

## THE ANIMAL SOUL AND THE PROBLEM OF ANIMAL SUFFERING<sup>1</sup>

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THE PROBLEM OF animal suffering presents a different problem for theism than what is usually discussed in regard to the problem of evil. It does not ask the question of how God could allow moral and natural evils to befall human beings. Instead it asks how an all-good, all-powerful, and all-knowing God could allow for millions of years of animal suffering.

It is said to be an evidential, as opposed to logical, problem of evil. Because of this, it traditionally does not attempt to show that theism is internally incoherent. Instead it attempts to show that given the vast amount of animal suffering, it appears that a naturalistic explanation for animal suffering is preferable to a theistic explanation.

Richard Dawkins gets at the problem when he emphasizes,

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1. Similar portions of this article will appear in “Are Insects Capable of Suffering?” as part of a forthcoming book from Lampion Press.

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The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive; others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear; others are being slowly devoured from within by rasping parasites; thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst and disease.<sup>2</sup>

But if this kind of suffering is taking place in the minute it took Dawkins to write that sentence, then there must have been countless instances of animal suffering that have occurred since animals appeared over 500 million years ago. Thus, two main questions arise: Are animals capable of suffering, and if so, why would an all-good, all-powerful, and all-knowing God create a world in which animals suffer for so long?

The problem of animal suffering has only fairly recently started to garner attention.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the pertinent literature regarding this problem has almost entirely ignored the thought of Thomas Aquinas, who presents a cogent explanation. Accordingly, this paper will attempt to explain and answer a major aspect of the problem of animal suffering using Aquinas' philosophy. Particularly it will attempt to explain how Thomism can answer the question, "Are animals capable of suffering?" It will first discuss Neo-Cartesian attempts to answer the problem of animal suffering. Next it will explain the Thomistic philosophy of mind and animal nature. Finally, it will discuss the implications of Aquinas' philosophy and conclude that the problem of animal suffering is not a problem for Thomism.

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2. Richard Dawkins, *River out of Eden* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 132.

3. Major book-length contributions from philosophers and theologians in this area include Michael J. Murray, *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw: Theism and the Problem of Animal Suffering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Christopher Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); Nicola Hoggard Creegan, *Animal Suffering and the Problem of Evil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Trent Dougherty, *The Problem of Animal Pain: A Theodicy for All Creatures Great and Small* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

## NEO-CARTESIAN UNDERSTANDING OF ANIMAL SOULS

Michael Murray explains in *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw* the popular understanding of the viewpoint of René Descartes regarding animal nature. Descartes is usually credited with the idea that animals are basically machines in that they are completely devoid of any and all sentient states.<sup>4</sup> Many of his writings lend support to this viewpoint and his metaphysical dualism easily leads to this conclusion.<sup>5</sup>

Descartes believed that humans are comprised of a physical body and a mind or soul which is immaterial. His philosophy entails that the body is a distinct physical substance and the soul is a distinct spiritual substance.<sup>6</sup> The soul is that which produces conscious mental states.<sup>7</sup> However, animals do not seem to possess the ability to reason as evidenced by the fact that they do not communicate with language as do humans.<sup>8</sup> Whether Descartes believed animals to possess consciousness, this logically entails that they do not possess souls and therefore lack all sentient states.

If something like this view of animal natures were true, then it would obviously have a big impact regarding the problem of animal suffering. If animals lack sentience, then they are incapable of the suffering that is attributed to them. Of course, the Cartesian understanding of human and animal natures has not gone without opposition since Descartes' time.

Despite the philosophical and scientific problems facing Cartesian dualism, there have been many philosophers that have held viewpoints similar to Descartes. Murray describes two of these neo-Cartesian

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4. Murray, 42.

5. Murray argues later in *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw* that there is evidence in Descartes' writings that Descartes actually held a view closer to the Aristotelian viewpoint described in this paper. See Murray, 49-52; and John Cottingham, "Descartes' Treatment of Animals," in *Descartes*, ed. John Cottingham (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 225-233.

6. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*, 4.

7. Ibid.

8. Descartes, 5.

viewpoints found in the writings of C. S. Lewis and Peter Harrison.<sup>9</sup> In his work *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis says that animals do not experience pain in a morally significant way. Lewis believed that animals do not experience pain through successive moments of time because they lack self-consciousness. His oft-quoted statement explains this belief:

There is, therefore, I take it, no question of immortality for creatures that are merely sentient. Nor do justice and mercy demand that there should be, for such creatures have no painful experience. Their nervous system delivers all the *letters* A, P, N, I, but since they cannot read they never build it up into the word PAIN. And all animals *may* be in that condition.<sup>10</sup>

Animals, without a subjective something that unites all of their successive pain sensations, do not own pain in the sense that humans do. They cannot even think of themselves as the subjects of even a single instance of pain. So although Lewis assumed that animals feel pain, he sought to answer the problem of animal suffering by emphasizing their lack of subjectivity.

Peter Harrison, in “Theodicy and Animal Pain,” provides a stronger defense of the ideas found in Lewis’ writings. Harrison seems to get closer to Descartes in that he sheds doubt on the existence of pain consciousness in animals.<sup>11</sup> He argues that if animal development is driven by evolution then the subjective sensation of pain is not as important as the behavior of the animals in regard to survival.

Harrison says that the behavior of avoiding physical harm alone would be sufficient for flourishing and perhaps animals do not feel or are not conscious of pain at all. This would be similar to most people’s reaction when they accidentally touch a hot stove. They immediately react by pulling their hand away without feeling pain.

Harrison also further develops the argument that pain in animals lacks moral significance without subjective continuity.<sup>12</sup> He provides

9. Murray, 43-49.

10. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, HarperCollins paperback ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 142 [emphasis in original].

11. Peter Harrison, “Theodicy and Animal Pain,” *Philosophy* 46, no. 247 (February 1986): 83-87.

12. *Ibid.*, 87-92.

examples illustrating why this is so. Among others, he says that people do not remember the pain they experienced as infants and therefore they cannot be said to be the subject or owner of those experiences. He also says there would seem to be no morally significant difference between undergoing an operation with an anesthetic or with a hypothetical drug that would not block pain but would erase the memory of the patient after the procedure.

