humans in more normal circumstances? Although amongst social animals behaviour patterns towards conspecifics normally remain relatively stable and predictable, their behaviour towards their extraspecific environment can be modified through experience, acquisition and the ways in which different creatures relate to them. LORENZ (II,147) points to the jackdaw as an example of this. In Northern Russia and Siberia the jackdaw shows no fear at all towards humans and nests in low-built peasant houses. In West European towns, by contrast, it is extremely timid and nests only in high and almost inaccessible buildings. What a jackdaw eats, where it seeks its food, the enemies which typically evoke alarm, the nest-sites preferred - all these are dependent to a certain degree upon the personal experience

of both the individual bird and the tradition of its society. Against all of this, the birds with respect to one another show not the slightest variability. So not only is the domestication of individual creatures made possible by the substitution of human society for the normal conspecific group, so that typical behaviour patterns are performed towards the human companions rather than the more normal ones; but also, as in the example of the jackdaws, it is possible for the response of whole animal groupings to be modified in a positive direction towards humans.

What about the wider question of animals sharing with humans the dimension of moral behaviour? Theists normally regard morality in terms of obedience to the will of the Creator: something is good if it accords with that Will, bad if it does not. The foundations of morality lie in this question of the obedience of a creature to its Creator. It is for this reason, then, that the biblical injunction is made to note the behaviour of the beast if one would learn to live well. Not because one ought to copy that behaviour oneself, but because animals are obedient to the designs of God for them, whereas humans very often are not (e.g. Prov.6:6; Job.12:7ff; Eccl.39:29ff). Whilst it is true to say, if our former arguments were correct, that both man and nature are fallen away from their original perfection, there is yet a recurrent intuition that the non-human has not strayed so far

from the Way as has man, and has therefore something to teach him about his own vocation (of course, if nature is not fallen, then this injunction will carry even more weight). Thus, Origen understood some species of animal to have been set in the world for the moral re-education of fallen spirits like ourselves (GALLOWAY(1) p.87). Whereas humans are superior to animals because of their active participation in intelligence, animals are superior to humans by their fidelity in remaining closer to that which they 'ought' to be. Humans have strayed from their true selves to a degree that the beasts have not. If one is looking at the question hierarchically, one could say that man is superior from the point of view of the spiritual possibilities of beings, and it is from such a standpoint that he can be considered God's vicegerent, having all other creatures in submission to him. However, the inverse relation is equally real: "the superiority of animal over man...consists in a greater 'exteriorisation' of essential perfection" (IBN 'ARABI p.11). In other words, to a certain extent human goodness is a potentiality, whereas the goodness of animals is an actuality. They are superior to man in their closer adherence to their primordial nature, and are thus more obedient to God.

Again, the whole Natural Law tradition in morality, which is ever-prominent in Catholic teaching, is one that casts Nature in the role of guide, even if it is normally accepted

that she is not a conscious one. Perhaps the beasts are not reasonable or moral in their own right, but they act in accordance with reason and in obedience to morality nonetheless. Natural law is considered to be the primary moral dimension, and the prescriptions of human law must be in accord with nature: man strives by his efforts to be that which nature already is (Philo: De Virtutibus 5).

Finally, what else are they saying who see in the natural world a teleology with man as the only, or the prime, end, except that it is altruistic in design, that it intends the good of humanity even to its own cost? Neither the elements which make up the world, nor the individual organisms, need be considered consciously altruistic, but by the scheming of Nature they do, in fact, seek the betterment of humanity. Animals, though they know it not, are altruistically inclined towards humans.

Human Altruism and Anthropomorphism

What if the world is not so ordered, and animal altruism does not transcend species barriers so easily? How are we to act in a world which neither shares our moral perceptions, nor acts altruistically towards us: is community with such a world possible?

From our animal ancestry we have inherited various altruistic tendencies. Specifically, we have inherited kin altruism (towards those who carry our genes) and reciprocal

altruism (towards those who benefit or help us). A less easily definable category is that of group altruism (towards those in our wider circle of companions). This last is more difficult to pin down partly because there is much overlapping between this and the other two categories: those in our group are likely to be our kin or those who are willing to benefit us (though are they in the group because they are willing to help us, or are they willing to benefit us because they are in the group?). Partly again this is because it is unclear how wide the group should be taken to be. It could be argued that one's 'group' is coeval with one's species, in which case MIDGLEY (pp.94ff) is correct in holding that it would be simplistic to see all preferences for one's species as 'prejudice' or 'speciesist'. It is equally arguable, though, that for many people the limits of the group are constituted more by class distinctions or race limits, and on such lines class bias and racism are just as 'natural'. But none of this means that the limits of the group, any more than of kin, ought to be taken as the absolute limits of moral concern. The preference for our friends as opposed to strangers, and for our family as opposed to non-family, is perfectly understandable in terms of our evolutionary past, and it may be that obeying the call of our 'selfish genes' has been partially responsible for placing us in a position of evolutionary superiority. Again though, it is not a

self-evident moral proposition that we ought only to do those things which have guaranteed our past successes (or those which will ensure our present or future successes). That we think and act in certain ways because of the conditioning of our natural past no more makes certain the moral correctness of such views and behavioural patterns than our having been brought up in a culture with cannibalistic inclinations would guarantee the ethically inviolate character of such goings-on. Neither biological, genetic nor cultural explanations of our actions amount to an ethical justification of them.

This is not, however, to dismiss our natural inheritance. We can understand these various forms of altruism as some of the starting points of moral behaviour, and as such deserving of serious attention and respect. Charity seems to arise from the instincts of compassion (AQUINAS(1) 2a-2ae, XXIV, 7), and the cause of charity will not be furthered by neglecting the place of compassion. However, it is but a beginning in moral terms: Christ sets a relatively low value on natural affection and a relatively high value on loving those who have no claim against one except that they are in some kind of need (Lk 10:25ff). This kind of love, 'agape' is almost to be defined by its ability to transcend such boundaries (MONTEPIORE p.159).

It is not a question, then, of ignoring natural sympathies, but of building upon them; not a matter of

attempting an emotional neutrality in which all ties are regarded as absolutely alike. Quite clearly, one must guard the emotional bonds that are already formed and have respect for the natural within ourselves. But perhaps it is also 'natural' for us to go beyond the ties we have mentioned:

"It is one of the special powers and graces of our species not to ignore others, but to draw in, domesticate and live with a great variety of other creatures" (MIDGLEY p.111).

Interestingly, according to the gospel of Matthew, Christ is reported as having recognised each prominent form of altruism, and in each case asked His followers to go beyond it (kin: 12:48; reciprocal: 5:46; group: 5:47). In each case the natural tie is presumed, but is not thought of as a stopping-place. It is natural to suppose that there might be no limit to our goodness (5:48).

It could be argued, though, that the proper objects of our affections are our fellow humans, not animals, and that although we can feel emotionally bonded to other kinds than our own, there must always be an element of compensation in such attachments for a human relationship which is lacking (DEWAR pp.155f). A dog is merely a substitute for human affection and can never be more than this.

If this were the case one would expect seemingly emotionally mature humans to have little to do with animals, except where absolutely necessary: animals will have been put away like so many childhood toys. But pet-keeping, for

example, is not confined to children, the lonely and the emotionally immature (unless they are deemed to be the latter on the basis of involvement with animals). Perhaps if I lived alone for many years with only a dog for company and one day a Human Being graced the threshold of my house, I would suddenly appreciate the difference between my feelings for the dog and for the human (I might, it would depend upon who the human was). But again, if I lived alone for many years with only elderly relations for company I might experience the same realisation of the worth of another human being if this same person appeared at my house. But I would not automatically then say that elderly relatives were affection substitutes for other human beings. We do not have to think in terms of 'substitution' and 'compensation' to be able to talk of having varying degrees and manners of affection for different creatures.

Still, can I only include animals within the sphere of my affections, into community with me, by grossly anthropomorphising them? Perhaps it is true that I can only feel kinship for what is human and so in order to include animals into any human community they have first to be made more 'human' than they are. What we think are our relationships with animals are at best relationships with harmless fantasies of our own. The real animal, like Locke's material substratum, can never be known. We are, inevitably,

anthropomorphising creatures. Language, although 'intended' as a means of clarifying, explaining and describing far more than just the limited world of homo sapiens, is tied to a conceptual apparatus which imposes itself on the outside world so that the only reality of which we are able to take cognition is a humanised one, so that even abstract properties are given personalities - 'life has been good to him', 'her religion tells her that', and so on. So, for example, when Kant proclaimed that he was about to effect a Copernican revolution by substituting his critical idealism for the realism of the Middle Ages, he in reality wrought the very opposite and set his seal on this anthropomorphising tendency. The sun which he placed firmly at the centre was man, and nature was conceived as absolutely dependent upon the laws and workings of the human mind. All things gravitate around human thought.

Still, this need not mean that they are outside of the human community: on the contrary, even if we 'distort' to bring in, we do still bring them in. And it need not be a matter for dismay that we interpret in our own way such meanings as the beasts may have in their noumenal state. Perhaps their place in the world is to furnish and enrich our inner lives. What matters is not whether we correctly understand what the beasts sign and mean among themselves: the World-as-it-is must remain unknown. What matters is only that

we glean from their actions moral and spiritual lessons for our own lives. We may heap disdain upon the laziness of the cat and praise the diligence of the ant. Other creatures exists to reinforce our codes and practices.

"God would have a lively image of virtues and vices to be in the creatures that even in them we might be provoked to virtue and deferred from vice"
(Thomas Wilcox, cited in THOMAS(2) p.326).

The world is the archetype of all morality plays, and we are the spectators.

We have noted before, though, that animals are very often seen in terms of that which humans dislike about themselves. If we resign ourselves to the inevitability of never knowing the real animal apart from our interpretation of him, will we not also be excluding many animals from the human-animal community since they will be seen as epitomising vices rather than virtues? The very words 'beast' and 'animal' have passed into popular use largely as a rhetorical device for condemning those things we are ill at ease with in our own nature. If we anthropomorphise, is that not bound to be to the detriment of our relationships with at least some animals? Or we may be left in a position of total relativism, where each can interpret as and how he sees fit, animals playing whatever roles we may decide upon, being despised or revered according to custom and tradition:

"...You fall before the ox
In reverence: I slay him for the gods.
You make the eel your greatest deity:

With us he's best of all good things to eat.
You don't eat pork, but I do, with a relish.
You worship your dog: I give mine a beating
If he steals meat" (Anaxandrides: Fr.39).

However, perhaps there is a kind of anthropomorphism which is a true reflection of the way things are, which does not lead to the arbitrary imputing of virtues and vices to animals, and through which we can escape from caricature and distortion. It could begin from the conviction that man is a part of nature and that mind, too, is not alien to it, but can know what is real. But this is different from saying that all things become subject to man's measurement. For the theist all being is ordered towards God and is under His control, not man's. We can have a true knowledge of things in so far as human consciousness is capable of being a reflection of the Consciousness that moved all things into being in the beginning. There is to this extent some substance which can be given to the notion that the world is inescapably 'anthropomorphic', that such a representation is not unfair to reality of such. All existents are contained in the mind of God, at unity in the First Consciousness, and we are able to image that unity in our own inner realm.

Love and Species Limits

Our having affection for animals need not be dismissed as fantasy. But perhaps we draw too quickly on the evidence of pet-keeping to assuming that our affections can cross the species line in a more general way. Certainly it is possible

to find countless examples of relationships between individuals and their animal companions in which they appear to show mutual loyalty and exhibit a real depth of understanding of each other. However, this does not always lead on to a more general concern for animals, even for those animals of the same species as the loved creature. Few pet owners are vegetarians. Partly, perhaps, this is because the species of animal which are generally kept as pets are different from those eaten, so that something of an imaginative leap is required to link the two "kinds". But keeping a pet lamb does not always deter a person from eating mutton. We believe that the animal known to us is unique; and far from uncommon is the attitude of the antiquary William Stukeley, who was deeply affected by the death of his cat, grieving for her "exceedingly", believing as he did that she had "sense so far superior to her kind" (PIGGOTT pp.152f).

None of this need surprise. The same kind of thing happens in human affairs: a lover sees the beloved as perfect (or near-perfect), and a great gulf is fixed between this particular person and the rest of humanity. But

"such a perfection is implicit in every human being, and (had we eyes to see) would be explicit there" (C.WILLIAMS p.47).

