

Religion, Speciesism, and the Past and Future of Ethics Toward Animals

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Abstract: It is the purpose of this paper to briefly examine the long and varied history of ethics toward animals from the philosophers of Greece and the scripture of the ancient Jews, to the early Christians, the Romans before and after Constantine, the Enlightenment thinkers, and onward. The paper focuses mainly on the evolving and resurfacing human attitudes toward and beliefs about nonhuman animals, and the way in which they should be treated, rather than focusing on specific incidental or perennial behaviors of humans toward nonhuman animals. The argument put forward by Peter Singer in his book *Animal Liberation* is the *locus classicus* for my ethical discussion of the subject. I attempt to extract from the various observations, by Singer, myself, and others, a general trend which can be used to predict and affect the future of ethics toward animals in Western civilizations, focusing on the role of religion, speciesism, systematic desensitization, and the human propensity toward rationalization and cognitive dissonance. I have argued the case for a revision of human ethics toward animals for the better, but seek beyond that to bring this somewhat overlooked subject into the light of rational philosophical discourse, whatever the outcome.

The history of ethics toward animals is long and varied, with opposing viewpoints within each documented era. These viewpoints have largely been informed by such factors as the religious beliefs of humans, the selected approaches to reconciling human convenience and economic practicality with morality, and the scientific information, or misinformation, of the age. A sociological survey of general trends in the philosophy of animal ethics of an era can be observed. The progression from the ethics of the ancient Greeks and the ancient Jews, to the Romans, to the cultural hybrid of Christianity, and to the relatively secular post-Enlightenment ethical thinkers, as concerns the treatment of animals, is sharply apparent. As this trend is further assessed, it becomes increasingly clear that the standards by which we have derived our modern ethics toward animals are largely reliant upon archaic dogmas and social memes, an anthropocentric worldview, a series of defensive psychological phenomena, and the adoption of fallacious and inconsistent patterns of reasoning. A daunting task though it may be, it is the duty of the philosopher to rid him or herself of such constraints and to work toward a legitimate,

principled approach to such ethical quandaries.

In several parts of the book *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer outlines and analyzes these trends, bringing them to the light of their natural conclusions: As humans seek to eradicate themselves and others of the injustices of the past, injustices largely endorsed dogmatically and prolonged by adherence to unexamined ideologies, and as we move forward with a clearer and more scientifically sound understanding of man's origins in respect to non-human animals and man's place in the universe, it becomes all the more imperative that we re-examine our ethics both within and without the parameters of often solipsistic and speciesist humanism. Singer's *Animal Liberation* is the *locus classicus* from which the argument I intend to make is derived, and is the source of much of my information.

Singer argues, with reference to Jeremy Bentham, that personhood should be established for all sentient beings, not with reference to their abilities to *reason*, but to their abilities to *suffer*.¹ Similar arguments have been made against slavery, subordination of women, vivisection of animals, child labor, and myriad other then-normalized ethical inconsistencies, and they have often been ridiculed by their contemporaries as runaway sentimentality, or as having been contrived under a childish propensity for idealism. This is why it is important that we -- as philosophers, citizens of a post-Enlightenment culture, and informed consumers -- must allow ourselves to overlook the comfortable societal norms and to look beyond our often indefensible impulses, in order to think critically about our approach to ethics concerning our duties to non-human animals. By allowing ourselves to do so, we may elect either to preserve or to revise the ethical standards of our forbearers. Whatever the case, we will at least be able to move forward knowing that we have considered our positions carefully, with unfettered logical and ethical

¹ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. 8

consistency, and have rooted out fallacious and contradictory patterns of thought.

It should be established that the purpose of this paper is not to indict or defend individuals and their specific actions toward animals; nor is it an attempt at an emotional dissuasion from practices which may or may not be considered cruel or improper. Peter Singer devotes several chapters of his book to describing the horrors of factory farming and experimentation on animals by pharmaceutical and cosmetics companies, university science departments, and psychologists of the behaviorist perspective, but I will leave the specifics to my external sources. The purpose of this piece is to examine the effects of memetics and ideology on ethics toward animals and to establish the groundwork upon which a meaningful discussion of ethics and speciesism can be had in a secular philosophical context.