These two viewpoints are more or less similar to Descartes in that they deny that animals experience pain in a morally significant way. Murray, however, finds Lewis' and Harrison's arguments problematic by emphasizing that the continuity argument fails to show that animal suffering is not morally significant. He cites Robert Wennberg's conclusion that a lack of continuity does not lack moral significance.<sup>13</sup> For example, it is intuitively obvious that most people would prefer the anesthetic over the memory erasing drug given the option.<sup>14</sup>

Moving on from Lewis and Harrison, Murray discusses different neo-Cartesian explanations of the apparent animal pain that he believes are able to sidestep the problems that Lewis and Harrison face. He lists four explanations:

1. Animals lack phenomenal consciousness;<sup>15</sup>
2. Animals lack higher-order mental states and therefore lack phenomenal consciousness;<sup>16</sup>

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13. Murray, 49.

14. Robert Wennberg, "Animal Suffering and the Problem of Evil," *Christian Scholar's Review* 21, no. 2 (1991): 122-124.

15. "Many nonhuman creatures are conscious inasmuch as they are alive, awake, and have sensations. These creatures have mental states that give them perceptual access to features of their environment in a way that allows them to make the requisite discriminations necessary for psychological control over their behavior. Yet, unlike the sensory states possessed by humans, the mechanisms whereby these organisms have access to the world lack any phenomenal character whatsoever. There is an intrinsic difference between the sensory states of nonhumans and humans in this phenomenal respect" (Murray, 54).

16. "For a mental state to be a conscious state (phenomenally) requires an accompanying higher-order mental state (a HOT) that has that state as its intentional object. This HOT must be a thought that one is, oneself, in that first-order state. Only humans have the cognitive faculties required to form the conception of themselves being in a first-order state that one must have in order to have a HOT" (Ibid., 55).

3. Animals have phenomenal consciousness of pain, but lack higher-order mental states;<sup>17</sup> and
4. Animals have phenomenal consciousness of pain, some animals occasionally have higher-order mental states, but those that do lack the capacity to regard those higher-order mental states as undesirable.<sup>18</sup>

He then briefly surveys empirical objections against each of these explanations. Murray's discussion shows that while there seems to be empirical evidence against each explanation, the evidence is never conclusive.<sup>19</sup> Each example that seems to be contradictory does not completely rule out any of the explanations and could be explained in ways that exclude moral significance.

### **ARISTOTELIAN–THOMISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF ANIMAL SOULS**

The Aristotelian philosophy adopted and modified by Thomas Aquinas posits a similar answer to the problem of animal suffering. However, Aquinas did not understand souls in the same manner as Descartes in which a soul merely bestows consciousness and rationality. Instead, Aquinas believed that the soul is what distinguished life from non-life. To better appreciate the difference, it will be good to summarize the Aristotelian-Thomistic view of animal souls.

Aristotle's hylomorphic philosophy of nature originated in part as an answer to the ancient Greek "problem of change" and the atomistic view of substances.<sup>20</sup> However, in addition to his thought regarding

17. "Some nonhuman creatures have states that have intrinsic phenomenal qualities analogous to those possessed by humans when they are in states of pain. These creatures lack, however, any higher-order states of being aware of themselves as being in first-order states. They have no access to the fact that they are having a particular feeling, though they are indeed having it. Since phenomenal properties of states of pain and other sensory states are intrinsic to the states themselves, there is no difference on this score between humans and other creatures" (Murray, 55-56).

18. "Most nonhuman animals lack the cognitive faculties required to be in a higher-order state of recognizing themselves to be in a first-order state of pain. Those that can on occasion achieve a second-order access to their first-order states of pain nonetheless do not have the capacity to regard that second-order state as undesirable" (Ibid., 57).

19. Ibid., 58-69.

20. An in-depth discussion, relevant to the philosophy of mind, of Aristotle's solution to the problem of change and the problems associated with atomism is found in James

the problems of metaphysics, Aristotle observed the obvious that living things are very different from non-living things. He argued that the matter of something cannot be the explanation for why it is alive. Otherwise it would be possible for every material thing to possess life.<sup>21</sup> He concluded that the form of a thing must be the explanation for why it lives.<sup>22</sup> So Aristotle's hylomorphism entails that living things are matter/form composites. The soul, the principle of life in living things, is the form of a living thing.<sup>23</sup> As the form of the body, the soul and the body comprise a substantial union.

### **Types of Souls**

Besides the difference between life and non-life, Aristotle observed major differences among living things themselves. This is the basis for his understanding that there exist three types of souls: vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls.<sup>24</sup> The soul is not only the cause of life in an organism but also that which has different abilities across the three kinds of souls. The vegetative soul is the form of organisms such as plants. Organisms with vegetative souls are able to process nutrients, grow and develop, and reproduce themselves.

The soul of an animal is a sensitive soul. Included in sensitive souls are the abilities of movement and sensation in addition to the abilities of vegetative souls. The sensitive soul is postulated to have various powers involving sensation. These are very important to the discussion of the problem of animal suffering and will be explored in detail below.

Finally, the soul of human beings is the rational soul. Like the sensitive soul, the rational soul includes the abilities of the souls beneath it. However, the rational soul has the unique abilities of the intellect and will. The rational soul is what sets humanity apart from all other animals. It makes the three acts of the mind and postmortem existence possible. As will be discussed below, the rational soul is

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D. Madden, *Mind, Matter, and Nature: A Thomistic Proposal for the Philosophy of Mind* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 222-235.

21. Aristotle, *De Anima*, I, 5.

22. *Ibid.*, II, 1.

23. *Ibid.*, II, 2.

24. *Ibid.*, II, 3.

necessary for self-consciousness, free will, and the ability to make moral decisions.

### **Powers of the Sensitive Soul**

The sensitive soul has both exterior powers and interior powers.<sup>25</sup> These powers are believed to be necessary for an animal to flourish in its environment.<sup>26</sup> The five exterior senses are sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.<sup>27</sup> Aquinas held that the sensitive soul has five interior powers: the common sense, phantasia, estimative power, and memory.<sup>28</sup> These abilities are possessed in differing degrees among non-human animals ranging from invertebrates to vertebrates.

