Nathaniel Wolloch

# The Enlightenment's Animals

## Changing Conceptions of Animals in the Long Eighteenth Century

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*To Naomi and Jonathan*

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# Preface

This book began as a collection of articles published over many years. These articles, however, have been revised, at times considerably, and combined to form an organic interrelated argument, reflecting the interpretational logic which underlines my view of the history of attitudes toward animals. In revising these initially separate studies it was necessary to omit all of the overlapping material, which has here been mainly consigned to the introduction. If for this reason alone, those who are interested only in one or another of these chapters would do better to go to the original versions. Other revisions have been more substantive, at times reflecting changes in my view of these topics. To these previous studies I have also added a significant new chapter which closes the book, one which puts all the other chapters in a different and more unified light. I have also attempted, as much as possible, not to repeat claims or material from my previous book on the history of attitudes toward animals, *Subjugated Animals: Animals and Anthropocentrism in Early Modern European Culture*. Some discussion of anthropocentrism, as of the Cartesian beast-machine theory and of early modern theriophily, could not be avoided, but I have tried to keep it to a minimum. These topics have received ample attention over the years from myself and many other scholars. Ignoring them is impossible, but neither do they require detailed (re)explanation. The term "theriophily," "love of animals," is used throughout the present book but, as will be explained, in a somewhat broader and looser sense than is usually customary. I have also tried to avoid as much as possible any partisanship regarding the ethical treatment of animals. As a scholar of Enlightenment historiography I do not deny the need for an ethical outlook when writing history. Nevertheless, in today's political climate anything which has to do with the environment, and specifically with animals, tends to arouse passions which are not conducive to a proper historiographical approach. This is more appropriate for philosophers than historians. In *Subjugated Animals* I succumbed to this temptation, to the detriment, so I believe today, of the quality of the discussion. Or have I simply moderated my views with the passing of the years? In any case, the material is presented here to the readers in a generally impartial manner, and they can do with it as they please in terms of how they fit it with their own philosophical beliefs.

The chapters in their original formats were previously published as follows: chapter 1 as "An Interpretation of Early Modern Vivisection," *Zmanim*, 67 (1999), 22-33 (originally in Hebrew; published by the Open

University of Israel); chapter 2 as "Christiaan Huygens's Attitude toward Animals," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61 (2000), 415-32 (published by the University of Pennsylvania Press); chapter 3 as "*The Turkish Spy* and Eighteenth-Century British Theriophily," *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 4 (2009), 67-85 (published by AMS Press); chapter 4 as "Rousseau and the Love of Animals," *Philosophy and Literature*, 32 (2008), 293-302 (published by Johns Hopkins University Press); chapter 5 as "William Smellie and Enlightenment Anti-Anthropocentrism," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 33 (2009), 45-63 (published by Duke University Press); chapter 6 as "The Status of Animals in Scottish Enlightenment Philosophy," *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, 4 (2006), 63-82 (published by Edinburgh University Press); chapter 7 as "The Limits of Enlightenment Sensitivity to the Suffering of Animals," in *Knowledge and Pain*, ed. by Esther Cohen, Leona Toker, Manuela Consonni, and Otniel E. Dror (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2012), 123-44 (originally published by Rodopi, now by Brill); chapter 8 as "Animals in Enlightenment Historiography," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 75 (2012), 53-68 (published by the University of Pennsylvania Press); chapter 9, in an original version which was more generously illustrated, as "Dead Animals and the Beast-Machine: Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Paintings of Dead Animals, as Anti-Cartesian Statements," *Art History*, 22 (1999), 705-27 (published by Wiley); and chapter 10 as "Adam Smith's Economic and Ethical Consideration of Animals," *History of the Human Sciences*, 26 (2013), 52-67 (published by Sage). Chapter 11, as already noted, is completely new and does not include any significant previously published material.

The debts incurred over the many years of working on this book, from my days as a student more than twenty years ago to the recent highly professional and generous review and production process at Amsterdam University Press, are too many to even attempt to name in detail. Had I tried to do so, I would have inevitably ended up forgetting some people. I therefore hope that they will all accept this general and collective expression of gratitude.

This book is dedicated to my children.