Our affections do not travel across humanity as a whole any more than to all animals. The particular objects of our fondness may be for us vehicles of the Divinity, so that in

then we catch a glimpse of the Glory that is in the heart of all creatures, at the same time seeing such beings in their own true glory. That all have this glory, and not just the beloved, we take on faith. We do not see this perfection everywhere but when it comes to the moral treatment of creatures we are bound to act as though we did. Sympathy alone cannot provide a sufficient basis for morality.

Any suggestion that genuine society is not possible outside of species limits because of the supposed impossibility of altruism crossing such lines, is also open to criticism for two additional reasons.

First, it is not entirely clear where species lines should be drawn, and the methods which are generally used to facilitate species differentiation would probably place some groups we commonly count as human in a different species. This is not as fanciful as it sounds. There are significant divisions within humanity, and unlike most animal populations, man occupies a number of ecological niches, so that one human population frequently displaces another one with a different way of life. Amongst animal populations there is often fighting between close ecological competitors, but it is very unusual for one group of animals to replace another group of the same species. This has led Erikson to describe man as a 'pseudo-species' (see LIVINGSTONE pp.13f): from an ecological point of view he acts as a series of different species.

DARWIN (p.108) did not draw any absolute line between species and races (or 'varieties'), and acknowledged that what he considered varieties might be thought later to be worthy of specific names. The term 'species' is one "arbitrarily given for the sake of convenience to a set of individuals closely resembling each other". 'Classes', 'orders', 'families' and so on are zoological terms which are important only in the sense that they allow a system of hierarchy to be established. They are mere helps in classification. The question which has to be asked is whether the words 'race' and 'species' are also only realities in the way in which 'classes' and so on are, or whether they represent definable realities. If they have only hierarchical value then it is open to anyone to deny that all humans belong to a single species.

There are three main ways of determining species differences: paleontological, morphological and genetic. This last has proved perhaps the most useful, and a sophisticated definition, using this criterion, reads:

"species in sexual cross-fertilizing organisms can be defined as groups of populations which are reproductively isolated to the extent that the exchange of genes between them is absent or so slow that the genetic differences are not diminished or swamped" (DOBZHANSKY).

On the basis of this criterion, the castes in India which practice strict endogamy will have to be classified as species, for from the time when such castes originated, the exchange of genes with the rest of the population was at an

end (or very nearly so) (DUMONT pp.151ff). There might be no obvious morphological differences between the castes, but neither are there between many types of animal regularly classified as separate species (J.R.BAKER pp.77ff). But even if there are sub-species within humanity, even if what are normally considered races or castes do turn out in some instances to be classifiable as different species, that need make no difference to our treatment of them. It would only if we had adopted an overtly speciesist attitude which treated all non-humans as radically different or held that altruism is impossible across species lines (cf CLARK(3) p.68).

Secondly, if we can have no society with those who are not of our Type, then plainly we can have none with God, nor He with us. In particular, the relationship from our side cannot be an altruistic one: the LORD cannot be benefited by anything we might do for Him, since He is all-sufficient. PROUDHON (p.237) was willing to accept such a conclusion: the Trinity may be in some sense a society, but it is not one in which we can participate in the least degree. There is no reason to suppose that God experiences social affections for His creatures. If we are disinclined to accept such a position we might also remember that, being made in God's image, perhaps we should conduct ourselves with the beasts as God does with us, and not give only where we expect to

receive in return.

The question of human altruism towards non-humans is intrinsically bound up with the proper relation between self-love and the love of others.

"Nought loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know:

And, Father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door." (Blake: A
Little Boy Lost).

That nought loves another as itself is only what any honest ethics must admit. But self-love need not be thought synonymous with selfishness. Although there is a corrupt form of self-love which many Fathers of the church equate with the root of all vice (THUNBERG pp.244ff), there is also a proper form of self-love which is integral to the love of God and of others. Self-love need not be opposed to the love of the other - indeed, true self-love can even be thought of as love of the other (AUGUSTINE(1) XIV:13). Love of God, of others and of oneself form a unitary mode of being and are not exclusive. The group is not to be thought of as the oppressor of the self, nor the self the natural enemy of the group. Blake's little boy recognises that all creatures belong to themselves as he does to himself. We can recognise in the affection animals have for their own that which we naturally have for our own, and with this recognition can be found

community. In the same way I am able to see that others than myself desire happiness, even if not with me or related in any way to me, and kinship comes with such a recognition.

"We are made to love, both to satisfy the necessity of our active nature, and to answer the beauties in every creature. By love our Souls are married and solder'd to the creature: and it is our Duty like God to be united to them all" (TRAHERNE II,66).

Chapter IX
THE EARTH AS A GIFT

There is a tendency to assume that animals are God's gifts to humankind, as are the rest of the earth's 'resources'. They are understood to have been 'sent' to us and for us, so that we may, by and large, do with them as we will. What we must do in return, of course, is express our thanks to the Creator for His undoubted generosity. We must say Grace over our meals.

"The earth and all that is therein is given to men for the support and comfort of their being...all the fruits it produces, the beasts it feeds, belong to mankind in common, as they are produced by the spontaneous hand of nature" (LOCKE II,26).

It is a sentiment with which Vatican II concurs - the earth and all it contains is for human use (FLANNERY p.975). Limitations are certainly set on this use, but they are not determined by the nature of anything non-human, but rather by the need for there to be an equitable sharing of the earth's goods amongst mankind. That is, definite limitations are proposed on the private use of the earth - it is ours to supply our individual necessities, but not to supply our private luxuries whilst other persons still lack such basic necessities. But there would seem to be no limits set to the common human use of the earth: the whole world is appropriated for this (though see John Paul II: Redemptor Hominis 15.2).

The gazelle has no claim to the land on which she grazes, the lion no right to his prey. Nor have any creatures other than humans rights of ownership even over their own bodies. That anything non-human enjoys food, habitat or life itself is only by the mercy of homo sapiens, the species to whom all rightfully belongs.

Why exactly it is that all can be said to have been given to humans alone is the question we must now address. We shall therefore examine various 'gift models' which might be held to imply this.

(1) We Claim Them

It might be suggested that what shows clearly that all things have been given to humans is the fact that they, alone of all creatures, can claim ownership of things. By this is not meant 'rightfully claim' on the basis of some intrinsic quality in man, or by appeal to some such criteria as first occupancy (on this latter principle animals have more claim to the earth's wealth than we have, though ultimately all belongs to Gaia, if she exists). Rather, what is being suggested here is that only humans can properly be said to 'claim' at all.

But if by this is meant the sort of claim that can be made and verified publicly within a shared tradition and a mutual understanding of the concepts of 'claim' and 'ownership', then the group of creatures to whom this is possible is smaller than the human group as a whole: it is

limited to the class of adult, rational humans. Only they can make that kind of claim. Thus the status of the uneducated, mental defectives and children is called into question: "Children are a gift from the LORD" (Ps.127). Is this meant in the same way that animals and other non-humans are classified as gifts?

What seems more satisfactory is to adopt a wider sense of 'claiming' something, so that a need for something or a desire for it could be seen as a claim which deserved recognition. All those creatures about whom it makes sense to say that they value certain states of being rather than others, who can entertain hopes, desires, wants or aspirations can be seen as making claims on things. Both children and animals are thus claimants.

Within this model we could say that adult, rational humans do have a position of special importance, in that they are the creatures with the greatest capacity for recognising and responding to the claims of other beings, and are thus best fitted for the role of stewards of the gifts of God. Still, they are not the only creatures capable of acknowledging the claims of others. Other species than man recognise and respect both the ownership of goods and territorial limits, at least within their own species. Not all animals are territorial (see STOKES), but most kinds do need a fairly stable environment. This is the case whether we

are talking about a rabbit's warren or a blackbird's territory, and one might reasonably surmise that the familiar material surroundings are often felt to be, in a way analogous to the human understanding of property, as an extension of the self. In the Western tradition property has been regarded almost as an exterior body, an expression of the personality (cf Dante: *Divina Commedia*, *L'Inferno* XI,40f; FLANNERY p.977), and from a psychological point of view this is certainly a plausible account. The boundary of the self is not equivalent to the physical boundary of the body: what is considered to be, in varying degrees, 'me' may extend (rightly or wrongly) to cover my spouse, house, even an ill-defined 'way of life' (it is worth noting that the Greek word 'philos' appears to have been in origin possessive, and was applied to parts of the body and to clothing as well as to wife and child (PERGUSON p.53)). If animals have a less than clear concept of the self (as is normally assumed) then the boundaries between the physical self and the environment are likely to be more blurred than is the case with humans, so that the beasts are generally more dependent upon the stability of environment than we are. We are more adaptable, are less intractably territorial, so that in our position as stewards of the world's gifts we have a special responsibility to help provide the kind of stability needed by less adaptable species.

We have considered the idea of territory at some length

in an attempt to understand how, in practice, claims are made. This example is also useful in that it shows quite clearly that claims by different species need not be exclusive ones. Certainly, ownership claims are not only intraspecific: if they were, the beasts could have no claims against us nor we against them. But it would be wrong to imagine that territorial claims by one species over a particular area necessarily excluded members of other species from also claiming that same space. A song-bird's territory is the home for countless other creatures as well. To suppose otherwise is to suppose that biotic communities do not exist. Even prey and predator will share territory and will ignore one another for much of the time. An area, then, does not 'belong' to one species alone: it is a shared domain. The song-bird may try to win a particular territory from another of her kind, but not from a rabbit. So, too, if I own a piece of land this does not prevent its' also being the territory of countless other mammals and insects. I share the land with numerous other kinds.

One last, brief remark here: whether we may rightfully claim certain things as ours is a separate issue from that of how we ought to behave towards them. It is far from obvious that I may do whatever I like to what I own, that there are no conditions attaching to the privilege of ownership of which I am bound to take note. We shall be looking more closely at

this question later, as well as suggesting that all our claims are secondary to the Divine claim upon us to pursue justice.

We Work For Them

All things are ours because only we are capable of labour and have the capacity to creatively use the earth's resources.

"The produce of the earth was designed for those only who make use of it; and though some beasts may rob us of a small part, it does not follow that the earth produced it also for them" (Balbus, the spokesman for Stoicism, in CICERO).

To say that we are sole owners because we labour for things would seem to be moving away from the idea of the world's products as 'gifts'. To call something a gift is normally to imply that it is not necessarily deserved, that the gift is not bound to be given as an act of justice. But if x belongs to me because I have worked to get x then this is establishing a direct link between x and myself such that x appears as my desert. Still, perhaps it is possible to think (indirectly) in terms of gifts: in immediate terms x is my desert, but it is also a gift in so far as that which earns me x (i.e. my capacity for labour) is a gift from God, is something that I have not earned.

As far as Balbus is concerned, then, all non-humans are automatically thieves and robbers, and are so inevitably by their very existence. To kill an animal is only to protect what is rightfully ours. Interestingly, this position points towards the ethical necessity for veganism. It might be

argued that an acceptance of his argument should lead one to attempt to eradicate all non-human life, as being the only way to rid the world of thieves (though not necessarily: that there should continue to be thieves is surely preferable to there being countless mass killers, which is what we should be if we followed such a course). But the beasts who steal directly from us are those whom we ourselves breed and multiply for food: unlike many wild animals they compete directly with other humans for nourishment. We have none but ourselves to blame if we encourage theft.

Moreover, it seems strange that Balbus should equate those who 'make use' of the earth with humans, denying that animals do so as well. Locke also seems to assume that only humans can really be said to 'labour', and so own property. For Locke, then, the main criterion for an article being moved from common property to private property is that labour is 'mixed' with it. He uses the example of a man picking up an acorn from under an oak: because he has taken the trouble to gather the acorn it has become his - he has mixed his labour with it. He cannot wait upon the consent of the rest of mankind before he takes it, for he would starve before that happened. The application of labour is sufficient to ensure that it is his. If we waive the various criticisms which have been made of this theory (e.g. NOZICK(1) pp.174ff) we can still say that animals mix their labour with the produce of

the earth as well as humans. Not only Locke collects acorns: squirrels do as well. And if the man who catches a fish, taking it out of the common state of nature, has a right to it, then surely so does the whale who takes a fish, as long as there is "enough and as good left in common for others" (LOCKE II,27). So if the mixing of a person's labour is what is held to count as the criterion for acquiring property, then animals, too, have a right to the holes they dig, the nests they build, the berries they eat and the beasts they catch. Locke at one point seems to grant as much, when he writes

"the grass my horse has bit, the turfs my servant has cut, and the ore I have dug in any place where I have a right to them in common with others, become my property without the assignation or consent of anybody. The labour that was mine removing them out of that common state they were in, hath fixed my property in them" (LOCKE II,28).