#### ***Phantasia/Imagination***

One power that is pertinent to the problem of animal suffering is the phantasia. The phantasia is the power to produce conscious experiences of incoming sense data in humans and animals.<sup>29</sup> In contemporary terms, the phantasia is what produces phenomenal consciousness. Aquinas says that while the common sense is necessary for the distinction of sensible species,<sup>30</sup> the phantasia is necessary for their retention and preservation.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the phantasia makes it possible for the active intellect in humans to abstract sensible species for storing in the passive intellect.

Aquinas says that the imagination is the same thing as the phantasia and both preserve the sensible species received through the senses.<sup>32</sup> However, the difference between the imagination and phantasia is

25. A “sense” is a passive power so I will use the terms “sense” and “power” interchangeably (*Summa Theologiae* I, 78, 3).

26. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) I, 78, 4.

27. ST I, 78, 3.

28. ST I, 78, 4. See also Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima* (Q.D. De Anima), 13.

29. Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 259.

30. A sensible species is the form of a sensible object in the spiritual representation of the sensible object.

31. ST I, 78, 4; Q.D. De Anima, 13.

32. ST I, 78, 4.

that the phantasia operates in conjunction with the senses while the imagination does not.<sup>33</sup> For example, a phantasm arising during sleep would be a product of the imagination because the person sleeping is not sensing anything.

### ***Estimative Power***

A power that is extremely pertinent is the estimative power. The estimative power is what Aquinas says is necessary for recognizing intentions that are not directly perceived through the senses.<sup>34</sup> In other words, the estimative power recognizes whether something is useful or harmful to the animal perceiving. This recognition causes animals to react according to the sensible appetites that the sense data invoke.

The estimative power is similar to the concept of non-human animal survival instincts.<sup>35</sup> It is the source of the ongoing controversy regarding whether or not animals are rational.<sup>36,37</sup> It can make animals seem to possess rationality as they perform complex tasks. The estimative power resembles empirical induction which is reasoning about the physical properties of things and the observed connections between events.<sup>38</sup> However, Thomism entails that non-human animals do not reason, but appear to do so by instinctually reacting to stimulus through the estimative power.

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33. Stump, 258.

34. *ST I*, 78, 4; *Q.D. De Anima*, 13.

35. Stump, 247.

36. The contemporary controversy is complicated because there are several definitions for the term “rational” across various academic fields of study including philosophy, psychology, and biology. For a discussion of the various meanings see Alex Kacelnik, “Meanings of Rationality,” in *Rational Animals?*, ed. Susan Hurley and Matthew Nudds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 87-106.

37. For an updated survey on the philosophical and scientific study of possible animal rationality see Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 80-109.

38. Ric Machuga, *In Defense of the Soul: What It Means to Be Human* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002), 41, 70, 76, 197.

## **Memory**

The memory, or memorative power, gives sensible creatures the ability to recall past sensory experiences. The memory stores sensory impressions that can be recalled with the awareness that they were experienced in the past.<sup>39</sup> Because the sensible soul is incapable of extracting immaterial concepts, the memorative power only has the ability to recall physical sensory experiences. Additionally, the estimative power can use memories in its operations.

### **Powers of the Rational Soul**

As mentioned above, the rational soul possesses all the powers of the sensitive soul. However, some of the sensitive powers in the rational soul are different. Specifically, the phantasia, estimative, and the memorative powers are different in humans. These differences result from the rational soul's unique possession of the intellectual powers.

#### ***Intellect: Active and Passive***

These powers unique to the rational soul are intellect and will. The intellect is divided into two separate powers: the active and passive intellects.<sup>40</sup> At this point it is good to note that Aquinas believed the intellect is an immaterial power.<sup>41</sup> The intellect is what enables humans to understand universal abstract concepts such as justice, love, numbers, the natures of different shapes and animals, etc.<sup>42</sup> These are immaterial, eternal, unchanging, and empirically unobservable.

The immaterial nature of the intellect has implications regarding its operation. Aquinas says it is impossible for the intellect to understand anything without abstracting intelligible forms from the phantasms.<sup>43</sup> Because the intellect is immaterial, physical phantasms cannot cause

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39. Stump, 260.

40. *ST I*, 79, 2-3; *Q.D. De Anima*, 4.

41. *ST I*, 75, 1-2; *Q.D. De Anima*, 1.

42. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (C.G.) II, 66.

43. *ST I*, 84, 7.

understanding. This led to the conclusion that there must be an active intellect that abstracts the immaterial concepts from the phantasms.<sup>44</sup>

The active intellect abstracts intelligible forms from the phantasms and deposits them in the passive intellect. The passive intellect is a blank slate that is capable of receiving an infinite amount of forms. However, there is more to understanding than the reception of an immaterial form in the possible intellect. The final step takes place when the passive intellect converts the intelligible species into a concept.<sup>45</sup>

### *Will*

Aquinas believes that if a being possesses an intellect then it necessarily possesses a will.<sup>46</sup> Aristotelian metaphysics entail the existence of final causes and a natural inclination towards the good in inanimate objects, which is called the “natural appetite.”<sup>47</sup> However, in sensitive and rational creatures this is called something different.

Beings with sensitive souls possess a “sensitive appetite” that naturally inclines them to seek that which is good and avoid what is bad for them, as well as resist that which might hinder the attainment of the good.<sup>48</sup> The sensitive appetite is not similar to a will because the sensory powers operate in a passive manner. Their passivity entails that when a non-human animal acts it never acts intentionally but only with an instinctual reaction to sensory experience.<sup>49</sup>

The appetite for the good in intellectual animals must be suited to act in accord with the powers of the rational soul. Therefore, the “intellective appetite,” or will, is the power that inclines a rational being toward or away from that which is apprehended by the intellect.<sup>50</sup> This is why Aquinas thought that only beings with rationality possess a will and do so necessarily.

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44. *ST I*, 79, 3; *Q.D. De Anima*, 4.

45. *C.G. I*, 53.

46. *ST I*, 19, 1; *C.G. II*, 47.

47. *C.G. II*, 47.

48. *ST I*, 81, 2.

49. *ST I*, 80, 2; *C.G. II*, 47.

50. *Ibid.*

### ***Phantasia/Imagination***

In humans the imagination has a different ability resulting from the intellect's power to store universal concepts. The human imagination can combine universals to produce never before experienced particulars. For example, Aquinas mentions that after observing gold and a mountain, a human can combine the two concepts to imagine a gold mountain.<sup>51</sup> Animals are incapable of this type of imagination because particulars cannot be combined in this way. Also, animals do not possess the ability (will) to command the phantasia to produce such imaginings.