In the interest of chronology, I shall start with the ancient Greeks. This is an admittedly broad timeline and a sizeable group of thinkers who perhaps cannot be arbitrarily placed into dueling camps, but doing so seems to me excusable in that such dilemmas are not satisfied by shades of gray, and must be resolved in the logical form: *A or not A*. Many of the ancient Greek perspectives are opposite in in some ways, and alike in others. On the whole, however, they may rightfully be considered the most influential to ethical thought at every subsequent step along the way. The two basic camps, to put the dilemma in the language of the later Immanuel Kant, consist of those who saw animals as *means to human ends*, and those who saw animals as *ends unto themselves*.

Aristotle, who argued that animals were *means to human ends*, established much of the precedence that would later be picked up by many of the Romans as well as the Christians. It is well documented that Aristotle was in favor of human slavery. He held this position not because he believed that slaves were not humans (defined by Aristotle as both social and political

*animals*²), or that they were in any way incapable of experiencing misery and pain, but because he believed that some people were naturally slave-like and essentially useless in any other capacity; the men endowed with a superior capacity to reason, he would argue, are to be the masters of the men with less reasoning power (and all men are superior to women, as he would have it³). This mentality of slavery and misogyny manifests similarly in the form of man's dominion over non-human animals up to the present, the former two of which have at least been strongly challenged, the latter of which has as yet gone relatively unexamined. Aristotle believed that "nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain... [and] has made all animals for the sake of man."⁴ It is within the power of a tautology which complements the desires of humans, either individually or collectively, to surpass other, more logically sound, though perhaps less convenient available maxims.

The Jewish tradition, thriving at much of the same time as that of the Greeks, is based on the Pentateuch, or Torah, or the Old Testament as it would later be presented in the Christian Holy Bible. In fact, Torah is the Hebrew word for *teaching, instruction*, and in some cases, *law*. As the first of the five books of the Torah, Genesis recounts the story of creation and in part establishes the ethics by which Judaism and its progeny continue to approach the question of animal ethics:

Then God said, Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful,

² Somerville, John, ed. and Ronald E. Santoni, ed. *Social and Political Philosophy: Aristotle, Politics*, I, 2.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 5.

and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”⁵

Later within the same book, the story of Noah more firmly establishes Yahweh’s intentions for the animals he leaves in the care of man:

God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.”⁶

It should be noted that the traditional storybook interpretation of Noah’s stewardship for every flood-surviving species was not one of selfless heroism. Genesis makes it explicitly clear that not only are animals to be means to the ends of human convenience, industry, and sustenance, but that they are to be so while in a perpetual state of horror. It is not surprising that societies which are founded upon strict adherence to such traditions will not fool themselves about whether or not the beings they are exploiting are capable of incurring the agonies of such exploitation, but that they should console themselves with the knowledge that they are doing what is commanded of them by their God. The animals of the ark, though often treated as refugees in modern Sunday school classrooms, would in fact have been foodstuffs and mechanisms for intensive labor.

The prophet Isaiah does later condemn the practice of propitiatory animal sacrifice, and does conjure up images of a time when the lion will live alongside the lamb,⁷ but goes no further in his post-Genesis consideration of the proper treatment of animals. His words perhaps

⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, Quoted by Singer, p.196.

⁵ Genesis 1:26-28

⁶ Ibid. 9:1-3

⁷ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975),

disabused many a Bronze Age Palestinian goat of his or her duties in the repentance of another being's sin, but nonetheless left us with a long tradition of the supremacy of man, scapegoat or none.