The grass, the turf and the ore may each count as his because in each case labour has been mixed with it. Locke calls the labour in each case his own, but this is only in so far as the servant and the horse are both his, so that their labour may be seen as legally his own. In fact, he has laboured directly only for the ore, and indirectly for the grass and the turfs: the agents who directly apply their labour here are the horse and the servant. If the servant was not a being who could mix his labour with the turfs then they would not belong to Locke, who owns them only because he owns the servant's labour. Again, if the horse was not such a being as could be held to

labour then the grass would not belong to Locke, who owns that, too, only because he owns the horse's labour. No labour would have been added in these two cases if it had not been supplied by the horse and the servant.

So there is no good reason to restrict the idea of labour to humans. The universe is not a lifeless factory in which humans work with raw materials, but contains agents like themselves capable of creation. The natural world is not only made, it is also maker. On a cosmic scale it is difficult to distinguish between producer and raw material, and in one sense the biosphere itself is one vast producer, spawning life. But what, then, does it produce? Itself: it is both producer and produced. Such a paradox may be fruitfully explored, but it leaves as a puzzle who, in Locke's terms, the "others" are for whom enough and as good must be left. Similarly Marx held that labour is exploited when a full return is not made, since labour alone creates value and therefore deserves the value of what is made (COHEN rephrases the theory: labour produces, not value, but that which has value; but the point about exploitation remains the same: there is injustice where there is not an adequate return to those who produce). To whom should return be made? Perhaps we should place in a special category those creatures who can be thought to have interests, those of whom it makes sense to say that there is something which it is like to 'be' them.

This is not because there is any necessary link between 'having interests' and 'being producers', but because only in the case of these beings can we talk of exploitation or of being benefited. It appears, therefore, that this model cannot understand the whole earth as a gift to humans alone.

"(Man) is not set up as lord over the earth, but as lord on the earth which is already furnished...Animals and plants do not belong to him; they and the whole earth can belong only to God" (BARTH III, IV pp.350f).

We Confer Existence

This is a model which differs from the others in one important respect. It locates the giving of life in humans rather than in God. It is asserted that if we did not want to hunt, eat or vivisect animals they would not be enjoying(?) existence at all. Strictly, it does not cover those animals conceived and nurtured outside of any human jurisdiction - we cannot have been responsible for their existence except in so far as we have allowed them to live and breed undisturbed. It might be argued that they owe us their existence since we have chosen not to take their lives. But unless we begin from the presumption of non-action, of letting alone, and therefore of a fundamental difference between action and non-action, we will have to accept that we also owe one another our lives in the human domain because we, too, have been allowed to continue in life through the mercy of our human brethren.

In the case of animals under human control, though, it

might be held that they are in existence only because we humans so desire it, and for our own purposes. Thus JAMES((1) p.100) suggests a Hegelian synthesis of domestication as the solution to the dialectic of (on the one hand) animals desiring to live, and (on the other hand) our desiring to kill them. The synthesis amounts to our keeping and breeding animals in order to slaughter them; but then they are only alive in the first place because of our desire to kill them. So also William Harrison observed in 1577 that foxes would have been "utterly destroyed...many years ago" if gentlemen had not protected them to "hunt and have pastime withal" (quoted in EDELEN pp.325f).

It is clear that if this kind of argument were applied to the human sphere any number of outrages against particular unwanted groups could be justified. It would serve, for example, as a simple justification for the use of 'superfluous' human embryos, which had been conceived in vitro, in medical experiments for the advancement of genetic knowledge. We are justified in using them thus because we created them, because it is only by our pleasing that they exist at all. Wider than this, the question could be asked: may a couple who plan to conceive ill-treat the child when it is born, whereas a child who is conceived without the express desire and deliberate planning of the parents may not be thus treated? Is the intention to create held to be ethically more

important than the fact of creation? An interesting side-point is the application of such an argument in the realm of theodicy. God, having conferred existence upon us, is presumably quite entitled to deal with us as He pleases. He definitely intended to create us: it is by His omnico~~m~~petent will that we exist. So, then, there is no need for a theodicy to be constructed. When we vivisect animals we are merely reflecting the image of the God who vivisects us. Those who are unhappy with such a picture of the Creator may also wish to understand His image in man as something rather more benign.

There is a fundamental confusion in this position, though, quite apart from its dubious implications for other areas of behaviour and theological reflection. This is that the underlying assumption is that creatures are born either 'through' God's will or through the human will. If an animal is born naturally (i.e. without human planning or contrivance) then it is God's will. Those creatures belong to God and I am consequently responsible to Him for the ways in which I treat them. If an animal is bred (or allowed to breed) by my directive, however, then any responsibility to God for the way in which I treat the creature is merely by the way. A dichotomy is assumed: God's will or my will, and with it there is held to be a corresponding ethical seriousness or frivolity.

As soon as it is stated one can see that this ignores the obvious point that God makes the world make itself. There is no dichotomy, no need to assume God's will or my will. The births of all the creatures which humans do not arrange take place through the interaction of non-human wills or through the causal nexus of the cosmos, not through God acting independently of His creation. God and His creation are not, at this level, opposed. In the same way, of course, neither is the fact of my intending the existence of a creature something which excludes God's intention: at the very least, for my intention to exist at all, God must intend that I should be able to intend it. God does not have to work 'around' human freedom, using only natural forces.

It is almost beside the point by whose will a creature is conceived and born. Once it is in existence its moral status cannot simply be disregarded, or reduced to the significance of the will that initiated its entry into the world. Morally speaking, it has to be recognised as a creature existing in its own right.

We Are Loved By God Through Them

A more subtle version of the general belief that all things have been given to humans is that which centres upon the creation as a place of revelation, an environment in which God seeks to make Himself known to His creatures.

"All that exists is God's gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man's

life communion with God. It is divine love made food, made life for man." (SCHEMENN p.19).

It is for this reason that humans may, for example, eat animals: they are given as signs of God's love for man. The world is a vast network of signs, each of them showing the goodness of the Creator. The importance of food is constantly stressed in the Bible. It is occasionally seen as a means of communion with God, as when the priests consume the sacrifice (at least, this may be the correct interpretation of the consumption of the victim); more often the provision of food is a sign of the watchful providence of the LORD for His people, and in the New Testament in particular the image of the banquet is used as a symbol of the fulfilment of life (e.g. Lk.22:30). The food which is given to us is one of the signs of the coming Kingdom.

All creation lives by eating, all depends for its life upon food. Or, to put it more exactly, every form of organic life is in a state of continual active interchange with its environment, extracting what it needs from its surroundings and returning to the surroundings waste products of one kind or another. All forms of life are 'open systems'. The authors of the early Upanishads, in their search for a constant among the flux of change found it in this never-ending process of eating and being eaten. Though individuals perish and are reborn under another form, the principle which keeps them all in existence is food. Food is

basic to life. It means that all things live in mutual relation to one another and that there is ultimately no death, for the death of one individual gives life to another, in a Whole which is continuously alive. So, not unsurprisingly, the ultimate mystical experience runs:

"O rapture, O rapture, O rapture!
I am food, I am food, I am food!
I am an eater of food, I am an eater of food, I am
an eater of food!
I, who am food, eat the eater of food!
I have overcome the world!" (Taittiriya Upanishad
3.10.6)

The vision which we have been presenting is not quite equivalent to this, though. It is not a matter of seeking liberation through the knowledge that we shall live forever under different life-forms, nor does the path to wisdom lie in not identifying ourselves with this particular body, which will in time be food for another, but in understanding ourselves as the never-dying Food. Rather, man's uniqueness (it has been suggested) is that he alone of all creatures can bless God for his nourishment, and that because of this he can act as priest of the cosmic eucharist, the one who takes the stuff of the world and offers it back to God (e.g. CHARDIN(2); SCHEMENN). He can recognise all that is around him as signs of the love of God and can be grateful.

Whilst I find such a broad sacramental approach largely sympathetic to the status of non-human creatures in theory, in practice the writers who embrace such an outlook often appear

to consider man's priestly actions automatically sanctifying, no matter what it is that he is doing. Perhaps this is partly due to the tendency to think in terms of 'basic matter' rather than of individual animals who may be harmed or helped by their contact with humans. It would seem to be more sensible to say that one lives in communion with God by loving Him in His creation rather than by slaughtering Him in it, but there is often no distinction drawn: any way that man acts upon the natural world is seen as a 'priestly' action and justified in those terms.

It is said, then, that God has made creation the means and sign of His love for man. On this reading non-human life is of instrumental value only. God shows His love for humans by giving them the world: that is why the world exists (cf PLANNERY p.925). In Berkelian terms we could say that God is constantly impressing ideas upon our spirits and so communicating with us (Berkeley, though, it should be noted, was ambiguous about whether or not some animals may not be spirits in their own right). It is true that since God is omnipresent He is communicating with humans through the whole of the natural world: all things share in the one divine life and so tell us something of God. But this does not mean that animal life should be understood solely as God's medium of contact with man; for it is equally the case that God, being omnipresent, continually communicates His being through humans

as well as through nature - and far more adequately in them than in any other part of the creation according to the doctrine of the divine image in man. We might even say that in some sense the human neighbour is Christ (cf Matt. 25:31ff). But although we may at times seem to others to be transparent to the divinity within this does not mean that we are intended solely as mediators of God's presence to our fellow humans. The significance of human life cannot be seen entirely as significance 'for others'. No more can animal life.

A further problem with understanding all non-human life as merely God's means of communicating with humans, rather than seeing that God may be interested in other kinds of life for their own sake, is that the world seems to be in so many ways ill-adapted and awkward as an attempt to express God's love for humans alone. Hence the problem of evil. So much in the universe appears to be either inedible, non-utilisable, uninhabitable or positively harmful to humans. We can understand this lamentable state of affairs as one of the effects of the Fall: what was once beneficial now distresses, and the animals who once came to Adam to be named now flee from him in terror. However, though this is perhaps part of the answer, the problem of evil also becomes less of an intellectual puzzle (as Job discovered) once it is accepted that the creation need not be understood as orientated solely

towards human utility. Tigers are doubtless potentially harmful to humans, are not obviously gifts to man from a loving God (if He wanted to provide man with skins He could have presumably arranged a less dangerous supply source) but they do not have to be viewed disparagingly as defective or corrupted gifts. Perhaps God simply likes tigers.

But even if all currently existing tigers are fallen specimens, are only caricatures of the perfect Tiger, this need not mean that the exemplar was created as a gift for humans. It will be argued later that it is a more satisfactory theological model to understand the world in terms of gifts being given to many different species. The revelation of God in nature need not be seen exclusively as a revelation to man. The self-expression of God in nature continues without a pause, like a spring or a fountain (Prov.18:4), and this language is not heard by man, though it reaches to the ends of the earth (Ps.19) (it is probably meant here that the revelation is not fully comprehended by humans (A.A.ANDERSON I,168)). Moreover, this account of God's glory is addressed by nature to nature - day tells it to day and night to night. Something of this is perceived by the psalmist, but the revelation of God in nature, the gift of Himself there, is not something that is presented especially for him. It goes on without him, although he may try to "listen". Neither is such an understanding of the natural

world as exceptional, in biblical terms, as RAD(1) suggests. In the creation story in Genesis Ch.1 God makes the non-human creation before man and pronounces it to be good without his presence (1:24f). Nor does the idea of humans exercising 'dominion' over nature imply that the world is somehow a gift to them: if anything the opposite is suggested - man has a place of responsibility and power in creation and his gift to the whole is in the right use of this under God. Lastly, God's answer to Job consists in telling him not to attempt to comprehend the whole world and all the creatures in it, as though their relation to him was their governing feature:

"Will it enter into an agreement with you
to become your slave for life?" (Job 41:4)

I have now examined several 'gift' models. Each of them purported to show that animals, and the rest of the natural world, are somehow gifts from God to humans. None, in my view, is capable of doing this. I shall now look briefly at one particular area where it is often assumed that God has indeed given His creatures to us: the use of animals for food.