### ***Cogitative Power***

Aquinas calls the estimative power in humans the cogitative power.<sup>52</sup> The cogitative power is similar to the estimative power in that it is used for apprehending intentions that are not present in sense data. However, Aquinas says that in humans this apprehension is performed by investigation and inference whereas in non-human animals it is a spontaneous reaction.<sup>53</sup> This is a big difference because humans can use the cogitative power at will whereas non-human animals cannot.

### ***Intellective Memory and Reminiscence***

Memory in humans is different in a similar way as the estimative and cogitative powers. Memory in non-human animals is needed in order to recall previous experiences in order to preserve them. However, use of non-human memory arises spontaneously as the result of sensory experience. Human memory can be searched or investigated in order to recall whatever a human wants to remember at will. This type of remembering is called "reminiscence."<sup>54</sup>

There is an additional difference in memory that pertains to the distinct powers of the rational soul. The memorative power in humans is able to recall physical representations (particulars) like

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51. *ST I*, 78, 4.

52. *Ibid.*; *Q.D. De Anima*, 13.

53. *Q.D. De Anima*, 13.

54. *ST I*, 78, 4; *Q.D. De Anima*, 13.

the memorative power in sensitive souls. However, humans can also recall immaterial concepts (universals) that are stored in the passive intellect.<sup>55</sup> This type of memorative power in rational souls is known as intellectual memory.<sup>56</sup>

### Consciousness without Rationality

Lacking a rational soul entails that a being cannot grasp immaterial concepts. It is hard to imagine possessing phenomenal consciousness of one's surroundings while lacking the ability to know what things are. However, there are examples that can help with imagining this type of existence.

Eleonore Stump believes that this would be similar to having what is known as agnosia.<sup>57</sup> Agnosia is a neuropsychological disorder in which someone is unable to process sensory information and thus is unable to recognize common objects, people, or sounds. It is not necessarily caused by a deficiency in sense organs. In some cases, a patient's senses are in good health although they suffer agnosia due to neurological damage to their brain.

Agnosia can afflict one or more senses. However, a being with only a sensitive soul would lack the understanding of any concepts and would be agnostic in all its senses. To illustrate what agnosia is like it will be helpful to consider an example of "visual form agnosia."

Visual form agnosia is a type of agnosia regarding cognitive processes involved with sight. Martha Farah defines it as "any failure of object recognition in which perceptual impairments seem clearly at fault, despite relatively preserved sensory functions such as acuity, brightness discrimination, and color vision."<sup>58</sup> Farah explains, "In striking contrast to their roughly intact visual sensory functions, visual form agnosics are severely impaired at recognizing, matching, copying, or discriminating simple visual stimuli."<sup>59</sup>

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55. *ST I*, 79, 6; Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate (De Ver.)*, 10, 2.

56. Stump, 248.

57. *Ibid.*, 246-247.

58. Martha J. Farah, *Visual Agnosia*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 11.

59. *Ibid.*, 13.

Visual form agnosics are unable to recognize normal visual objects although their eyes lack impairment. Of course, their actions may seem more handicapped than those of animals but this is probably due to the fact that they were at one time able to cognitively process visual stimuli. Noting how they learn to cope with their condition gives possible insight into how animals operate. Farah describes instances in which patients used the physical features of objects in order to make guesses regarding their natures.

RC [an agnosia patient] was reported to use “features of objects, such as their color or whether they were shiny or not. He could also recognize the ‘texture’ of objects. If encouraged, he could often make an accurate guess about the nature of objects from such cues.” Landis et al. report similar strategies in their patient, X: “He once mentioned being on the 14th floor of the hospital. Asked how he knew, he replied “It’s the only one having red exit doors.” Adler’s patient, too, was said to recognize objects by “a process of adding up visual impressions,” and often used color to guess the identity of objects, mistaking vanilla ice cream for scrambled eggs and a piece of white soap for a piece of paper.<sup>60</sup>

This seems very close to the empirical induction simulated by the estimative power of the sensitive soul.

Stump refers to agnosia as “seeing without seeing as.”<sup>61</sup> This Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding of the sensitive soul entails that animals do not apprehend what they are seeing. They only see and remember concrete particulars and are unable to process and apprehend immaterial concepts. They see objects without seeing objects as what they are.

They do not ponder love, justice, or the nature of their own species because they have never perceived these things. Additionally, they do not access their memories or “reasoning” processes at will as do humans. Their estimative sense might give the appearance that they are reasoning but their actions are ultimately explainable by their instincts and lessons they have assimilated during their lives. All of this takes place on the level of empirical induction which only

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<sup>60</sup>Farah, 15.

<sup>61</sup>Stump, 268.

involves the physical aspects of things and the observed connections between events. This is the reason why Aristotelians and Thomists believe that the difference between animals and humans is one of kind and not of degree.

### **Free-will, Self-Consciousness, and Morality**

The rational soul makes several distinctly human abilities possible. First, no animal can possess a will without a rational soul.<sup>62</sup> Non-human animals are understood to lack will because the only thing resembling a decision-making ability in them is the estimative power. However, it was already mentioned that this power causes action in animals as instinctual reactions to sensory experience.

#### ***Free-will***

The immateriality of the intellect and will has implications regarding whether or not humans are able to freely choose their actions. The movement of the will depends upon mental apprehension.<sup>63</sup> Because mental apprehension is the result of an immaterial power, it cannot be influenced by anything material or be governed by the laws of nature. This means that the will also escapes the causal influence of the laws of nature. This entails that for any particular choice, there is always the possibility that a different choice could have been made.<sup>64</sup> The movement of the will is not physically determined because apprehension is not physically determined. It originates in the person and is not caused externally. This is how Aquinas understood humans to possess free will.

#### ***Self-consciousness***

The unique human possession of intellect is what Aquinas thought gives rise to self-consciousness. He believes that humans gain self-knowledge in two ways: self-awareness by the actualized intellect in the act of understanding, and quidditative self-knowledge of the

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62. *ST I*, 80, 2; *C.G.* II, 47.

63. *ST I*, 82, 4.

64. *ST I*, 83, 1.

soul through demonstrative argumentation.<sup>65</sup> The first type of self-knowledge is the most pertinent to the problem of animal suffering because it helps to show why self-consciousness is intuitively obtained by human beings.