The blurring of cultures between ancient Greeks and ancient Jews culminated in the formation of Christian culture, which would, about three centuries after the death of Christ, be adopted by the Roman Emperor Constantine for his empire. Pre-Christian Roman culture necessarily included "games" in which beasts of prey and other large animals (often lions, tigers, bears, bulls, and elephants) would be set upon one another, and often included gladiatorial competitions, which were fought to the death, and were considered highly entertaining to the Roman citizenry.⁸ The modern Spanish and Latin American bullfights originated with the Romans as well. The Romans were not without an understanding of human pain and suffering, and were not without a sense of justice, but they seem to have compartmentalized their minds to imagine that some humans, and all animals, were outside the realm of these concerns.

The simplest explanation for this is that the Romans were largely a warring society. Violence and bloodshed were commonplace and necessary for the maintenance and expansion of their empire. Systematic desensitization is bound to occur in such a society. It is, in part, my assertion that the same systematic desensitization is responsible for the pervading attitudes toward some (and not other) types of animals in our own society. Although we may be desensitized to consuming the flesh of nonhuman animals, most of us are not desensitized to the processes of branding, tail clipping, castrating, confining, and slaughtering these animals. The fact that those who are raised in this business are considerably less reluctant to engage in these practices than are those of us who were not is evidence that what conclusions we think we have

p. 195

⁸ Ibid. p. 197-8

come to rationally may indeed just be a matter of enculturated callousness.

Although Aristotle's legacy has held its influence beyond that of the Romans, there were a few Roman philosophers who were more convinced that animals were ends unto themselves, like Ovid, Seneca, Porphyry, Pythagoras, and Plutarch.⁹ Much of what they had to say has filtered into the more modern animal liberation thought, after being popularly overlooked for nearly two millennia. Plutarch was perhaps the most influential of these, having been the first known to argue for universal benevolence to animals for its own sake, and not simply because of any belief in transmigration of human souls to animals.¹⁰

Christianity, when introduced to the Roman Empire, quickly had its effect in snuffing out the practice of gladiatorial games, as it taught that all human life was sanctified. It can and has been argued that the reduction of violence in Roman culture was in part responsible for its eventual downfall, but it can and has also been argued that such a structure, in spite of its efficiency, ought not to have existed if it meant continued abandonment of ethical considerations both for foreign humans and domestic and imported animals.

The teachings of Jesus Christ were arguably valuable, from the humanitarian perspective, but did little to assuage the plight of nonhuman animals. The Bible story in which Jesus casts demons from people and into a herd of two thousand pigs, who are then compelled to drown themselves,¹¹ illustrates this point rather well. One might imagine that, having all the powers of God at his disposal, as he was held to be the incarnation of God himself, he could have simply caused the demons to no longer exist, but instead elected to sacrifice a massive herd of conscious, suffering beings. Although inexplicit, the message of this story is clear, and it paves

⁹ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. 200

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mark 5: 1-13

the intellectual pathway for millennia to come: *humans are the ends, animals the means*. St. Augustine of Hippo would later write:

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 beast and trees, he sent the devils into a herd of swine and with a curse withered the tree on which he found no fruit.... Surely the swine had not sinned, nor had the tree.¹²

Another influential Catholic, St. Thomas Aquinas, is arguably the most prominent Christian theologian to have lived, and his work, *Summa Theologica*, has become the foundation upon which many Christian beliefs are constructed still today. Most theological work beyond Aquinas was either a reaction to, or an extension of, his work. It is clear that the ethical pronouncements of such a figure would leave a lasting impact on the societies of the approximately two billion people who profess Christianity today. In *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas takes the position that animals are indeed means to human ends and supports his point of view with scripture:

There is no sin in using a thing for the purpose for which it is. Now the order of things is such that the imperfect are for the perfect... plants which merely have life, are all alike for animals, and all animals are for man. Wherefore it is not unlawful if men use plants for the good of animals, and animals for the good of man... Now the most necessary use would seem to consist in the fact that animals use plants, and men use animals, for food, and this cannot be done unless these be deprived of life, wherefore it is lawful both to take life from plants for the use of animals, and from animals for the use of men.¹³

¹² St. Augustine, *The Catholic and Manichaeon Ways of Life*, quoted in Singer, p.199.

¹³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II, II, Q64, art. 1, quoted in Singer, page 201.