Gifts To Eat

The idea that animals are gifts to humans can, then, take the straightforward belief that they are simply 'made to be eaten', that this is the only (or almost only) reason why certain beasts have been given a place in the Divine plan at all. A sheep is walking mutton. Not all animals can be

accounted for under such a scheme, of course, - nobody eats lions, and so they cannot have been sent for humans to eat (unless something went wrong with the plan). Where the line is drawn between those animals who have been given to us for nourishment and those who have not is (curiously enough) exactly where our particular culture sets the edible-inedible boundary. Those creatures who fall on the inedible side (and who cannot be utilised in any other obvious way by the human race) tend to be either half-acknowledged as having some inexplicable place in the cosmic plan, or else quietly forgotten.

Within the Christian tradition the statement that animals were 'given to us for food' tends to imply some reference to an authoritative revelation. There are problems with trying to hold such a position on the basis of natural theology unaided by revelation, as can be seen from ORIGEN's (IV,78) attempt to answer Celsus, who held that it is wrong to say that animals were made for man to eat just because we hunt and kill them, for the beasts also hunt and kill us. Moreover, they do so with weapons supplied by nature (claws, teeth, and so on), whereas we need to have recourse to nets, hounds and man-made weapons. Clearly, then, nature intended the beasts to hunt us, made us for the beasts, and not the other way around. Origen's reply is that humans have the weapon of intelligence to use on the beasts, so that although we are

physically weaker than many animals, our cunning may get the better of them. Who is a gift for whom presumably depends, then, quite simply on the pragmatic criterion of who manages to capture and who is captured. But our reaction to this level of argument will probably be that it gives us a far from adequate basis for morality. Are rights, duties and moral obligations all to be decided by an appeal to our physical and intellectual capabilities? May, then, the intelligent hunt and kill the dull-witted (who are, on this view, 'gifts' to the intellectuals)? No amount of adding up 'facts' about ourselves or about the world can ultimately tell us what it is that is morally right, and there is certainly no good reason to suggest that we should do all that is merely possible for us to do.

There tends, then, to be an appeal to revelation to justify the idea that animals have been given to us for food. It is therefore worth considering briefly whether there is, in fact, unambiguous biblical support for such a position. We shall find that there is not.

It is not to the complex food laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy that Christians normally refer, but to the creation narratives in Genesis. Here it is stated quite explicitly that God has given humans dominion over the animals - and so it obviously follows that humans may eat them. What else could dominion be for? Without spending time considering

the probable meaning of 'dominion' in this passage (suffice it to say that to 'have dominion' is not equivalent to 'use freely' or 'use as you wish' (MOULE pp.5f; WESTERMANN pp.45ff)), we may note that in the creation story in Genesis Ch.1 man's dominion does not include the right to eat animals. Adam, monarch though he was, could not make bold with a lark or a rabbit to satisfy his hunger (LOCKE I,39). This is made quite clear when in chapter 9 the prohibition is removed. But the fact that the prohibition is taken away does not mean that there is, after all, an unproblematic support from scripture for the habit of flesh-eating. It is best to say that it is allowed but not enjoined, as Philo recognised (Quaestiones in Genesin II,58).

"Although it (the Old Testament) recognises man's preying on nature as a fact, it characterises that fact as a mark of man's decline from the first perfect intentions of God for him" (J.A.BAKER p.96).

Moreover, as we shall be considering later, it is not always right to perform all that is merely allowed -other considerations enter in apart from our rights.

Everything Belongs To God

If I give a gift to someone I relinquish ownership of the object that I give. In the theistic context, however, it is obvious that I already belong to God, so that if He then gives me a gift it does not follow that the object He gives is not still (and primarily) His. All that exists belongs to God, whoever else may be the secondary owner (compare the claim in

the Prologue to John's gospel that the Logos has possessed all things from the beginning (BULTMANN p.56)). In this sense it is better to say that the world is 'leased' to us rather than 'given' to us. We are ourselves the gods' possessions, and for that reason have no right to dispose of ourselves as we wish (Plato: Phaedo 61). But then neither may we dispose of anything else as we would wish, without reference to God, for all things are His possessions. This deserves spelling out a little.

All things belong to God because He is their Creator, ex nihilo. Just as we might say that 'The Church Of Auvers' belonged to van Gogh because he painted it, so the totality of things belongs to God since He is their Creator (i.e. 'The Church of Auvers' cannot be said to have belonged to van Gogh in absolute terms, but only as a secondary ownership). We can clarify this further by looking at a notion of causality which has been popular with the Christian tradition. The mediaevals understood rational causality to be characterised by the presence, in the mind of the one who acts, of a certain preconceived idea of the act to be accomplished (GILSON). Our actions, or the product of our actions, must of necessity be first of all in us before they can be in themselves what they will be once we have produced them. In other words, our effects, before existing in themselves as effects, exist in us as causes (cf Plato: Philebus 27a). But we are causes only

derivatively, by way of God, who is the First Cause. All things are His effects, and all things exist first in Him as Cause before they exist in themselves as effects. Man cannot elevate himself into a position of absolute ownership because he, too, is an effect and owes his being to God.

Nothing is man's absolutely. It is always and everywhere the case that God has sovereign dominion over things, so that creation is only for human use under the commandments laid down by the Creator (thus Aquinas: MONAHAN II,379f). The Judaeo-Christian tradition has always been emphatic on this point at least, that the earth is the LORD's, not man's (cf Psalm 24). This belief found concrete expression in the Law of Jubilee: "No land shall be sold outright, because the land is mine" (Lev.25:23). The earth, moreover, has value in itself:

"the land is not only gift from God, transcendent Promiser. It is also land in history, land not usurped or simply mastered, but a land with its own history. Therefore his people does not own the land but also belongs to the land. In that way, we are warned against presuming on it, upon controlling it in scientific and rational ways, so that its claim, indeed its own voice, is not heard, or is disregarded" (BRUEGEMANN p.192; cf Job 31:38).

At the same time, though, whilst it has to be stressed that all belongs to God, the picture of God as the Giver is not a false one. The God revealed in the Christian tradition is supremely a God who gives (Jas.1:17), and it is said that all who call upon Him for His gifts can do so with the utmost

confidence (Matt.7:7,11). Again, the self-giving of God has always been held to be the central point of the Christian mystery: the LORD gives Himself for the redemption of the world. TRAHERNE (I,17) actually identifies the knowledge of God with the realisation of the world as given: to know God "is to see the King of Heaven and Earth take infinite delight in Giving".

Interestingly though, when the gift metaphor has been used in the Christian tradition to describe the relation between man and the world, it has often been with the express purpose of discouraging possessiveness. The reiterated insistence that one's vision of the world is not correct until "you see all things in it so perfectly yours, that you cannot desire them any other way" (TRAHERNE I,38) is partly an attempt to prevent a miserly and grasping attitude towards the world, not to licence one. Like St. Francis (see DOYLE), Traherne was so convinced of God's watchful providence that he did not need to stress any 'right' to ownership in order to enjoy. The pages of 'Centuries' are filled with tirades against those who have to take from others because they cannot see that the world is already full of gifts for them. Indeed, he felt that too much stress upon actual ownership could inhibit a clear vision of the world as a gift, for it can mean closing oneself off from the world, so that others are seen as antithetical to one's interests rather than joined to them (cf

BRENKERT).

"It is enough for you to say, 'I have this watch, it is mine', and close your hand on it, to be in possession of a watch and to have lost a hand" (BLOOM p.15).

How can we decide whether or not some actual object is a gift for us from God? And does the fact that something is a gift imply that we then own it, even if only derivatively? The discussion of these points will revolve around two main areas. In the first, I shall look at the question of gratitude: understanding when it would be appropriate to thank for something can lead us to see when something is, in fact, a gift for us. When thanking seems inappropriate it is likely that a gift has not been offered. In the second, I shall look at the variety of ways in which things may be seen as gifts, and at the idea that different 'conditions for use' are attached to the gifts with which God presents us.

Gratitude

We may come to a clearer understanding of the nature of the gift relationship, then, if we focus on the appropriate response to gifts: gratitude. By coming to see when gratitude is, or is not, the sort of response to a given situation which seems right, we may also be able to see exactly when it is that a gift is being offered to us. There are cases when an expression of gratitude is obviously the right response, just as there are cases when it is more suspect. Let us look at a

simple example of both cases.

(1) There are two children, Alice and Bertram. Alice has a bag of sweets and gives one to Bertram. In response Bertram thanks Alice.

(2) Alice has a bag of sweets, as before. But she has no particular intention of offering one to Bertram. However, Masie (Alice's mother) tells her that she must share her sweets - so Alice does. In response Bertram thanks Alice.

In the first case, where Alice makes a free choice (it is assumed) to give Bertram a sweet the response of gratitude is unproblematic. But that Bertram ought to thank Alice in the second case is less obvious. If we assume that Bertram was ignorant of the fact that Alice had been coerced then it is not surprising that he thanked her. We can say that from Bertram's point of view gratitude was an entirely appropriate response, as much so as in case (1). However, from an outsider's viewpoint, where it is known that Masie had forced Alice to give him one, the response seems a little incongruous.

Gratitude for a gift, then, normally implies that the giver was free to withhold the gift if he or she had so chosen. If a gift is received from a creature who is, temporarily (like Alice) or permanently, not a free agent, then it would appear that gratitude should be extended rather to the 'nearest' free agent in the causal chain. Again, if Bertram took the sweet from Alice without her consent (or with her active opposition) it would not then be appropriate for him to thank her for the 'gift'. It would not be a gift: he would

have stolen it. If, however, Bertram took a sweet and Alice then said, 'Yes, you may have one', an expression of gratitude would again be appropriate: the one who is technically the giver need not necessarily be the one who initiates the giving, although it would seem that there must be (at least) free consent on the part of the giver. So HOBBS (I,15) is surely correct to write of gratitude,

"As Justice dependeth on Antecedent Covenant; so does GRATITUDE depend on Antecedent Grace, that is to say, Antecedent Free-gift".

It does not make sense to speak of gratitude towards a being who cannot make free choices, who cannot choose whether to give or whether to retain. Gratitude is inappropriate in cases where a creature benefits us unwittingly, since the proper object of gratitude is benevolence rather than beneficence. It is a response to a grant of benefits (or the attempt to benefit us) which was motivated by a desire to help us (BERGER p.299). Clearly, given such an account, there can be no question of our being grateful to animals themselves for 'giving' their lives to us: they are normally assumed to be incapable of genuine free choice; but even if they do have a limited capacity for this there is no evidence that they desire to give themselves to us as food.

Perhaps, though, it was never presumed that we owed gratitude towards the beasts. Rather, our thanks are directed towards the Creator who has so liberally supplied the earth to

cater for our needs and pleasures. Let us look, then, at another case: that of a sheep being sheared and my receiving the wool. The sheep has not given the wool freely, and so it does not make sense for me to thank her. But this does not mean that gratitude is not owed at all. The point is only that it is not towards the sheep that it should be expressed. Gratitude in this situation is owed the shepherd (or the most appropriate free agent): it is he who gives me the sheep's wool.

It is clearly simplistic, however, to say that gratitude is always appropriate towards any free agent who benefits us and who acts with the best of intentions. It may be that it is not right to express thanks for something because the giver, however well-intentioned, has no right to give the gift. A neighbour may proudly present me with his fatted grandson for my birthday celebrations: am I to be grateful to him for this gift? The presupposition for gratitude in this case would have to be that he had the right to decide that the child should die to provide my party guests with a meal. If the offer is made at all some sort of gratitude will probably seem right, even if I decide not to accept the gift. But if I do not think that my neighbour has the right to decide the fate of his grandson in this way, then although I may express my thanks to him for the benevolent intention I cannot be grateful for the child. If I say that I am grateful for the

boy then I must have already decided that he has the right to give him to me. If he does not have that right then I must reject the gift since it was not within his rights to offer him to me in the first place (just as I should not accept stolen goods, however kindly the thief meant the gift). If we replace 'fatted grandson' with 'fatted calf' the point remains the same: I cannot be grateful for a gift until it is established that the right was there to give it to me.