Aquinas believes that one way in which self-awareness arises is through the mind perceiving its own act of knowing.<sup>66</sup> When the active intellect abstracts a form from an intelligible species and deposits it in the passive intellect, a person not only knows the object of intellection, but also knows that they are knowing.<sup>67</sup> This is an intuitive act because the knower does not perceive the self through a discursive reasoning process, but through direct cognition of itself.<sup>68</sup>

Aquinas believes that this intuitive self-awareness is what causes a type of personhood. This is because of two aspects of self-knowledge gained through self-awareness. When a person knows of his own act of knowing, this knowledge comes with certain personal aspects.

The first aspect is knowledge of the self as an “I” that is distinct from the object known.<sup>69</sup> When a person knows that he is cognizing an object, he knows that the object is being cognized by himself. This

65. Therese Scarpelli Cory, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 63-64. See *ST I*, 87, 1; *De Ver.* 10, 8.

66. *ST I*, 87, 3; 93, 7, ad 4; *C.G.* III, 46; Aquinas, *Setentia libri Ethicorum*, 9, 11.

67. In a related note, researchers have concluded that animals such as monkeys do not know that they know. For example, Dorothy Cheney and Robert Seyfarth explain that “vervet monkeys are poor naturalists. They seem disinclined to collect information about their environment when that information is not directly relevant to their own survival. Vervet do not seem to know that hippos stay in water during the daytime or that particular shore birds do not occur in dry woodlands. These data are perhaps not surprising, but they do point out a potential difference between monkeys and human beings, who are naturally curious about much of their environment and who engage in many activities that have little practical value to survival. . . .

Monkeys have a kind of laser-beam intelligence. While they solve social problems with little difficulty or training, they often flounder when confronted with the same problems outside of the social domain. They do not always generalize their social abilities to other species or to inanimate objects, and in this sense their skills seem relatively restricted. Apparently, the animals do not know what they know and cannot apply their knowledge to problems in other domains” (Dorothy L. Cheney and Robert M. Seyfarth, *How Monkeys See the World: Inside the Mind of Another Species* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 301-302).

68. For an in-depth treatment of the process of intuitive self-awareness see Cory, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge*, 69-133.

69. *Ibid.*, 84.

knowledge entails an intuitive subject/object relation in which the cognized object is known as being known by a knower, or an “I.”<sup>70</sup>

The second aspect of the knowledge of self-awareness is that the “I” exists.<sup>71</sup> This is seen in that when the intellect cognizes anything, it cognizes that the thing exists.<sup>72</sup> This means that when the intellect knows that it is knowing, the intellect judges that the knower exists.<sup>73</sup>

This self-awareness of an “I” that is knowing remains throughout all experiences and produces a diachronic unity of consciousness.<sup>74</sup> As the knower experiences self-awareness in all its actions, the knower realizes that all of these experiences have occurred to the same “I.” Thus, personhood arises through the acts of the mind, which are unique to human beings. Sensible creatures without a diachronic unity of consciousness are not persons, but unconsciously connected collections of memories and conscious states.<sup>75</sup>

### ***Morality***

The rational soul has important moral implications for humans in at least two ways. First, it makes moral agency possible. The fact that humans have an intellect and free will makes them the originators of their actions. This means that they are responsible for their actions

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70. Cory explains, “In Aquinas, then, intellectuality entails the capacity to experience the world from one’s own ‘viewpoint’ as subject, because intellectual cognition is always ineliminably twofold, illuminating the knowing intellect and its known object in relation to each other” (Cory, 204).

71. *Ibid.*, 84.

72. *Q.D. De Ver.*, 10, 8.

73. Cory, 84.

74. *Ibid.*, 207.

75. This is almost identical to what C.S. Lewis explains in regard to animals lacking a continuity of consciousness and conforms with the conclusions of researchers in that area. In a related note, researchers believe that infant amnesia ends at the development of episodic memory in childhood at about the age of 3 1/2 (see below for explanation of episodic memory). For examples see Josef Perner and Ted Ruffman, “Episodic Memory and Autonoetic Consciousness: Developmental Evidence and a Theory of Childhood Amnesia,” *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 59, no. 3 (June 1995): 516-548; Thomas Suddendorf and Michael C. Corballis, “Mental Time Travel and the Evolution of the Human Mind,” *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs* 123, no. 2 (May 1997): 133-167.

because there are no outside influences that are causing them to act either way.

Second, beings with rational souls are persons. They originate their actions and they also understand that they originate their own actions: they are self-conscious. Beings that lack rational souls do not originate their own actions and they do not perceive or understand themselves as persons. This means that animals are not necessarily the objects of moral concern. Of course there are many concerns regarding animal ethics and welfare. However, animals cannot be said to have rights based on personhood because personhood is something they lack.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROBLEM OF ANIMAL SUFFERING**

With the explanation of the Thomistic understanding of human and non-human souls finished, the implications for the problem of animal suffering can now be discussed. As it may be evident from the above discussion, Thomism has different implications for the problem than the neo-Cartesian answers suggested by Murray. This will mainly be seen in the area of self-consciousness.

#### **Can Animals Suffer?**

As mentioned above, one of the main questions arising from the problem of animal suffering is, “Are animals capable of suffering?” The neo-Cartesian answers to this question held that animals are either incapable of phenomenologically experiencing pain or that animals experience pain without an experience of aversion to pain. However, Thomism is not as quick to be skeptical regarding the phenomenological experience of pain in animals.

As mentioned above, Thomism entails that the biggest difference between humans and non-human animals is the rational soul. It was shown that the Thomistic power of the phantasia is thought to be a power of the sensitive soul, which is a power contained in both the sensitive and rational souls. Thomism presupposes phenomenal consciousness in animals as the means for their survival.