It thus became very simple for dozens of generations of Christians to dismiss the question of animal ethics by replacing logical consideration with theological interpretation and ecclesiastical dogma.

Considered the father of modern philosophy, Rene Descartes, is known to have considered animals to be without many of the redeeming qualities of man. A follower of the new science of mechanics as well as a devout Christian himself, he saw no spark of divine light in animals, believing that all things which did not have a soul were necessarily mechanistic and unconscious; he thought animals were *automata*, or machines which appear similar to human animals in many ways,¹⁴ and that the screams and yelps of dogs and other animals during unanaesthetized vivisection (or the process of being nailed to a plank and dissected alive), were in fact superficial manifestations of mechanical processes. It took several centuries for the practice of vivisection to be made illegal in most parts of the world; Charles Darwin himself argued sternly against it, but did not go so far as to stop eating animals. Singer suggests that the arguments for speciesism are strikingly parallel to those for racism, and that they are similarly impossible, without massive cognitive dissonance, to cogently defend.

Nicolas Malebranche, a contemporary of Descartes, and a fellow rationalist Christian philosopher, argued that it is impossible for animals to suffer because all suffering is derived from Adam's original sin, and animals are not descended from Adam.¹⁵ St. Francis of Assisi was one of several Catholics who attempted to expiate the orthodox cruelty to animals, but seems not to have limited his love to sentient beings. It is said that St. Francis also loved rocks, trees, plants, and every other thing in nature with an almost ecstatic passion. This proved beneficial to those he may have inspired to do good to animals, but seems to imply that in any dilemma in

¹⁴ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. 208

which the interests of a rock were to be considered against the interests of a conscious animal, the interests of the suffering latter were not guaranteed to take precedence.¹⁶

The eighteenth century Enlightenment was the turning point in philosophy, after which reason, rather than dogma, became the primary authority in matters of philosophical inquiry. Secularism and humanism are the lasting influences of this era; secularism being an epistemological disconnect from the church and a movement toward science, empiricism, and reason; humanism being the shift of intellectual emphasis from God to man. Proponents of humanism point out the massive leaps in humans rights that have been accomplished under its influence. Critics of humanism, including Peter Singer and Oxford biologist and pioneer of the field of memetics (or the application of the principles of genetics to thoughts and beliefs), Richard Dawkins, often claim that it is too anthropocentric, that it puts too much emphasis on the importance of human animals, and that it acts as an unreasoned intellectual wedge between humans and nonhumans, disrupting a desirable interspecies solidarity.

The Enlightenment, however, was not free of blatant speciesism, and nor has been its legacy. This is in part due to the work of Immanuel Kant, who wrote: “[A]nimals are there only as means to an end, since they are not conscious of themselves; a human being, by contrast, is an end... Hence we have no immediate duties toward animals; our duties toward animals are merely indirect duties toward humanity.”¹⁷ The work of Kant, namely *Lectures on Ethics*, emphasized this point repeatedly. It is likely, being a religious man, that the secularism of his era did not phase his adherence to the traditional mores of Christian culture, from Genesis onward. It is equally possible that a secular speciesism motivated his exclusive humanism, but the former is

¹⁵ Nicolas Malebranche, *Man's Responsibility for Nature*, p. 114n, referenced in Singer, page 208.

¹⁶ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. 204-5

¹⁷ John Cottingham, *Western Philosophy: Immanuel Kant, Lectures on Ethics*, p.442.

more likely, as he did not feel the need to provide empirical evidence for his statements about whether or not animals were self-conscious, self-determining, or rational beings, instead merely making the bald assertion that they did not. The above mentioned Jeremy Bentham, the writer of the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, responded to Kant with: “The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but Can they *suffer*?”¹⁸