Surely, though, if the 'neighbour' in this instance is God the issue is easily resolved. God must have the right to give me the calf since He created both of us. So BRODY (pp.151ff) argues (as does AUGUSTINE(1) I,25) that if God owns everything it is possible that He has decided to give the animals to man for food. As the Creator, He is entitled to do this, and a divine command to this effect will undermine any purely moral argument that a sympathiser for the vegetarian cause might put forward. Brody is right, of course, although it is equally possible that God might decide to give me my neighbour's grandson for food: He created us both and has the right to do that as well. But this kind of argument surely misses the point, which is that it is not a case of what God has the right to do (if such an idea makes sense at all), but about what it is that might cause us to think that some or other creature is a gift from God. As we have already seen, there is nothing in revelation about God commanding humans to

eat animals, or even suggesting that this is what He wants. At the very most the practice is allowed. Again, He created our capacity for moral intuition, so in the end it is a fair presumption that He will not command something which is out of keeping with what we can understand to be right through our own lights: how could we recognise such a command as being from Him if it were not in keeping with our own understanding of goodness? It seems, then, that it cannot be simply asserted that animals are gifts from God to humans in an attempt to short-cut one's way through the normal discussion of the moral issues involved in deciding how animals ought to be treated.

One last point about gratitude. An important element in it, rightly understood, is the felt need to make some sort of return for the gifts:

"pleasure at being favoured, however undiluted, does not amount to gratefulness in the absence of any desire to make a return. It would be irony to describe as grateful for his find the miser who gloats selfishly over the gold sovereigns he has chanced to discover" (A.D.M.WALKER p.49).

The truly grateful person is marked out by his desire to make some sort of response, most typically to favour another since he has been favoured himself. Both LEVI-STRAUSS and MAUSS have pointed out the importance of reciprocal gifts in ancient societies. Exchange was more often in these terms than in straightforward economic transactions. "Reciprocity demands adequacy of response" (POLANYI p.89), though not always an

equality of response. Moreover, it is not always necessary to favour the exact one who benefited oneself - gift relationships need not be so tidily reciprocal.

RICHARDS (pp.20ff) sees the working out of gratitude primarily in terms of the external obligations of justice: one must act in certain ways in order to repay the person to whom one is grateful. Moreover, he understands it as a type of reciprocal action which is useful for encouraging mutual aid and further acts of beneficence between people. But one might well object to this: an important part of sincere gratitude surely involves not using the one to whom I am grateful as a mere means to the furthering of my own interests. In any case, such a view cannot be applied to the relationship between God and His creatures, for we cannot ever really give God anything, since all that we have and all that we are is already His (cf Ps.50:12). Again, as regards the Divine-human relationship we are not grateful with the aim of encouraging further acts of beneficence from God: He is always willing to give (Matt.7:11).

However, this does not mean that no return at all can be made. If God gives us gifts then even if we cannot give Him anything in return we can nonetheless give to His creatures. As we have already noted it is not always necessary for gift relationships to be neatly reciprocal. So Abba Zeno said, "when someone brings me something I will accept it and I will

give it to anybody who asks me for something" (WARD(1) p.56). We can use such gifts of God as we have to fulfil our place in the network of obligations in the world. We shall be looking in more detail at this point later.

Gifts and Conditions

Perhaps the question we ought to be asking is not whether something is a gift to us from God, for which we should be grateful, but what sort of gift something is. This is because from a theistic point of view everything which touches our lives is ultimately given us by God, is a gift - the air we breathe, the ground on which we walk, animals, food, friends and family, all are gifts. We ought to say Grace over more than just our meals, as Chesterton knew (M.WARD p.59). There are numerous ways in which different parts of creation might be considered to be gifts to us.

"All of God's creation gives great delight to anyone looking upon it, for in some things there is beauty, as in flowers; in others healing, as in herbs; in others food, as in produce; in others meaning, as in snakes" (Honorius of Autun, quoted in CHENU p.8).

Not all of God's creation is for physical consumption: we do not eat sunsets. It is not necessary that all gifts should have utility value for humans. Francis, recognising this, commanded the brother who looked after the garden to grow not only edible herbs but also flowers, because these also give glory to God by their beauty (Mirror of Perfection 118; see also WALLICE-HADRILL p.109). Calling something a gift from God

cannot be, then, a reason for waiving all further moral discussion concerning the use of that gift. Rather, what kind of gift the creature, or object, is cannot be decided independently of our moral intuitions and general ethical framework. We can indeed begin with the idea that 'this pig has been sent to us as a gift', but not with the idea that 'this pig was sent to us for food'. The first is not analytical of the second.

Everything is a gift. But just what is intended by this appellation of 'gift' to each object will vary greatly from case to case. It is not enough simply to say that something or someone is a gift from God; further questions have to be asked, since a gift has to be understood with reference to the reason (or reasons) for which it is given, and the ends (or ends) which it is designed to serve. Both my mind and my body are gifts to me from God, but I have to ask why it was that they were given (i.e. for what reason and to what end). Just because they are gifts to me does not mean that I can feel free to use them indiscriminately or for anything at all: they should not be used for evil. In unpacking the notion of there being conditions attached to the gifts which God has given to us, it is possible to isolate three main areas where we can understand limitations to have been set on the use of the earth.

First there are physical limitations. God has given me

the gift of a body. He has created me as a physical being, one who experiences reality largely through the senses. I am a creature capable of experiencing bodily pain and pleasure and a whole host of different bodily activities are open to me. However, there are clear limits to the extent of this gift: I am capable of enjoying only so much pleasure and of enduring only so much pain. I cannot make my body invisible at will, neither can I jump fifty-foot walls. Moreover, God will only continue to give me this gift if I cooperate by respecting it in fairly fundamental ways: e.g. I must feed it regularly and must take a certain amount of sleep. There are conditions attached to the use of the gift which I must respect and observe. All material objects have some conditions attached to their use and continued existence, simply in virtue of the fact that they are finite, that they are one sort of being and not another.

Secondly, there are moral conditions. The human moral sense is a gift from God. However, for it to be preserved and developed it must be heeded. AQUINAS((2) III,II,112) opposed cruelty to animals largely on the grounds that it corrupted human sensibility and thereby encouraged cruelty to humans as well. It is a clear warning that if we overstep certain limits with respect to the gifts which God has given us we shall be in danger of dulling the voice of conscience. Our dealings with creatures, considered as gifts, are limited,

then, by this self-referential caution.

Thirdly, we are limited by the nature of the ultimate purpose of all gifts, which in theistic terms is to lead the soul to recognise and love God. My dog is a gift to me, but she is not thereby simply placed at my disposal. Since God is the End of the life of all rational creatures His gifts should point towards Him. But a despoiling of the gifts, using them without due respect, or as a means to purely human ends, leads only to ourselves and not to God, since we have thereby made ourselves the end point of our calculation as to the worth and meaning of the gifts.

"Unless therefore I could advance you higher by the uses of what I give, my Love could not be satisfied in giving you the whole world" (TRAHERNE 1,6).

This is in itself a limiting condition which attaches itself to all gifts.

For one last condition, a very strong one, we can recall what has already been said concerning the question of when gratitude is appropriate, and look at whether we should accept a gift, responding with thanks, when another is deprived by our doing this. The God who has revealed Himself in the Judaeo-Christian tradition has done so as one who demands justice and righteousness from His servants. One general pointer, then, as to whether something is a gift to me is whether my receiving it will mean that another is seriously deprived. That is, is my understanding of something as a gift

to me compatible with my knowledge of the just LORD who cares for more than just me?

Let us use an example to illustrate this point. Two philosophers, Pythagoras and Zeno, are living in adjacent caves somewhere on the Ionian coastline. Pythagoras is fairly well-off, he has a warm cave and enough to eat. Zeno, however, has run out of fuel and is close to starvation. At this point a mysterious Mr.X appears and offers Pythagoras a large sum of money. Mr.X came by the money fairly and it is his to dispose of as he will; he knows both Pythagoras and Zeno and their respective situations and decides to give the money to the former. Now Pythagoras is also aware of Zeno's rather desperate circumstances. Can he, in this position, make a simple response of gratitude to Mr.X and accept the gift? In so far as the situation relates only to Mr.X and himself the answer is simple: Yes. But the circumstances alter radically when both of them are viewed standing in relation to Zeno.

Perhaps if Pythagoras knew that if he refused the gift Mr.X would simply keep the money for himself and disappear as mysteriously as he had come, or even give it to a third philosopher living a bit further down the coastline who was already living in regal splendour compared to Pythagoras, then Pythagoras could accept the money with a clear conscience, thanking Mr.X for the gift. However, if Pythagoras knew that

if he refused the gift then Mr.X would give the money to Zeno instead, then although Zeno has no right to the money, and no right to expect Pythagoras to refuse it, except as the measure of a decent man, still we would recognise it as a good if Pythagoras did so. Even where another has no positive rights against us we still owe mercy. (Pythagoras could, of course, accept the money and give it to Zeno himself).

Let us assume a slight variation. Here Mr.X takes a sum of money from Zeno expressly to give to Pythagoras. Again, let us assume that he has the right to do this. Because of this Zeno dies of starvation. From a Christian standpoint it is again clear that even though Zeno had no right to that money, and though Mr.X had the right to give it to Pythagoras (perhaps he just likes Pythagoras more, or thinks more highly of his philosophy), still Pythagoras should not have accepted the gift since his own need was comparatively small. We would make the same judgement concerning a situation in which Mr.X expressly said that although he (Mr.X) would not take the money from Zeno himself, still Pythagoras could take it at any time and for any reason. Even if, as we have assumed, Mr.X has the right to ordain things thus, it does not follow that Pythagoras should take advantage of this offer, except perhaps in a situation of need comparable to Zeno's.

It is not necessary to labour the application of this story to human relations with animals. We may simply say that

even if God has allowed humans to view the beasts as gifts sent for their sustenance, if that use involves their death or severe deprivation (as it often must) and if our need is not compelling, then there are good reasons for supposing that we should not accept such gifts. The idea that God does offer them as gifts in such circumstances, only to have our moral sense telling us to refuse them, is thereby shown to be a strange one. It is simpler to assume that animals are not normally sent as that kind of gift.

Everything A Gift For Me

God has not just given the world to humans: far more radically, He has given everything to me ! St. John of the Cross has given classic expression to this idea that all has been given to him:

"Mine are the Heavens and mine is the earth;
mine are the people...
the righteous are mine and mine are the sinners;
the angels are mine...and the Mother of God,
and all things are mine...
and God himself is mine and for me,
for Christ is mine and all for me.
What then dost thou ask for and seek, my soul?
Thine is all this, and it is all for thee" (Prayer
of an Enamoured Soul).

Where it is so roundly asserted that all, without exception, is given, it is easy to see that the fact that something, or someone, is a gift from God does not imply that the gift is ours to use as we will. The "righteous" may be mine in some obscure way, but that does not mean that I may use any saints I happen to come across in medical experiments. As we have

seen, all of God's gifts are conditional partly in that they are given into a network of needs and obligations of which we, the recipients, are bound to take account. I may not use the non-human world for my own purposes without taking such needs and duties into consideration, just as I cannot use other humans without reference to social obligations I may have. Both human and non-human are equally gifts to me - "Adam and the World are both mine...God only being the Giver and I the Receiver" (TRAHERNE I,15) - but not all uses of these gifts are virtuous ones.

A possible problem ought to be noted here: if we insist on saying that everything is a gift from God are we not in the same position as we might be if we had not made the point at all? What is the difference between saying that everything is a gift and saying that everything is, for example, 'free', or 'pink' - or indeed, anything? We can understand what it is for something to be pink because there are objects which are other colours, things which are not pink. We use the word 'pink' to differentiate some objects from others. But what would it mean to say that everything is pink? Would we really be saying anything either very clear or very useful? Why say it at all?

One answer would be to point out that some things are not, after all, gifts from God. It is difficult to see how greed, boredom or bad temper could be seen as gifts. All that

has being and goodness is from God, but He does not send evil. In so far as all evil is parasitical on goodness the gifts of God allow the possibility of evil, of non-gifts, but they are not given directly from God, but are corruptions of what has been given.

"No one under trial or temptation should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God is untouched by evil, and does not himself tempt anyone. Temptation arises when a man is enticed and lured away by his own evil desire" (Jas.1:13f).