Some have argued that the power of phantasia in sensitive souls eliminates the possibility for a Thomist to accept explanations similar to (1) and (2) in which animals are thought to lack phenomenal states of consciousness. Despite the logical possibility of animals lacking phenomenal consciousness, like accounts in Carruthers<sup>76</sup> and Harrison,<sup>77</sup> these are supposedly not an option for the Thomist.<sup>78</sup>

However, there is reason to believe that it is possible for an animal to receive and respond to stimuli from its environment without being phenomenally conscious of the stimuli. For example, it is known that human patients with a condition called “blindsight” can receive and learn from visual stimuli they are unaware of receiving. In one experiment a blindsighted patient was continually shown a drawing of an airplane.<sup>79</sup> Each time the airplane was presented in the patient’s field of blindness, the patient would receive an electric shock. The experimenters found that the patient eventually startled when the drawing was presented, with or without a shock, although the patient was never aware of seeing the drawing.<sup>80</sup>

This allows some room for the Thomist to be skeptical of phenomenal consciousness in non-human animals. Perhaps the phantasia could be understood as being different in non-humans that show evidence for a lack of consciousness. However, as will be seen, this is not really an issue for Thomism.

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76. Peter Carruthers, “Brute Experience,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 86, no. 5 (May 1989): 258-269.

77. Peter Harrison, “Do Animals Feel Pain?” *Philosophy* 66, no. 255 (January 1991): 25-40.

78. John Haldane notes that it does not matter if we can somehow recreate the subjective experiences of animals. We can know they have phenomenal consciousness if they perform tasks only possible for something that possesses a sensitive soul: “What is of prime importance in determining if an individual is sensate is not the question of what it is *like* to be it, or even whether that Nagelian question arises; but rather the issue of how the individual is related to its environment. We do not need telepathy in order to attribute sensory awareness, for perception shows itself in the eye of the perceiver – *vultus est index animi*. On this basis there can be no serious doubt that dogs see other dogs” (John Haldane, *Reasonable Faith* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 122-123 [emphasis in original]).

79. Andrews, 57.

80. See Alfons O. Hamm, Almut I. Weike, Harald T. Schupp, Thomas Treig, Alexander Dressel, and Christof Kessler, “Affective Blindsight: Intact Fear Conditioning to a Visual Cue in a Cortically Blind Patient,” *Brain* 126, no. 2 (2003): 267-275.

## **Do Animals Suffer Like Humans?**

If animals are capable of experiencing pain and suffering, then a further question arises: “Do animals suffer in the same manner as humans?” To answer this question it will be good to first look at contemporary studies into possible animal self-consciousness. Recent studies have focused on three main abilities that are thought to indicate self-consciousness. These abilities include mirror self-recognition, episodic memory, and the use of a theory of mind.<sup>81</sup>

### ***Mirror Self-Recognition***

Gordon Gallup formulated the mirror self-recognition test in 1970.<sup>82</sup> Since then this test has played a major role in the study of animal self-consciousness.<sup>83</sup> Gallup’s test consisted of marking anesthetized chimpanzees with a non-irritating, non-odorous red dye on areas only visible in the mirror. He then observed the behavior of the chimpanzees as they viewed themselves in a mirror both before and after the marking. Gallup found that the chimpanzees touched the marked areas four to ten times (as opposed to one time without the mirror) and spent four times the amount of time in front of the mirror. He concluded that the chimpanzees were recognizing themselves in the mirror and that this implied a concept of self.<sup>84</sup>

This test is thought to provide evidence for self-consciousness because the animals do not interact with their mirror image as if they are seeing a different animal.<sup>85</sup> However, this test is not as conclusive as it may seem initially.<sup>86</sup> For example, some have proposed the possibility that animals may merely recognize their own bodies, as opposed to

81. Gary E. Varner, *Personhood, Ethics, and Animal Cognition: Situating Animals in Hare’s Two Level Utilitarianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 182.

82. Varner, 195.

83. Andrews, 70.

84. See Gordon G. Gallup, Jr., “Chimpanzees: Self-recognition,” *Science* 167, no. 3914 (January 1970): 86-87; Gordon G. Gallup, Jr., “Self-Recognition in Primates: A Comparative Approach to the Bidirectional Properties of Consciousness,” *American Psychologist* 32, no. 5 (May 1977): 329-338.

85. Andrews, 71.

86. *Ibid.*, 71-72.

themselves, in the mirror.<sup>87</sup> Also, it has been suggested that the test could merely show animals are recognizing that their body and the body in the mirror are two similar representations of the same thing.<sup>88</sup> Another interesting proposal is that animals viewing themselves in mirrors may be perceiving a “mirror beast” or a “cool copycat,” which to them could simply be “a cold, flat, odorless creature that is a near-perfect mimic.”<sup>89, 90</sup>

The mirror test does not pose a threat to the Thomistic understanding of self-awareness. The powers of the Thomistic sensitive soul provide a sufficient explanation for the chimpanzees’ behavior. If a non-human animal has the ability to remember particular physical objects, then there would be nothing alarming if the animal acts as if it recognizes its body in a mirror. It would seem strange to think that an animal could not distinguish between its body and anything else. In fact, this is to be expected because the ability to discern between one’s body and the world is thought to be a necessary ability for successful navigation that is possessed by a large number of invertebrates.<sup>91</sup>

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87. For example Cecilia Heyes explains, “All that the animal needs to know about itself is that its body is distinct from the rest of the world, including the bodies of other animals. Or, to put it more precisely, the animal needs to be able to distinguish, across a fairly broad range, sensory inputs resulting from the physical state and operations of its own body, from sensory inputs originating elsewhere. If it could not do this, then presumably it could not learn that when it is standing in front of a mirror, inputs from the mirror correlate with inputs from its body” (Cecilia M. Heyes, “Reflections on Self-recognition in Primates,” *Animal Behaviour* 47, no. 4 [April 1994]: 915).

88. For examples see Thomas Suddendorf and David L. Butler, “The Nature of Visual Self-recognition,” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 17, no. 3 (March 2013): 121-127; Kim A. Bard, Brenda K. Todd, Chris Bernier, Jennifer Love, and David A. Leavens, “Self-Awareness in Human and Chimpanzee Infants: What Is Measured and What Is Meant by the Mark and Mirror Test?” *Infancy* 9, no. 2 (March 2006): 213-216; Josef Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 69-101; Thomas Suddendorf and Andrew Whiten, “Mental Evolution and Development: Evidence for Secondary Representation in Children, Great Apes, and Other Animals,” *Psychological Bulletin* 127, no. 5 (October 2001): 633-634, 638.

89. Heyes, 917.

90. Heyes suggests further that “Under the influence of such a perception [of a cool copycat], an animal might touch its brow thinking ‘He’s got a mark on his head; I wonder whether I have too’” (Ibid., 917).