# Introduction

This book outlines a central thesis, which, put simply, asserts that the study of early modern attitudes toward animals, mainly in the long eighteenth century, has unjustifiably concentrated on the history of philosophy and science and has failed to give adequate attention to emerging historiographical and economic conceptions of animals. A concomitant of this traditional approach has been an undue concentration on debates about the physical, and mainly mental, similarities and dissimilarities of humans and animals and also, in many cases, an overstatement of the rise of a modern morally sensitive attitude toward animals in the Enlightenment. In departing from this common historiography, the book begins intentionally with a discussion of the more familiar territory of the intellectual history of attitudes toward animals in science and philosophy but then gradually moves to the history of historiographical and economic conceptions of animals. In this way the importance of the more familiar materials is not denied, but at the same time the novelty of the less familiar materials can be comparatively appreciated. From a methodological vantage point as well, the interdisciplinary nature of the discussion, and specifically the integration of visual artistic sources into the field of intellectual history, is meant to show that the history of early modern attitudes toward animals is far from a limited philosophical or scientific topic.

Not long ago, the study of the history of attitudes toward animals still seemed to require justification.[1] Recent years have seen a growing stream of publications in this field, making any such justification all but redundant. Particular attention has been devoted to early modern attitudes toward animals.[2] This is no accident. It was during the early modern era that the cultural and intellectual consideration of animals gradually assumed its modern form. By the end of the eighteenth century, the way people

1 Delort, *Les animaux ont une histoire*, 7-11; Fudge, "Left-Handed Blow"; Ritvo, "Animal Planet."

2 For a far-from-comprehensive selection limited to book-length studies, see e.g. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*; Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning*; Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*; Boehrer, *Shakespeare Among the Animals*; Wolloch, *Subjugated Animals*; Fudge, ed., *Renaissance Beasts*; Palmeri, ed., *Humans and Other Animals*; Shannon, *Accommodated Animal*; Muratori and Dohm, eds., *Ethical Perspectives on Animals*; Senior, ed., *Cultural History of Animals*; Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots*; Cole, *Imperfect Creatures*; Quinsey, ed., *Animals and Humans*. Also see the special journal issues: Ridley, ed. "Animals in the Eighteenth Century"; Cole, ed., "Animal, All Too Animal"; Meli and Guerrini, eds., "The Representation of Animals in the Early Modern Period." Among older studies see Harwood, *Love for Animals*; Boas, *Happy Beast*; Hastings, *Man and Beast*; Rosenfield, *From Beast-Machine to Man-Machine*.

viewed and discussed animals was in many ways similar to the way they are perceived today. In this as in so many other respects, the long eighteenth century proved to be the transition to modernity. A major topic of interest among scholars of this topic has been the difference between early modern theriophily ("love of animals"), most notably as exemplified by Michel de Montaigne, and the more stringent Cartesian "beast-machine" theory of animal automatism. The latter has continued for many years to evoke controversy as to the exact level of commitment which Descartes himself had to denying animals sentience.[3] A large number of studies have been written about these topics, and therefore in what follows they will not be discussed in detail, beyond certain necessary references. It should be noted at the outset, however, that despite the seeming disparity between the theriophilic and the Cartesian outlooks, both positions accepted the basic assumption of human superiority to animals, whether in degree or in kind. The clash between animal advocates and their rivals, which has become so conspicuous in our contemporary culture, was much less evident before the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, in the following chapters it should be kept in mind that the varying positions of Montaigne and Descartes were familiar to most Enlightenment intellectuals.

That being said, in the eighteenth century itself these earlier considerations of animals became gradually irrelevant. As we will see in the following chapters, the traditional interest centering on the sensory and mental differences between human beings and animals, which was shared by both the theriophiles and the Cartesians and indeed almost anyone in the early modern era interested in animals, still persisted even in the late eighteenth century. Yet toward the end of the century new modes of discussion of animals, mainly historiographical and economic, gradually displaced this traditional discourse. Descartes's view of animals, which had been so famous, and often notorious, in the seventeenth century, was in fact practically discredited by the turn of the eighteenth century. At the same time the