A second answer would be to say that to call all things gifts (except evil) is to specify what is an appropriate response to reality as a whole. The basic response to life is to be one of gratitude. The action of God lies behind all of the world's events and the over-arching description of all that exists as 'gift' encourages an attitude of trust and submission to the will of God as He is revealed in His creation (it is this kind of thinking which provides the foundation for Caussade's 'Self-abandonment to Divine Providence'; cf 1 Thess.5:18). It also acts as a reminder that we are not self-generated and not self-contained, either physically, emotionally, intellectually or spiritually. We receive reality, and do not ourselves decide upon its ultimate content. Life and its meaning are not at our disposal to organise and dispense with as we please. It does not belong to us. More positively, it leads to a respect for life -

"Can you then be righteous, unless you be just in rendering to things their due esteem? All things

were made to be yours, and you were made to prize them according to their value: which is your office and duty, the end for which you were created" (TRAHERNE I,12).

It is not primarily through acquisition and ownership that one comes most to appreciate the world as a gift, but through enjoyment of its worth (cf BERKELEY VII,195). All things are ours in the only sense that they are worth having: that we may recognise and enjoy their value.

God's Giving And Human Giving

To say that the world is a gift to me from God is to take a metaphor from the sphere of human transactions, partly perhaps from that of gift trade which was for millenia the way that trade between cultures was carried on (DALTON). But the idea of the world as God's gift is not one that can be drawn straightforwardly from the human experience of giving and receiving gifts. For one thing, if I give something to a friend it is then normally understood that my friend is the new owner of that object: I have relinquished ownership of the article by giving it as a gift (when we speak of 'gift trade', by the way, we do not mean to imply that the gifts were 'free' in the way that they normally are now: reciprocity in some form or other was the rule (see THURNWALD)). As we have noted, however, all things remain God's whoever else may be the secondary owner. Again, when I give a gift it not only leaves my ownership, but I also lose control over it. But God is continuously sustaining the universe in being, and if He

were not upholding it all things would pass into non-existence. Nothing can ultimately be out of God's control. At the same time, He has also created beings with a degree of freedom, so that His gifts can fall under the control of creatures as well. As with the question of ownership, though, this control is dependent upon the primary action of God: God controls my freedom to choose not to be controlled by Him.

Creation is an act of God's generosity. It might be thought that there is a problem here: on the one hand, since God is the perfect Good what gift could He give Himself, since nothing can be added to Him? On the other hand, since the creature is nothing, what could He give to it? The end for which God has made all things must be Himself, for to suppose that He could find an end outside of Himself would be to limit His actuality. All things - stones, plants, animals, humans, angels - find their end in Him alone. Creatures are different from this: contingent beings always strive to realise themselves, always try to acquire more being. God, who is fully realised, can act only to give. Thus, He gives by creating beings who may share in Himself as the supreme Good.

So far we have been looking at the question of how far humans (or I in particular) have the right to take and use the gifts of the earth. We have tended to assume that only humans could properly be thought to be those for whom God's

gifts were intended. But the idea that the universe is a gift for humans alone (for which there is little support in revelation) should probably be abandoned in favour of a wider view as to who are the recipients of the Divine generosity. The picture of the Lord of creation which Jesus gives is of one who makes clothes for the flowers and prepares meals for the sparrows: the LORD is revealed as the servant of all (MANSON(1) P.163). Again, within this broad perspective there are many possible ways in which the universe might be seen in terms of gifts: perhaps the inanimate world is a gift to the animate; perhaps there are complex hierarchies of gifts; or maybe there are no clear boundaries and one must rest content with saying that all forms and types of existence have something to "give" to other parts of the creation. "God gave me alone to all the World, and all the World to me alone" (TRAHERNE I,15). God does not give only to man: life itself is the supreme gift and both man and beast share in the "nephesh" of God (EICHRODT II,131ff). The Franciscan vision, which has its biblical precedents (e.g. Ex.23:11, Lev.25:4ff), is one in which

"The birds are not looked on as merely provided for human use or even delectation. The earth with its resources and beauties, the mountains, valleys and trees, is assumed to be for their use and pleasure as well as for ours; and they, as our sisters, are regarded as kin to us, members of God's family, sharing the world's riches" (ARMSTRONG p.60).

It might be argued that this is nonsense in theological terms. "Sympathy with the pains of animals...is not a virtue that can reasonably be ascribed to the Divine Nature" (GEACH p.80). And if He cannot be expected to sympathise with animal suffering, neither can He have any concept of the beasts' needs and desires. Thus, there is no reason to suppose that He will lavish gifts to meet such needs. Geach's argument, though, is surely a strange one, as has been pointed out by PATERSON, who argues in reply that even if God cannot 'sympathise with' animal pain, if 'sympathise' suggests actual participation in the feelings of another, He can still have 'pity for' animal pain i.e. He can be faced with the knowledge that some of His creatures are undergoing suffering. To deny this would be to deny that God is omniscient. Indeed, if God does not know animal pain then there is a great deal else that He does not know, since animals perform many actions with the intention of avoiding pain. There is a whole set of actions x which are performed for the reason y (the avoidance of pain). God, on Geach's theory, can know that x takes place, but He cannot know y, the reason why they took place. The meaning of many actions is therefore unknowable for God. Again, is it physical pain of which God is being said to have no knowledge (physical pain being the supposed limits of animal pain)? Presumably this would be because God has no body and therefore no experience of bodily pain. If this is the case then God

can also have no knowledge of human physical pain either. Humans, like animals, perform many actions with the intention of avoiding bodily pain, and so the reasons for these actions must, as with animal actions to avoid pain, remain unknown to God. As regards mental pains, unless one takes seriously the idea that animals entirely lack consciousness, that even the most rudimentary levels of experience are not available to them, it must presumably be accepted that God will be aware of such mental pains as they have (e.g. frustration, loneliness, boredom), even if He cannot know any physical sensations which accompany such states. To deny this would be to say that not only can God not know material creation, He cannot know mind either. Little sense then would be able to be made of any doctrine of omniscience!

But even if we suppose Geach to be right, his point is that although God cannot be expected to have any sympathy with His animal creation, still we can since we share their nature, and it is therefore a virtue for us to do so. We can sympathise, and since God has so liberally supplied us with gifts perhaps we will feel called upon to imitate the Divine, act out the image of divinity within, and be equally generous in our sharing of the world's gifts. Even if all is rightly ours, why should we not assign goods to those who cannot lay any claim to them themselves? If God is liberal with His gifts, may we not be with ours? Indeed, if we are the only

immortals, and so expect and seek a life beyond this one, we will share all the more: whilst we seek a lasting city beyond this one, this is the only one the beasts will have (cf Heb.10:34). On the other hand, if we are not sole heirs to the promise of immortality let us share with them now as equal friends of God, building the earthly city as the reflection of, and preparation for, the heavenly.

The property of absolute generosity belongs to God alone. Man cannot be all generosity because he is not all being, because before giving of what he has he has to take of what he is not. All creatures receive their being from God as pure gift and they must take from Him before they can give to others. Or: all living beings are able to decrease their internal entropy only at the expense of substances or free energy taken in from the environment and subsequently rejected in a degraded form. God is that Energy which is all-sufficient, which has no need to consume from any source external to Itself. But it would be merely cynical to say that the only thing man is capable of giving to those around him is entropy. Avid consumer that he is he can also be generous with what he is because he is also good and therefore able to imitate the divine. The mark of this goodness, as Plato said, is that it is free from jealousy, and does not try to restrict all being to itself, but gives existence to others (Timaeus 29e). Our way of giving is perhaps to give existence

by leaving other creatures alone. Love is often described in terms of union and of a positive giving, but such an idea may easily be distorted in reality, so that union becomes absorption. MACQUARRIE's (pp.348ff) description of divine love as a 'letting-be' is therefore to be welcomed. This is not to imply a remoteness from His creatures, but only that He allows them 'space' to develop and to realise their potentialities. We can imitate this by giving up the desire to restructure the earth around ourselves, to orientate all creatures to our own existence. We give freedom as the greatest gift.

Chapter X

INCARNATION AND HUMAN CENTRALITY

If it is possible to understand humans and animals as participating in a single Earth Community, what is the overall relationship between them? Is it necessary, in theological terms, that humans be understood as occupying the central position in such a community, as the principle mediators of divine grace and the ones through whom animals must relate to God? If this is the case, then man is the key to unlock the secrets of the world: "To neglect man and speculate about nature is to misunderstand the facts of the universe" (Hsun Ching, in NEEDHAM II,28). Human nature is a microcosm of the universe, and it is to the workings of human society that one must turn in order to comprehend the natural world. Only in the context of man can animals be understood and their place in the scheme of things elucidated.

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition the Chosen community has often been seen as a microcosm of the universe. In the major Old Testament traditions, the creation accounts do not stand in isolation from the historical progress of the People of God. Some would argue that the creation narratives are best read as attempts to establish the tribal God, Yahweh, as the universal God, the One who governs all nations and the whole course of events (e.g. VON RAD(1); ANDERSON(1) pp.40ff).

Where nature plays a role it is in the context of bearing witness, and responding to, God's care for the Israelite community. So, one often finds that what appears to be a statement about the natural world per se turns out to be an oblique remark about the Chosen race, or about mankind in general. Thus, for instance, the phrase, "the Spirit of the LORD fills the whole earth" (Wis.1:7), which appears at first to be asserting as its main point the immanence of God in creation, is leading to the warning, "and that which holds all things together is well aware of what men say". A doctrine of God's omnipresence is certainly implied in this short passage, but the idea is closely tied to a concern about human behaviour and the pursuit of righteousness. If what we have found in this instance is typical of the biblical approach then we shall have to say that there is no doctrine of creation which can be had apart from an explication of man's creation and purpose.

This is not to say that animals, or the natural world, are in any sense ignored. But they are not understood in their own right, apart from the place which humans have in the Divine plan. Hope is held out for the redemption of animals (indeed, for the whole earth), but the central point of this hope is always to be located in man - or, better, in the human community. The centrality of Zion in messianic thought is parallel to that of Eden in the primeval paradise: both are

pictured as being placed on the mountain at the centre of the world. In Gen.2:10ff we can find hints of a tradition which conceived of Eden as the source of the four rivers encircling the earth, and Ezekiel is probably drawing on this tradition when he describes Eden as a "holy mountain of God"(28:13f). It is in the light of such passages as these that the prophetic description of Zion as the mountain at the world's centre receives its full significance (CHILDS pp.88ff). Zion has become Eden. This idea of the chosen community being the central point of the world is also found in the New Testament, most specifically in the book of Revelation (Ch.21). Passages about the new Jerusalem may well be alluding to a belief held in pre-Christian Judaism that the 'real' Jerusalem is being kept in heaven and will form the centre-piece of the redeemed world (cf The Apocalypse of Baruch; Is.54:11f). Again, in the Pauline epistles it is said that it is in the body of Christ that all things are held together, and in which they find their unity (Eph.1:10; Col.1:19f); certainly the Church and the universe are closely linked in Paul's thought, the former being "the centre, the midpoint from which Christ exercises his invisible lordship over the whole world" (CULLMAN(1) p.229). The human community, and more particularly the community of believers, is the 'meeting-point' between God and the world, and is seen to be in a pivotal position as regards the redemption of the earth. Only with reference to humans

can animals find their full significance, and only in relation to the chosen community can they enter into the sphere of Christ.

How is the connection between humans and animals to be understood, both in theological and in practical terms? It has been said that the universe is not only "closely related to man" but also that it will "attain its destiny through him" (PLANNERY p.407). One of the questions which could be asked is whether this "through him" is meant to point to some metaphysical necessity concerning human existence, so that without him the world would be radically incomplete and unable to reach the fulness for which it has been destined; or whether it is to be understood in a more literal way, so that ways need to be found of uniting the beasts more closely to humans, bringing them more into contact with man, so that in this way they may be "perfectly reestablished in Christ" (PLANNERY p.497, after 2 Pet.3:10ff, Eph.1:10, Col.1:20). Maximus the Confessor lists five polarities which are to be overcome by man: God and creation, the intelligible and the sensible, heaven and earth, paradise and the world, and man and woman. Only the God-man Jesus was, in the first instance, able to unite all of these in Himself, but when the believer is united to Him he is also joined to this point of universal reconciliation and it is his task to make that unity present in the world (THUNBERG).