Other Enlightenment thinkers, like the Scottish philosopher and promoter of Lockean British Empiricism, David Hume, suggested that humans are “bound by the laws of humanity to give gentle usage to these creatures.”¹⁹ Though perhaps not in line with principles of equal consideration of the interests of sentient beings, Hume at least recognized the necessity of avoiding wanton cruelty and unnecessary tyranny. Alexander Pope, who has influenced the notion that humans ought to use their power to act as stewards of animals rather than tormentors thereof, suggested that although “the inferior creation [has been] submitted to our power, [we are answerable for the] mismanagement [of it].”²⁰ Voltaire, who shaped much of his satirical writing career around the debunking of unreasonable dogmas, said:

There are barbarians who seize this dog, who so greatly surpasses man in fidelity and friendship, and nail him down to a table and dissect him alive, to show you the mesaraic veins! You discover in him *all the same organs of feeling as in yourself*. Answer me, mechanist, has Nature arranged all the springs of feeling in this animal *to the end that he might not feel*?²¹

Among other Enlightenment and, in these cases, Renaissance thinkers are Leonardo da Vinci,

¹⁸ Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, quoted in Singer, p. 211.

¹⁹ David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Ch. 3, quoted in Singer, p. 210

²⁰ Alexander Pope, *The Guardian*, 21 May 1713, quoted in Singer, p. 210-1.

²¹ Voltaire, *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, s.v. “Bêtes.” Quoted in Singer, p. 210.

who was so troubled by human maltreatment of animals that he became a vegetarian,²² and Michel de Montaigne. Montaigne, one of the most influential writers of the French Renaissance, whose favorite author was the aforementioned Roman animal ethicist, Plutarch, wrote:

Presumption is our natural and original disease... 'Tis by the same vanity of imagination that [man] equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine qualities, and withdraws and separates himself from the crowd of other creatures....²³

Modern thought, shaped as it has been by Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, has given rise to two salient camps of ethical perspectives. One is that the principles of natural selection necessarily dictate that the survival of the fittest is the supreme rule by which courses of action should be guided, that *might makes right*, and that the way in which we treat nonhuman animals ought to reflect the way nonhuman animals in nature behave toward one another. The other position is that our understanding of our relations to other animals, and our understanding that we are, whether or not it flatters our vanities, nothing beyond rather well-developed animals ourselves, should incite us to embrace the rest of the animal community as distant kin, using our cognitive faculties to act as stewards of the lower life forms rather than as predators and usurpers thereof, and that our position as omnivorous moral agents who have arguably healthier dietary alternatives ought to use our capacities of reason and ethical consideration to overstep the thoughtless and unaccountable behaviors of the beasts of prey we so readily suppose are beneath us in all other manners.

The first of these camps, in the interest of clarity, I will call the *might makes right* camp. It seems to me that in order for this assertion to hold any moral weight, we should similarly be ready to declare all crimes -- murder, rape, or theft -- by *stronger* humans against *weaker* humans

²² E. McCurdy, *The Mind of Leonardo da Vinci* (London: Cape, 1932) p.78, referenced in Singer, p. 206.

²³ Michel de Montaigne, "Apology for Raimond de Sebonde" in his *Essays*. Quoted in Singer, p. 206.

ethical and natural. This argument could just as easily be made for killing and eating the mentally or physically handicapped among us, or of the abandonment or mistreatment of infants. This obvious conclusion can only be avoided by applying an equally indefensible speciesism, which is in its essence no different than the Aristotelian racism that kept the Atlantic slave trade so long intact. By suggesting that because one *can* do something, one *should*, the *might makes right* camp not only observes a Hobbesian worldview, but seems to contribute to it. We have all seen the real-world implications of applying Machiavelli's principles to human cultures, but seem always to fail to apply the lessons learned to interspecies norms of coexistence. Charles Darwin was clear in establishing that his theory of evolution by natural selection sought only to explain how nature *does* work, not how it *ought* to work, when we are presented with the option, and that the theory of evolution by natural selection is an explanatory biological construct, not a viable ethical recommendation.