3 For Montaigne, see Fudge, "Two Ethics"; Panichi, "Montaigne and Animal Ethics"; Boas, *Happy Beast*, passim; Melehy, "Silencing the Animals"; and Shannon, *Accommodated Animal*, 11-17, 183-97 (the last two items comparing him with Descartes). The debate on Descartes began in the nineteenth century and continues today. See e.g. Huxley, "On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata"; Balz, "Cartesian Doctrine"; Spink, *French Free-Thought*, 226-37; Shugg, "Cartesian Beast-Machine"; Cottingham, "Brute to the Brutes?"; Harrison, "Descartes on Animals"; Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents*, 132-52; Newman, "Unmasking Descartes's Case"; Radner and Radner, *Animal Consciousness*; Senior, "Souls of Men and Beasts"; Rosenfield, *From Beast-Machine to Man-Machine*, passim; Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning*, passim; Thomas, "Does Descartes Deny Consciousness to Animals?"; Friedland, "Friends for Dinner" (also on Montaigne); Strickland, "God's Creatures?"; Miller, "Descartes on Animals Revisited."

theriophilic tradition, which due to its roots in the thought of Plutarch and other classical philosophers, had been quite popular in the Renaissance, was gradually replaced by more modern versions of ethical arguments in favor of sensitivity to animal sentience.[4] In what follows, therefore, the use of the term "theriophily" will often be somewhat anachronistic. It should also be remembered that it was not in common use in the early modern era. It will therefore be used here loosely to designate a wide array of philosophical claims which to varying degrees emphasized animal sentience and usually some level, even if minimal, of consequent ethical obligation to animals. Eighteenth-century theriophiles were no longer interested in the classical exemplars of animal sagacity which had interested Montaigne and other early modern primitivists as part of their critique of human pride. Yet the philosophical difficulty of outlining a theory regarding the differences between human and animal characteristics, and the relevance this had for the ethical treatment of animals, if anything, became of even more wide-ranging interest. It will become apparent that a large majority of eighteenth-century intellectuals shared some level of theriophilic views and that this more often than not did not entail any kind of belief in animal rights in the modern sense. Put briefly, demonstrating some, even token, sensitivity to animal sentience became in the eighteenth century part of a civilized façade, almost a requirement of politesse and respectability. For someone to espouse a Cartesian view of animals, or total lack of sensitivity to their suffering, would have seemed not only philosophically unsound but also practically uncivilized. Yet this did not by any means entail a broadly-shared commitment to extolling animal mental capabilities or to improving their treatment in any significant way. The attempt by various historians to claim the eighteenth century as the historical moment of the roots of the modern conception of animal rights therefore seems to rest on shaky ground. At most, it refers to a phenomenon which was peripheral to the mainstream culture of the period.

One related eighteenth-century development that has often been discussed by scholars is the seeming rise in romantic sensitivity to the aesthetic qualities of nature, which has been linked to the view that the roots of the modern humanitarian consideration of animals originated in the Enlightenment. However, modern scholars ranging from Norbert Elias to Keith Thomas have noted, in different ways, how this emotional and aesthetic sensitivity to nature was the product of urban élites inhabiting

4 For the classical roots of the theriophilic tradition, see Gill, "Theriophily in Antiquity"; and Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas*, 389-420 and passim.

increasingly industrialized cities and hence being ever more removed from direct contact with nature.[5] It was precisely this increasing remove from nature and animals which enabled the emergence of modern environmentalism in general and animal-rights advocacy in particular. This was a type of luxury which less industrialized societies could not afford, a point which remains increasingly evident on a global scale today. Several scholars have noted, in different ways, how this dialectic developed specifically in relation to animals.[6] Of these, the most controversial has been Donna Landry, who has used this point as a justification for hunting in the traditional English countryside fashion.[7] It should, in any case, be kept in mind that the late eighteenth-century changes in conceptions of animals which will be charted below were intimately related to this transformation of European society's relationship with the natural environment.