In the chapter on 'community' we looked briefly at a model of the world seen as a series of concentric circles, and at the time found it to be inadequate for our purposes. But perhaps, after all, it is the most helpful one for understanding the relation between humans and the natural world. Christ would be the central point of the community, the axis about whom all else turns. Beyond this is the Church, His body, being that which is most closely united to Christ. The Church is the centre-piece of humanity as a whole, which is the next circle. And all humans, without exception, bear the image of God and so it is to them that the animals and the rest of creation must relate. These latter, then, form the outermost circle. Christ is the Saviour, of course, and those who would reach Him must do so by way of relating to those in the circle nearer to Christ than the one they are in, or by moving into that circle themselves. Thus, humans must stand in a positive relation to the Church, and animals must stand in the same relation to humans. Or it might be thought that animals had to be, in some way, in direct relation to the Church, which is the "cosmos of the cosmos, because Christ has become its cosmos" (Origen: Commentary on the Gospel of John:6,59,309). But there would seem to be no possibility of animals actually 'entering' a circle closer to Christ - quite obviously, they cannot become humans, and it is difficult to understand how they could become members of the Church.

Humans are in a different position as regards this, then, for they can become part of the Church. Animals, it would appear, must always stand in an indirect relation to Christ and the sphere of grace, with man acting as mediator. So although the beasts cannot actually become humans, they must be in some sort of contact with them. In terms of the Earth Community, then, the place of humans is a central one and it becomes a matter of importance whether or not animals are able to relate successfully within such a community.

"The error we must avoid is that of considering them (i.e. animals) in themselves. Man is to be understood only in his relation to God. The beasts are to be understood only in their relation to man and, through man, to God" (LEWIS(4) p.126).

The corollary of this view, which Lewis does not hesitate to draw, is that it is the tamed animals who are the 'natural' ones - the wild beasts (that is, those still unrelated to man and not obviously under his dominion) are 'unnatural'. To be redeemed the beast must come into the sphere of the human (see also LOSSKY(1) p.178). Again,

"It is not we who are related to God through nature, but nature that is related to God through us...Nature is freed for our use" (PARICY p.5).

This approach, though, can tend towards a denial of the sacramental nature of the world, of the idea (deeply embedded in Christian tradition) that God relates to man through the things of the world. It need not be denied that nature can relate to God 'through' humans, since if He is immanent in all

things He is immanent in man as well. But it is surely a reciprocal relation and not something moving only in one direction, precisely because God is immanent in more than just man. In all the sacraments of the Church material things are taken and used as points of meeting between God and the human community. More widely, the concept of the Word taking flesh, as expounded in the gospel of John, does not just mean the taking on of a single human body, but means that in His whole method of dealing with humans the Son of God will "act as Son of Man and work through the things of the flesh" (R.E. BROWN p.98). Christianity is a sacramental religion, and God is believed to approach His creatures through the things of the world.

Surely, though, the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Word as a human points unequivocally to the centrality of humans in the plan of salvation? The fact that

"God has himself become man in the incarnation has sealed human nature with a certificate of value whose validity can never be questioned" (MASCALL p.22; cf WOJTYLA p.102).

Whether the Incarnation shows the supreme value of man as against the rest of creation might well be doubted. It could fairly be held to suggest just the opposite: not some particular excellence or merit in humanity, but a peculiar depravity entailing the necessity for redemption. The Word became incarnate to redeem sinners, to make them valuable, not because they were so initially (LEWIS(3) pp.88f); or, the

Word took flesh in a "mere man" rather in some "other and nobler" parts of creation, such as the sun, moon or stars, because He came precisely to teach and to heal humans, and to heal rather than dazzle them: the manifestation had to be "according as they could bear it" (ATHANASIUS(1) Sect.43). There is no need, then, to interpret the Incarnation as pointing to the overwhelming value of humans.

However, does it not still set man apart (worthy of this distinction or not), making him the gateway to God for the whole created order? Is it not a unique event setting man apart from the rest of creation and elevating him above it? This approach presumes that God's "normal" way of relating to creation and His relating to it through the Incarnation are radically different. The Church has indeed always felt the necessity of safeguarding the uniqueness of Christ. Some kind of distinction has to be made between the activity of the Word who is present and active in all of creation and this same Word present in the man Jesus. On the one hand, we can agree that in order to express the full significance of Christ the New Testament writers felt obliged to ransack the religious language of their day in order to come to terms with what they felt had happened. At the same time, though, part of this process involved relating Christ to the whole of the created order so that everything was thereafter seen as bearing His image. An appreciation of the newness of the "Christ-event"

involved seeing that He also revealed what the world itself was, and always had been, really about (Jn.1:1ff). ATHANASIUS

((1) sect.8) expresses the paradox thus:

"the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him, Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us".

One common way in which some of the fathers of the early Church tried to define the distinction was through the use of Logos terminology. The idea of the "logoi" which underlie creation, and which are related to the one Logos, can be traced back to early Christianity, and is in turn based (probably) on the Stoic idea of the "logos spermatikos" combined with Christian Logos speculation. Origen was the first prominent Christian thinker to have presented a noticeable theology of the logoi of creation. He regarded them, in a fairly Platonic way, as ideas present in Christ (understood as Wisdom) so that together they form the intelligible world, the archetype of the world of the senses and represent the original goodness of things (De Principiis I,2,2). Athanasius, as we have seen, related the presence of the Word in Christ to its presence in the rest of creation. He speculated that God, realising that a creation differentiated according to its individual logoi, would be a divided world, created the world in accordance with His own

Logos. And it is because we, as rational beings, are possessed of the Logos that we can know the logoi of things. After all, it is possible that there could have been a chaotic world where the various sense impressions we receive from different objects might either be missing or not correlate at all, so that we might see a car coming but hear nothing and feel nothing if we put a hand out to touch it. Or we might hear the sound of a car and smell the exhaust fumes but see nothing on the road, or else see the car approaching from a different direction than we had anticipated. That our experience of the world is not like this and that our senses give us a unified view of the world is something which Athanasius could explain by this inherence of the logoi of things in the one Logos.

The most systematic treatment of this theme can be found in the writings of Maximus the Confessor (THUNBERG pp.76ff). He held that the differentiated logoi pre-exist in God, and that they are therefore, in some sense, to be called 'divine'. They are the basis for the nature of created things - which is not to say that any given individual is immutably 'fixed' in its logoi, for it is possible to be either in or out of harmony with one's own nature. These logoi are seated like birds on the great Logos tree, and he held that the presence of the Logos in them may be understood as a primary incarnation.

In all of this language there is a certain tension, and

answering the question as to whether animals need to be related to God 'through' the mediation of man (because of the Incarnation of Christ as a man), or whether they are already joined to God 'sufficiently', by way of the Word immanent in their logoi, would appear to depend ultimately upon which side of the paradox one chose to stress the most. Is one to stress the continuity of the Incarnation with the presence of the Word in the world, or the discontinuity between them?

The Discontinuity Option

Let us examine the second option, which asserts that it is only through contact with humans, or the Church, that animals may be said to come fully into contact with God. Certainly all things already stand in some relation to Him, merely by dint of being created, but we argued in an earlier chapter that we should probably understand the non-human, as well as the human, world as being fallen in some way. In that case, although animals are in relation to God it may not be the 'right' relation - they may not be in harmony with their logoi. Christ, it is believed, has opened the way for humans to return to their proper relation with God, and they are normally understood to do so (at least in the Catholic tradition) by inclusion into the Church, where they are called upon to lead the life of faith, hope and charity. Do animals, in some sense, have to join the Church? It is rarely supposed possible that a donkey could entertain faith in God, exercise

hope as a theological virtue, or acknowledge the one, true Church: how could an animal become part of the Christian community? Although, as we have noted, material reality is seen by the Church as mediating God's presence, its use in the sacramental rituals of the community does not include animals. The sacraments make use of water, oil, bread, and so on, but not pigs and elephants. Animals cannot be thought to be in contact with the Church in that way. Perhaps, though, one could think of their being connected with the community through its members. If we held that what was important was to be in contact with a Christian then we could make a distinction between a dog living in a Christian household and one living in a secular one: the former has come within the sphere of grace, whereas the latter has not. If we held that what was important was to be in contact with a human, then the distinction would be between a dog living with humans and one running wild outside of human control. Accepting that it is human, rather than Christian, contact which is necessary for the beasts (because all humans still bear the image of God, however marred?) widens the scope and the number of animals who can be 'saved', but many will still be outside of this sphere. Perhaps those beasts who lived before the advent of humanity and those who have not been touched by human civilisation will be thought to be, by analogy with those humans who have never heard Christ proclaimed, in a position

of 'invincible ignorance', and not responsible for their lack. Still, there is something odd about taking this approach seriously: was Scott going to the Antarctic to redeem it? (Similar questions can be raised, in an even more acute form, if it is held that the beasts must have contact with Christians).

There is a further set of problems when we begin to try to specify what could be meant by 'contact' with a human (or a Christian). The records we have of man's past record of 'contact' with animals and the natural world hardly encourage one to think that it could be regarded as salvific. Unless 'being brought into the sphere of grace' means, for animals, 'being made available for human use', and bears no relation to their own health or pleasure, one would have to admit that having contact with humans (or the Church) is not synonymous with relating to God. It is not simply any kind of contact with man that can count as relating the beasts to God: a dog is not automatically sanctified when it is beaten. As a sinful act (cruelty is a sin) it is not a sanctifying one, and so grace cannot be imparted to the animal in question. Some human actions, then, will relate an animal to the Word, but not all will communicate salvation in this way. Again, do we mean by 'contact' a few minutes attention given by a child to a stray cat, or a lifetime of care? Is a patch of ground, with its manifold life-forms, relating to God when a man walks

through it, or when it is owned by one who remembers the Eden injunction to care for it and till it? Further, what of the many animal populations which exist in independence of overt human care: is it necessary that we involve ourselves (however benevolently) in the welfare of such creatures? It is hardly conceivable that their lives be made much better by such interference, and yet if this principle were adopted that the wild beasts must come into contact with humans for reasons of redemption, then we would seem duty bound to meddle.

The Continuity Option

Problems such as these may encourage us to explore the other side of the christological paradox: that of stressing the continuity of the Word incarnate in Jesus with the Word immanent in all of creation. Christ would then not only be seen to be mediated to the animals by humans, but it would also be recognised that the Cosmic Christ is already present in the trees, the plants, the animals, in the heart of the material world. So, when Christ took the bread at the Last Supper, saying, 'This is my body', He was speaking not least of His presence as the eternal Logos in all creation. Christ, the Son of the Creator, is the Word through whom the vine bears its fruit, the springs flow and the earth is enabled to yield its produce (so Irenaeus: Against Heresies 4,14;4,34,1. see HITCHCOCK p.213). The beasts do not have to come into the human community in order to be related to God, for they are

already so related. Neither do they need to seek their full meaning and significance in their relationships with humans, for they can find that in living out the pattern of their own logoi, which are rooted in the one Logos. The ability to live in community with humans is no longer seen as the touchstone of salvation. So, in trying to convince "the Greeks" of the fitting nature of the Word of God taking to Himself a human body, Athanasius argues from the continuity of this fact with the embodiment of the Logos in the rest of nature:

"if the Word of God is in the universe, which is a body, and has entered into its every part, what is there surprising or unfitting in our saying that He has entered also into human nature? If it were unfitting for Him to have embodied Himself at all, then it would have been unfitting for Him to have entered the universe" (ATHANASIUS(1) sect.42).

He is drawing the closest possible parallel here between the Word's dwelling in human nature and in the natural world as a whole - "Man is a part of nature...and the reasoning which applies to one applies to the other" (sect.42). Everything that exists already stands in relation to God: indeed, He is immanent in them. God is omnipresent and so must of necessity be connected to each and every point in the creation. The Divine point of view, one could say, is infinite: His perception is unique in that it involves seeing everything simultaneously, and from every point of view. If everything is in the "mind of God", as Berkeley would say, then all is a theophany, a manifestation of Him (though no one sees God as

such): when we read the world aright, we read it as the thoughts of God. Therefore, even if Christianity has always been careful to avoid simply identifying God with these manifestations, still they are revelations analogous to His revelation in Christ. The Incarnation does not contradict, but stands in continuity, with the Thoughts of God which pre-dated Christ, so that Jesus can be seen as the New Moses, the greatest of the prophets, the Wisdom of God, and so on. Neither can it be clearly separated from the Thoughts which have post-dated Him: it has also been thought proper to describe the life of the body of Christians as "the Incarnation continued" (understood analogically, of course, and with all the desired nuances, so as not to assimilate Christ to the Church) (LUBEC pp.23ff).