91. Heyes emphasizes that “...if the animal could not distinguish extraneous visual input from visual and kinesthetic feedback from its own body, then it would constantly bump into things. Most vertebrates are capable of avoiding collision with objects and other animals, so it is clear that, whether they can use a mirror or not, they have this capacity”

## ***Episodic Memory***

Another area of research regarding possible animal self-consciousness is something called “episodic memory,” which is a type of propositional memory.<sup>92</sup> It is defined as the “remembering of personally experienced events.”<sup>93</sup> Episodic memory is thought to require self-consciousness. So discovering that an animal demonstrates behavior requiring episodic memory would supposedly provide evidence of self-consciousness.

One study concerning episodic memory was thought to show that scrub jays possibly possess episodic memory.<sup>94</sup> The scrub jays were given and allowed to store differing types of food that became inedible at differing times. It was found that scrub jays that were released before their preferred food became inedible returned to where they stored their preferred food and scrub jays released after this time did not.<sup>95</sup> This finding suggested that scrub jays can remember where, what, and surprisingly when they stored their food.<sup>96</sup> This was thought to be something like episodic memory entailing that the scrub jays were remembering the past as they experienced it.<sup>97</sup>

However, similar to the mirror test, studies involving episodic memory are inconclusive. It has been suggested that it may not even be feasible to satisfactorily detect episodic memory.<sup>98</sup> A major difficulty arises in the attempt to distinguish between episodic memory and semantic memory, which is propositional memory that lacks a

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(Heyes, 915).

92. Propositional memory is the ability to remember that an event occurred. This is to be distinguished from procedural memory, which is the ability to remember how something is done (Varner, 184).

93. Endel Tulving, “Memory and Consciousness,” *Canadian Psychology* 26, no. 1 (January 1985): 2.

94. Varner, 186.

95. N.S. Clayton, D.P. Griffiths, N.J. Emery, and A. Dickinson, “Elements of Episodic-like Memory in Animals,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society: London B* 356 (2001): 1495.

96. See N.S. Clayton, et al, 1483-1491.

97. Clayton, et al did not claim that they had demonstrated episodic memory in scrub jays, but merely labeled their finding as “episodic-like.”

98. Varner, 186-187.

personal aspect. Although it may seem that the scrub jays' memory includes themselves, this is not necessarily so.

For example, it seems entirely possible that the scrub jays remembered the when and where of their storage without necessarily remembering themselves in the storage event.<sup>99</sup> It is not hard to imagine remembering the where and when of an event, such as remembering your birth, without remembering the event itself.<sup>100</sup> It has been proposed that they could possess a type of knowledge of the present state of the world including the locations and ages of their stored food.<sup>101</sup> Also, it has been suggested that the scrub jays could have learned to prefer only those perishable foods of which they possessed strong memories.<sup>102</sup> They possibly could have learned that there is always an undesirable outcome when they attempt to retrieve perishable food when their memory of the food is weak and fading.

Findings involving possible episodic memory do not pose a threat to Thomism either. It seems that the estimative and memorative powers of the sensitive soul are sufficient for explaining the episodic-like behavior of the scrub jays. Learning that food will go bad after a specific time could simply be the animal relating its behavior with physical outcomes. So remembering the loss of food associated with waiting too long does not necessarily require abstract reasoning or the apprehension of any universal concept. As Thomism would predict, many researchers believe that episodic memory is unique to humans.<sup>103</sup>

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99. Heyes, 187.

100. Thomas Suddendorf and Janie Busby, "Mental time travel in animals?" *TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences* 7, no. 9 (September 2003): 392.

101. Robert R. Hampton and Bennett L. Schwartz, "Episodic Memory in Nonhumans: What, and Where, is When?" *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 14, no. 2 (April 2004): 194.

102. Howard Eichenbaum and Norbert Fortin, "Episodic Memory and the Hippocampus: It's About Time," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12, no. 2 (April 2003): 55.

103. For examples see Suddendorf and Busby, "Mental time travel in animals?" 391-396; Endel Tulving, "Episodic Memory: From Mind to Brain," *Annual Review of Psychology* 53 (2002): 1-25.

### *Theory of Mind*

The last ability regarding possible animal self-consciousness is an ability known as a “theory of mind.” This is something very familiar to humans. To use a theory of mind is to use one’s beliefs and desires as a reference in interpreting the actions of other people.<sup>104</sup> For example, my three year old son often believes that dogs are “mad” at each other when they are exchanging barks for whatever reason. When he gets angry himself, he sometimes feels like yelling. So he is using his knowledge of his own feelings to suppose that the dogs are angry with one another. Accordingly, self-consciousness is thought to accompany the use of a theory of mind because it involves self-knowledge.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence suggesting the use of a theory of mind in chimpanzees.<sup>105</sup> For example, it is known that subordinate chimpanzees sometimes exhibit what seems to be deceptive behavior. They have been observed attempting to eat stolen food out of sight of a dominant chimpanzee.<sup>106</sup> This seems to show that they are anticipating the dominant chimpanzee’s behavior based on their own set of beliefs and desires.

However, this topic is one of the most controversial studies regarding possible self-consciousness in animals.<sup>107</sup> Similar to episodic memory, it has been objected that it might be near impossible to detect the use of a theory of mind in animals. This is because possibly all the pertinent animal behavior can be explained both by postulating the use of a theory of mind and postulating that the animals are merely associating particular behaviors with particular outcomes.<sup>108</sup>

So returning to the example of the supposedly deceptive chimpanzees, it is possible that they are using knowledge of their own behavior to anticipate the behavior of the dominant chimpanzees. But it is also possible that they are merely associating physical pain with

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104. Varner, 204.

105. *Ibid.*, 208.

106. Andrews, 145-146.

107. Varner, 206.

108. Andrews, 147; C.M. Heyes, “Anecdotes, training, trapping and triangulating: do animals attribute mental states?” *Animal Behaviour* 46, no. 1 (July 1993): 177-188.

eating food while the dominant male is present.<sup>109</sup> Thus, Thomism does not seem threatened here either. Certainly the estimative power and its deceptive resemblance to human rationality can be used to explain theory of mind like behavior.