All this begs the question: if the Enlightenment did not after all contribute in any straightforward way to a clear rise of an unambiguous humanitarian concern for animals (which raises a whole host of philosophical questions, well beyond the confines of the present discussion, regarding what exactly such a humanitarian view of animals might be), and if it did not contribute anything truly novel regarding the traditional debate about animal mental characteristics, what, if anything, was its innovative contribution to the rise of the modern view of animals? The argument developed in the following pages is that there was such a contribution and that it was constituted first by an increasingly historiographical consideration of animals, and the place their utilization played in human cultural progress, and second by an economic consideration which took this historical analytical view and transposed it into the prescriptive realm of nascent modern political economy. This type of detailed historiographical and economic discussion

5 Elias, *Civilizing Process*, 496-7; Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 181-91, 300-3; Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France*, 30-4, 199-220; Porter, "Urban and the Rustic in Enlightenment London"; and Harman, *Culture of Nature in Britain*, 5-6, 344. For the American scene, see Marx, *Machine in the Garden*; and Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. For an interesting application of Elias's ideas to the study of early modern attitudes toward animals, see Sahlins, "Royal Menageries of Louis XIV."

6 Berger, "Why Look at Animals?"; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 1-6 and passim; Raber, "From Sheep to Meat." Also of interest are Bradie, "Moral Status of Animals"; Harwood, *Love for Animals*, 64, 74-5, 126 and passim; Hastings, *Man and Beast*, 16, 279-82; Kerestman, "Breaking the Shackles of the Great Chain of Being"; Maehle, "Cruelty and Kindness to the 'Brute Creation'"; and in particular Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 181-3, 300-3.

7 Landry, *Invention of the Countryside*. Landry's otherwise sophisticated argument does not sufficiently tackle the question of the inherent moral problem concerned with the enjoyment hunters derive from killing animals.

of animals was barely noticeable before the eighteenth century, yet it subsequently became a mainstay of the modern view of them and their relations with human culture.

The following chapters will outline this changing view of animals throughout the long eighteenth century. The chapters in the first part will concentrate on the seventeenth-century practice of animal experimentation, or vivisection, to use the modern term. This will serve as a prelude to the connection between philosophical and other types of consideration of animals, and to subsequent developments in eighteenth-century discussions of them. The first chapter will raise some important connections between early modern experimentation on animals and the general contemporaneous ethical debate about them. The second chapter will take a closer look at one specific example of this connection, that of the famous Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens. These chapters will also set the stage for the pan-European nature of the developments charted here, though with particular attention devoted to several countries, not least Holland. The chapters in the subsequent second part will discuss various eighteenth-century examples of literary and philosophical discussions of animals and will convey the broad array of Enlightenment theriophilic positions, many of which were very moderate in their conceptual and ethical implications. Toward the end of this part we will begin to see the transition to a more modern historiographical discussion of animals. The third chapter examines one of the most emphatic, yet least-discussed, examples of theriophilic philosophy in early modern literary culture, the popular epistolary work known as the *Turkish Spy*. This is followed in the fourth chapter by a discussion of perhaps the most famous case of Enlightenment theriophily, that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau; but this discussion will also emphasize the clear limits to Rousseau's theriophily, which are usually not sufficiently recognized by scholars. The next chapter again returns to an almost forgotten case of Enlightenment theriophily, that of the Scotsman William Smellie, visiting the connection between consideration of animals and the wider issue, and limits, of eighteenth-century anthropocentrism and its critique. This is also the first chapter which emphasizes the important role which the Scottish Enlightenment played in developing novel considerations of animals, again demonstrating the pan-European nature of Enlightenment attitudes toward animals. Chapter 6 continues the investigation of Scottish Enlightenment views of animals, giving a general overview of this topic while taking a particular look at another nearly forgotten figure, the physician John Gregory, a much less innovative thinker when it came to animals compared to Smellie but,