The doctrine of the Incarnation means that God comes to His creatures as one of them. He relates to humans not just as their Creator, but also as another human. It is not the Father who will judge: all jurisdiction is given to the Son (Jn.5:22). In other words, the divine judgement is not delivered from some supernatural plane, but is enacted within the relations of human beings to one another. God, for humans, is to be found (principally) in human society. In the same way, God is present in the beasts in order to share His life with them, and for them He will appear as one of their own kind. Some Fathers of the Church have argued that even if

the Fall had never occurred, God would still have become incarnate, for that is the logic of creation itself - God's sharing His life with the universe. So the Incarnation is not an event which can be neatly divided from God's activity in the whole of creation: the Christian God is not a deus ex machina, either making occasional insurgences into the world, or having all things (including miracles and the Incarnation) pre-programmed from the beginning. God at each moment holds everything in being.

Again, if man is conceived to be a microcosm of the world, then in making Himself incarnate in man God is, in any case, incarnating Himself in the whole of creation. When the Word takes flesh, He takes the flesh of the vegetative and the animal elements in creation which are contained and summed-up in human flesh. "Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate" (CHARDIN(2) p.23). But even if this specific position were not adopted, it still could not be believed that in taking to Himself human nature (including a human body), the Word could enflesh Himself only in a single body. Any particular body is related to an indefinite number of other bodies and ultimately requires the whole material universe to support it. Moreover, the fact of metabolism means that the interdependent bodies which feed and nourish each other, also constantly interpenetrate and exchange with one another the material which goes to make them up. But if

all bodies are so closely related, then God cannot take to Himself a single body without at the same time taking all bodies - the Body of the cosmos.

Human Importance

Does not this kind of picture leave man as only one among many, of no more importance than the birds or the ants in the Divine scheme? What is the human place in this egalitarian universe? Celsus ridiculed the idea that humans could be really any more important than other species, and compared Christians of his day to "frogs holding council in a marsh", vainly imagining that they alone of all creatures counted in the eyes of the Creator (ORIGEN 4,23). Perhaps we are not worth less than the frogs, but neither can we suppose that we are worth more. None of this is a new idea, even to many in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It is sometimes imagined that in the dark, ignorant past humans were able to conceive of themselves as the centre of the universe, with everything else as existing and arranged especially for them, in order to meet their particular needs. Since the rise of science and learning, however (the argument runs), and especially the new astronomical and geological discoveries, this position has been rendered untenable.

Both these points are probably wrong. On the one hand it is not impossible, despite the wave of learning which has supposedly dampened our cosmic self-confidence, that this

planet, and humans in particular, are the most valued articles in the cosmos. It may appear implausible that the Creator of a universe sixteen billion light-years across should be particularly interested in us, but perhaps we are unduly impressed by size: after all, what relation has mere physical size to value? (CUPITT p.37). And even if there are a vast number of other planets with life (see PUCCETTI(1) Ch.3 and 4), there is no reason to suppose that we need expect to find other creatures who share our rationality or value systems (or even consciousness: CLARK(5) p.137). If, faced with the manifold variety and impressiveness of terrestrial life, we show no inclination to revise our opinions about our supreme standing amongst such beings, there seems little reason to suppose that we might be persuaded to do so on encountering extra-terrestrials, of whatever kind.

Humans have always been aware that they must look, from the Cosmic Outsider's point of view, very small and unimportant. Certainly, before Copernicus the 'official' Christian view of the world was geocentric; and, certainly, before Darwin the official Christian view was that man was undoubtedly a unique creation. But the findings of these thinkers, and others like them, have disturbed the thought of the majority of people less than one might imagine. In terms of the planetary-system of which the earth is a part it might be true to say that the earth turns about the sun rather than

the other way around, but in cosmic terms who knows whether it might not make as much sense to say that the sun revolves around the earth? It all depends upon one's point of reference. But if there is no obvious physical centre to the cosmos, then any point can be considered the centre: we may, after all, presume that all reality turns about the earth. Again, the Darwinian account of human evolution out of a bestial past has been used, paradoxically, to exalt man still further: he is the evolutionary success, the supreme peak of the process. And the main Christian bodies have seen no reason to accept that the human soul must be considered to be on a par with the souls of the beasts: it is still believed to be a special creation of God which is joined to the (evolved) body at the point of conception.

The modern arguments which patiently explain human insignificance have not convinced. But, then, they are not modern. They are some of the most well-rehearsed sentiments in philosophy, literature and biology. The doctrine of man's social evolution, for example, is an ancient one: in classical antiquity Protagoras, Diodorus Siculus, Lucretius, Horace, Cicero and Vitruvius had all suggested that humans have only gradually ascended from a bestial condition, developing language and civilisation over a long period of time. Neither was such a concept alien to the Christian tradition (THOMAS(2) p.167). And what more classic expression could be found of

the sense of man as only a dot amidst the infinite spaces than Psalm 8?

"When I see the heavens, the work of your hands,
The moon and stars which you arranged,
What is man that you should keep him in mind,
Mortal man that you care for him?"

We have to look elsewhere than at such arguments if we wish to understand man's conviction of his central importance.

What is it that prevents us from seeing ourselves as just one among many? Perhaps the fact that although we are able to achieve a certain cognitive detachment from ourselves and from an obsessional concern for our own affairs, seeing ourselves as part of a wider whole, still from a social and valuational point of view we are each the inevitable centre of life's patterns, and interpret things accordingly. We feel our own importance too much to have it overthrown by intellectual speculations about our cosmic insignificance: to take seriously the idea that we and all our plans and desires are no more than so much cosmic dust floating aimlessly in space would be to undermine our very basis for action. The religious standpoint at one level confirms and strengthens this sense of our own importance. It says that God loves each soul as though there were only one to love: so NEWMAN (p.3) rested in the thought of "two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator". Absolute value is accorded each soul.

At another level, though, it completely overthrows this

idea of our own centrality. It teaches that this assumption that we are each the world's centre is the most basic illusion of all. In opposition to this we must learn to lose self, to recognise that we are worth no more than any other 'centre'. We have to learn to see ourselves as grounded in the true Centre, who is God, and to see that all selves are equally grounded there: "where Maleldil is, there is the centre" (LEWIS(6) p.201). God, as Bonaventure said, is the Centre who is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. But perhaps these two perspectives need not be opposed to each other - the sense of our supreme importance and of our unimportance. The basic belief in our own value is what might be held to make possible our realisation of the value of others than ourselves. We are able to universalise from the conviction of our value to ourselves, and appreciate that other selves feel the same way about themselves, their plans and hopes. Empathy with others presupposes a knowledge of oneself and one's own feelings.

Utopia and Utopias

An appeal of this kind, to recognise God working in all selves, is one way to set about understanding a different kind of relationship between humans and animals from that which must see humans as the centre-point. If each point is the centre, then no single individual or group can insist that all other selves must form community around it. It releases one

to see that there are other communities than one's own, which live in relative independence to oneself. This is not to divide the world into an infinity of discrete atomic centres, for all is subtly related, and all selves, as the mediaevals insisted, are members of the prime community which is the universe. Every terrestrial grouping is a member-state of that community which comprehends the heavens and the earth, and which is primary in the sense of being the Whole of which all smaller communities are parts (GIERKE Ch.2). Such a vision can, unexpectedly, find support from the Priestly creation narrative in Genesis. The first chapter is often read as laying stress upon the hierarchical arrangement of creation, with 'Adam' placed firmly at the top. This element is certainly present, but the narrative can also be seen to be concentrating upon the earth as a whole, the household of earth creatures. The creation story can be seen as having two three-day sequences, each of which concentrates upon the earth, so that

"the emphasis falls not so much on anthropology, that is, the supremacy of humanity, as on ecology, that is the earthly habitation which human beings share with other forms of 'living being'" (ANDERSON(2) p.158).

We have already noted that the stars are not treated as minor deities in their own right, but exist merely as luminaries, serving to mark the times and the seasons: again, it is not humans alone that they serve, but the earth as a whole.

Perhaps humans have no unique metaphysical status which means that animals have to be connected to them in order to relate to God. But this need not mean that they have no unique function. We can ask whether the human species should understand itself as chosen to perform some task. Just as the Chosen Race was not ontologically different from other races, but was marked out through its having a special function, so the same might be true of the Chosen Species. This chosenness could be understood, for example, in terms of 'dominion' over other species, though it must be noted that 'dominion' is in no way synonymous with 'domination' (WESTERMANN p.85; ZIMMERLI p.41). The chosen race did at times interpret their being set apart in terms of lording it over the nations, but the tradition of thought which was picked out by Christ and the early Christian community was that which saw them as being a witness and light to the world. Being chosen, as Christ suggests elsewhere, is a privilege which involves service: as has been suggested, we are perhaps uniquely equipped to understand and help other species than ourselves, and maybe it makes sense to see this as the distinctive human function. It is not a case of bringing the world into the human community, but of living responsibly with the world which God has loved in Christ (Jn.3:16)(cf BONHOEFFER pp.286ff). Just as the Church is not the sole focus for the redeeming activity of God within humanity, even if the most important, so humanity

itself is only one constituent in the mystery of the Divine economy which seeks the "redemption and supernatural elevation of the created order" (BUTLER p.34). The human place within this economy is to minister the love of God, which means (amongst other things) allowing them the freedom to live in their own communities and according to their own natures.

To propose that other beings be left to pursue their own lives, with as little interference as possible, is not an espousing of a radically pluralistic view of the universe, nor some attempt to deny the real relations between things -in particular, between humans and the natural world. But it does oppose any attempt to make manifest in a crude way on the phenomenal plane, that mysterious unity which all beings have in the Absolute. Our task is, perhaps, to catch a glimpse of the One revealed in the Many, and he to whom this is granted will not seek to join what is known to be already unified. Variety is not, then, being made an end in itself, as though a rich and varied universe were the only ideal upon which the world could be structured. A completely diverse universe would have no structure: it would be an unreported, because unreportable, world, one of which no records could ever be made, since a reportable world must be one with identifiable groups of phenomenal objects whose differences and similarities can be noted. A world of literally infinite variety would lack this. Plainly this is not what is being

sought. But a stress on the variety of life does help provide a balance to those evaluations of life which have only admitted the worth of forms of life which draw close in kind to human life. There can be a tendency, on the part of those who wish to reassess the respective values of human and animal life, and the most appropriate relationship which should hold between them, to play down differences between human and non-human, so that (at the best) animals are seen as slightly 'imperfect' humans (but no more imperfect than the retarded, the senile and so on). Human qualities remain the only touchstone of worth and the question then becomes how far animals really have these qualities as well. Those who look for a new perspective in the relationship between humans and animals will argue that the beasts do satisfy the criteria of language, rationality, sentience, or whatever it is we put forward to gauge value. And indeed, in many instances qualities have been held to be distinctively human when they were not so, and differences in kind proposed when we were faced merely with differences in degree. But this approach goes hand in hand with the supposition that the beasts need somehow to be fitted into our community, and when this is the only approach taken it becomes easy to neglect the question of why animals should have to satisfy these various criteria of rationality, souls, or whatever, before they are left alone to lead their own lives.

To understand animals as pale reflections of humans, to remake the world thus in our own image, is also to deny ourselves the chance to see the strangeness of much of nature, as also to see what is truly distinctive in human life. Humans have been endowed with powerful and unusual gifts and it would be ridiculous to try to conceal that fact in some attempt to press all forms of being into a single mould. Neither should differences between individual humans be forgotten: each person, more likely than not, has a unique idea of his or her imagined utopia, so that

"Utopia will consist of utopias, of many different and divergent communities in which people lead different kinds of lives under different institutions" (NOZICK(1) p.312).

If there is not a single human community that can be assumed to be the best for all, then it is even more fruitless to try to fit animals into a human community framework. What is more important is that animals be allowed to build their own utopias in peace and without undue interference.

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