### The Thomistic Answer in Light of the Neo–Cartesian Answers

Regarding Murray’s four neo-Cartesian answers to the question of animal suffering, Robert Francescotti says that

the neo-Cartesian defenses do not satisfy Murray’s standard of not conflicting with one’s justified acceptances, and it seems that they also fail to meet the standard of not being significantly likely to be false. Another reason for rejecting the neo-Cartesian defenses (a point related to the issue of emotional suffering) is that these accounts focus only on the distress of *pain* while it is clear that there are phenomenally distressful mental states other than pain. Two obvious candidates are *depression* and *grief*, forms of emotional suffering, which appear to be present in other mammals (seen especially in behavior exhibited at the death of kin).<sup>110</sup>

Francescotti believes that not only does “casual observation of animal behavior” show that animals most likely are aware of pain, but also that there is plenty of experimental evidence to support this intuitive observation.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, for various reasons he believes that even if some type of Higher-Order Thought theory is correct, it is still likely that animals experience pain.<sup>112</sup>

These are not problems for Thomism. This is because Thomism helps to explain exactly why there is nothing wrong with animal suffering.<sup>113</sup> As mentioned above, although it is possible that non-

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109. See Daniel J. Povinelli and Jennifer Vonk, “Chimpanzee Minds: Suspiciously Human?” *Trends in Cognitive Science* 7, no. 4 (April 2003): 157-160.

110. Robert Francescotti, “The Problem of Animal Pain and Suffering,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil*, ed. Justin P. McBrayer and Daniel Howard-Snyder (Somerset: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), 120 [emphasis in original].

111. *Ibid.*, 117.

112. *Ibid.*, 118.

113. This is not to say that there cannot be a neo-Cartesian answer that involves the denial of self-consciousness in animals. Surely there are plenty of ways to do this apart from Thomism. However, Murray does not address self-consciousness in *Nature Red in*

human animals lack phenomenal consciousness of pain, Thomism is not necessarily concerned with this. On the contrary, Thomism presupposes consciousness in higher animals.

However, it is the non-human animal lack of a rational soul that makes all the difference regarding the problem of animal suffering. The history of life on Earth has demonstrated this reality. The arrival of anatomically modern human beings, *Homo sapien sapiens*, brought the advent of sophisticated tool technology, art, music, and religious practices.<sup>114</sup> Hominins only used primitive tools and did not show any technological advances despite their relatively long tenure on Earth.<sup>115</sup> For example, *Homo habilis*, thought to be the first hominin to use tools, appeared around 2.2 million years ago and showed little advancement during the course of its over one million year long tenure.<sup>116</sup> This is because no other animals on Earth have ever possessed the rational abilities that humans possess.

This has not gone unnoticed among Darwinists across disciplines such as biology, philosophy, psychology, and zoology despite their rejection of the difference in kind between humans and other animals. For example, Derek Penn, Keith Holyoak, and Daniel Povinelli, a trio consisting of a philosopher, psychologist, and biologist respectively, surveyed the scientific evidence regarding the nature of nonhuman animal minds. Although they ultimately suggest a naturalistic explanation, Penn et al. conclude:

Although there is a profound similarity between human and nonhuman animals' abilities to learn about and act on the perceptual relations between events, properties, and objects in the world, only humans appear capable of reinterpreting the higher-order relation between these perceptual relations in a structurally systematic and inferentially productive fashion.

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*Tooth and Claw* and instead stops at his four neo-Cartesian answers that mainly involve phenomenal consciousness alone.

114. Ian Tattersall, *The World from Beginnings to 4000 BCE* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 96-101.

115. Richard G. Klein and Blake Edgar, *The Dawn of Human Culture: A Bold New Theory on What Sparked the "Big Bang" of Human Consciousness* (New York: Wiley, 2002), 230-237.

116. Robert J. Sternberg and James C. Kaufman, *The Evolution of Intelligence* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 65.

In particular, only humans form general categories based on structural rather than perceptual criteria, find analogies between perceptually disparate relations, draw inferences based on the hierarchical or logical relation between relations, cognize the abstract functional role played by constituents in a relation as distinct from the constituents' perceptual characteristics, or postulate relations involving unobservable causes such as mental states and hypothetical physical forces. There is not simply a consistent absence of evidence for any of these higher-order relational operations in nonhuman animals; there is compelling evidence of an absence.<sup>117</sup>

The difference between humans and non-human animals looks to be the same today as it did to Aristotle thousands of years ago. The reality of the internal workings of non-human animals seems to be very close to that postulated by the Aristotelian-Thomistic concept of the sensitive soul.

So regarding the problem of animal suffering, the lack of self-consciousness means that in the animal kingdom there is no person, *qua* person, that experiences pain. There are organisms that phenomenologically experience pain. This pain causes them to react in accord with their estimative power and sensitive appetite. The estimative power causes their reactions through invoking the proper reactions and emotions. But they do not have intellects that can abstract the concept of pain and in the process of abstracting have awareness of themselves as the recipients of pain.

Moreover, animals lack the moral status that accompanies personhood. Although a Thomist may believe that God has a moral obligation to eliminate the possibility of seemingly purposeless accounts of suffering in persons, this is not a problem for God regarding *non-human* animals. Regarding the millions of years of *non-human* animal suffering, God has not allowed a single *person* to suffer.

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117. Derek C. Penn, Keith J. Holyoak, and Daniel J. Povinelli, "Darwin's Mistake: Explaining the Discontinuity Between Human and Nonhuman Minds," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 31, no. 2 (April 2008): 110.

## CONCLUSION

The millions of years of animal suffering seem to intuitively cause a problem for theism. However, there are many theistic explanations to nullify the problem. Neo-Cartesianism attempts to answer the problem in various ways from denying phenomenal consciousness in animals to denying the unpleasantness of pain in animals.

The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas supplies an interesting explanation for the absence of morally significant suffering in non-human animals. The Aristotelian concept of the sensitive soul, rising from the metaphysical solution to the problem of change, explains why non-human animals seem to be so similar to humans yet so different. Although non-human animals phenomenally experience pain, they do not possess intellects, wills, and self-consciousness.

These robust philosophies of nature and mind combine to provide a detailed and compelling explanation for the absence of morally significant suffering in non-human animals. Any theist attempting to explain animal suffering using contemporary philosophies of mind will inevitably run into all of the infamous problems they encounter. Thomistic philosophy avoids these problems while simultaneously avoiding the problem of animal suffering.