in consequence, one who was probably more representative of common contemporaneous viewpoints. Chapter 7 then begins the shift, crucial to the argument of this book and mirroring the shift which occurred in Enlightenment thought itself, from more traditional discussions of animal mental characteristics vis-à-vis human beings, and the possible ethical ramifications of these characteristics, to the novel historiographical and economic view of animals. In this chapter the emphasis will be more on the ethical debate about animals as this appeared in the context of Enlightenment natural philosophy, which was to influence the view of nature and animals in Enlightenment historiography. This sets the stage for the final chapter of this part, which will consider in detail the rise of the Enlightenment's historiographical consideration of animals in the work of historians (broadly defined) such as Johann Gottfried Herder and the Abbé Raynal, and (more strictly defined), William Robertson, and most significantly, Edward Gibbon. This chapter will set the stage for the chapters of the third and final part, which will describe the conclusion of this changing conception of animals as it was transposed from the historiographical to the economic field of inquiry. It will do so, somewhat surprisingly at first, by looking at the depiction of animals not just in the obvious realm of political-economic discourse but also in art, specifically in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, thus re-emphasizing the significance of the Dutch contribution to changing conceptions of animals during the long eighteenth century. Joining a discussion of art and economic thought might seem methodologically unconventional, but the logic for doing so will be explained, and it will serve to emphasize how the earlier popular mode of discussing animals, most notably in philosophical discussions with varying levels of theriophilic overtones, was no longer at the forefront of intellectual innovation in the late Enlightenment or, indeed, perhaps not even a century earlier. Chapter 9 discusses the popular early modern genre of paintings of dead animals, and how these relate to contemporaneous philosophical debates about animals. Chapter 10 then moves to a detailed consideration of the most innovative economic discussion of animals in the Enlightenment, not surprisingly that developed by the Scottish philosopher and father of modern economic discourse, Adam Smith. The final chapter then joins all these threads – discussing the emergence of the modern economic view of animals both in art, again specifically Dutch seventeenth-century painting, and in economic literature itself. Some examples of how this new economic consideration of animals was perpetuated in nineteenth- and twentieth-century economic literature will then be surveyed to demonstrate how, by the late eighteenth century, the

stage was set for the modern type of economic perception of animals and their place in human civilization, an outlook which is still with us today.

The following chapters do not claim to present a conclusive and comprehensive discussion of eighteenth-century attitudes toward animals. They offer an interpretation of this topic, and they do so while discussing sources and materials most of which have not been discussed in this way before. In addition to philosophical, scientific, and literary materials, which often figure in intellectual history, significant attention will be given to artistic, historiographical, and economic sources, the latter two in particular heretofore having been conspicuously absent from studies of the history of attitudes toward animals. Also, as already mentioned, in addition to English, French, and other sources, particular attention will be devoted to seventeenth-century Holland and to eighteenth-century Scotland. Anyone even remotely familiar with the history of the Enlightenment, its sources, development, and influence, knows that the significance of these two centers of historical cultural innovation requires no introduction. The result of these methodological, thematic, and interpretative points will, hopefully, shed new light on a topic which in recent years has gained increasing scholarly attention.

This leads us to one final point which should be kept in mind throughout the following pages. The study of the history of attitudes toward animals is currently in a transitional state – on the one hand it is no longer a relatively new field of inquiry as it was thirty years ago; but on the other, it is not yet an established field with its own core of methodological and interpretative assumptions shared by most scholars. Indeed, there is not yet even any major point of contention over which scholars are engaged in heated debate (a sure sign that a field of inquiry has become truly significant and of wide interest). A further sign of this unhelpful esotericism is the fact that no major connections have been elaborated between the issues which historians of animals study, and the wide-ranging debate on the nature of the Enlightenment which has been ongoing in the past generation, and is still heatedly contested.[8] As an opening salvo I want to offer here a few general thoughts.

About thirty years ago historians began contesting the traditional view, represented by the impressive overviews of scholars such as Ernst Cassirer and Peter Gay, of the Enlightenment as a unified philosophical

8 For a few good surveys and commentaries, see Robertson, *Case for the Enlightenment*, 1-51; Oz-Salzberger, "New Approaches"; McMahon, "What are Enlightenments?";and O'Brien, "Return of the Enlightenment." Also see Wolloch, "Natural Disasters."

outlook dominating the eighteenth century and the transition from the early modern to the modern world.[9] Increasingly, the emphasis has been on pluralizing the Enlightenment, mainly along national lines but also while emphasizing different intellectual, social, and religious contexts.[10] J. G. A. Pocock has been particularly influential in pluralizing the Enlightenment, claiming that "There is no single or unifiable phenomenon describable as 'the Enlightenment,' but it is the definite article rather than the noun which is to be avoided." Pocock regards reference to *the* Enlightenment as an unavoidable but regrettable reification, and using qualifying adjectives is a reminder "that the keyword 'Enlightenment' is ours to use and should not master us."[11] This tendency, to various extents and in a myriad of ways, to contextualize and pluralize the Enlightenment, has in general predominated eighteenth-century studies for the past generation, not least because it validates the most esoteric of studies. It has added many new perspectives to our understanding of the long eighteenth century, yet it has tended to unjustifiably fragmentize the idea of the Enlightenment as the single most important intellectual, ideological, and ultimately social and political, force behind the great innovations which western civilization underwent during this transformational era.