Someone in opposition to the *might makes right* camp would argue that the discovery of our relations to all other animals on earth, distant in the case of birds, or close in the case of mammals, and our realization that humans are only slightly more mentally capacious animals, and are no more intrinsically worthy of ethical consideration of interests than are other animals, should inspire us to treat our fellow animals with a certain libertarian respect and to refrain from engaging in any tyrannical relations with them. These notions are naturally agreeable to human children before they are conditioned with storybooks about farms filled with happy animals and before they are desensitized by early-childhood meat eating. The conditions of our upbringing frequently inspire us to value the lives of cats, dogs, guinea pigs, horses, hamsters, and rabbits above all the rest of Animalia. Peter Singer points out the inconsistency of this position:

Killing an animal is in itself a troubling act. It has been said that if we had to kill our own

meat we would all be vegetarians. There may be exceptions to that general rule, but it is true that most people prefer not to inquire into the killing of the animals they eat. Very few people ever visit a slaughterhouse; and films of slaughterhouse operations are rarely shown on television. People may hope that the meat they buy came from an animal that died without pain, but they do not really want to know about it. Yet those who, by their purchases, require animals to be killed have no right to be shielded from this or any other aspect of the production of the meat they buy. If it is distasteful for humans to think about, what can it be like for the animals to experience it?²⁴

The sort of denial or refusal to face the ethical implications of one's actions may bring to mind an Orwellian paradigm of cognitive dissonance and self-deception from the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. As the story goes, a dystopian and entirely fascistic society run by a political class known only as The Party is required constantly to rewrite its newspapers and its history books in order to preserve the dignity and prestige of The Party. The citizens of this society are compelled upon pain of death, and are eventually fully conditioned, to unreservedly go along with this process, called *doublethink*, lest they be convicted of thought crime. Orwell writes:

His mind slid away into the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again:

²⁴ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. 151.

and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself. That was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word 'doublethink' involved the use of doublethink.²⁵

It seems to me that, to a lesser extent, each of us must engage in a similar psychological phenomena of intellectual casuistry in order to keep from convicting ourselves of what careful consideration might reveal to be crimes against our planetary cohabitants -- be they in the form of animal experimentation, intensive factory farming, hunting, zoo keeping, circus animal captivity, or using the stronger of them as laboring Cartesian *automata*.

The impact of religion in modern times is relatively subjective. Ecclesiastical control has lost its political teeth and is now only effective within the minds of its adherents. Although the United States is the only country with a complete constitutional separation of church and state, certain religious provisions are certainly residual, though unrecognized. Singer points out that “many countries, including Britain and the United States, have an exception for slaughter according to Jewish and Moslem rules which require the animals to be fully conscious when slaughtered.”²⁶ Ritual slaughter also generally involves the animal being suspended by one leg, so as to avoid contact with the blood of other animals, and execution with a poleax (which is really a large sledgehammer, rather than an ax), which may or may not require multiple swings, depending on the skill of the slaughterer, and on the stillness of the animal.²⁷ As the origins of these traditions of thought and action are further examined, they may change in a direction of increased humanity and compassion. Most modern Christians, for example, would be appalled

²⁵ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1949) p. 220.

²⁶ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), p. 152.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 152-3

by St. Thomas Aquinas's insistence that heretics be killed,²⁸ or by St. Augustine's recommendation that alleged heretics be tortured.²⁹ (These suggestions were not theoretical; both were employed rather enthusiastically in both the Crusades and the Catholic Inquisition.)

As the public square inches increasingly further from organized religion, and as religious people gradually distance themselves from the fanatical pronouncements of their pious forbearers, it will become easier and all the more necessary, in the interest of ethical consistency, to apply the same progressive principles of Enlightenment humanism (which we have thus far extended, at least nominally, to slaves, ethnic minorities, women, and would-be child laborers), to the rest of the world's sentient beings, who quite clearly have interests, are self-conscious, are self-determining, and are empirically shown to be just as capable of suffering as are human animals. Our integrity as philosophers depends upon our ability to overlook established and oft-unexamined societal norms, to understand the memetic genealogy of our contemporary ethical ideologies, and to move forward from the feeble practice of Orwellian *doublethink*.

²⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II, II, Q11, art. 13.

²⁹ St. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, Ch. 6.

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