Some scholars, such as John Robertson, while taking into consideration the insights offered by the pluralizing view of the Enlightenment, have nonetheless insisted on an updated interpretation of the Enlightenment as a more or less unified phenomenon.[12] The most prominent of these has been Jonathan Israel, in several voluminous, influential, and, in some scholars' views, controversial, books.[13] While Israel does not view the Enlightenment as strictly a unified movement, he does regard it as a pan-European one spanning the long eighteenth century. The differences within the Enlightenment itself (discounting the Counter Enlightenment, which was obviously opposed to it) were not along national or other contextual lines but, rather, according to the level of commitment to Enlightenment ideals, and most significantly to the idea of democracy. In accordance with this, Israel differentiates

9 Gay, *Enlightenment*; Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*.

10 A particularly influential volume in this respect has been Porter and Teich, eds., *Enlightenment in National Context*.

11 Pocock, "Historiography and Enlightenment," 83-4, 91, 93-5. Also see Pocock, *Religion: The First Triumph*, 215-19, 313-14.

12 Robertson, *Case for the Enlightenment*. For a different approach, reaffirming France as the center of the Enlightenment, see Edelstein, *Enlightenment: A Genealogy*.

13 Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*; Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*; Israel, *Revolution of the Mind*; Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*; Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas*.

between the Moderate and the Radical Enlightenments. It is the latter which he sees as evincing the true Enlightenment, as it was manifested in the initial stages of the French Revolution before it was corrupted by Robespierre and his ilk, whom Israel regards as enemies of the Enlightenment. Furthermore, Israel sees the roots of the Radical Enlightenment in the Spinozism of seventeenth-century Holland. It is beyond the scope of our discussion to go in detail into the many criticisms which have been leveled at Israel's interpretation, particularly regarding the Spinozistic roots of the Enlightenment, but also against his generalizing claims about its nature and its role in the revolutions of the late eighteenth century. Some of these criticisms, particularly on specific points, no doubt have merit. Yet such a wide-ranging overview of the intellectual history of the Enlightenment has been offered by no one else, not even by Peter Gay, and it seems petty to look for specific faults and imprecisions, which are bound to occur in such a wide-ranging survey. If nothing else, Israel's work has made it once more legitimate to seriously consider the Enlightenment in a general way, and this is a welcome correction to many years of studies which have become esoteric even among scholars of the eighteenth century. For my own part, if there is one point on which I disagree with Israel, it is that I view the differences between the Moderate and Radical Enlightenments as less emphatic than he does, and therefore the Enlightenment as even more unified.[14]

How does the history of attitudes toward animals figure into this whole debate? No doubt this seems precisely one of those fields which are esoteric, or at least highly specialized, to an extent which makes it the province of specialists, not of those interested in the Enlightenment in general. This, no doubt, is to the detriment of scholars from both ends of this spectrum. In any event, the initial tendency would be to view the rise of a seemingly greater, more modern, moral sensitivity to animals as part of the generally democratizing current of the Radical Enlightenment. This, however, would be a mistake. A radical figure like the Scotsman John Oswald could indeed couple an extreme advocacy of animal rights with a commitment to political revolutionary principles, dying in battle in the revolutionary army in France.[15] Yet Oswald was a rare anomaly. As will become clear throughout the following pages, recognition of animal sentience, and of at least some level of ethical consideration of animals, became a commonplace in the eighteenth century. This would suggest that the Moderate Enlightenment, rather than the Radical Enlightenment, was perhaps the main vehicle for

14 Wolloch, "Natural Disasters."

15 On Oswald see chapter 6 below; and Wolloch, *Subjugated Animals*, 62-3, 126.

effective long-term changes and improvements in the treatment of animals. Furthermore, as already noted, this seemingly new sensitivity to animals was itself a manifestation of a growing distance from the natural world and thus, ironically, of a new type of human control of this world.

Spinoza himself, as I have argued elsewhere, was in fact surprisingly insensitive to the need for an ethical consideration of animals.[16] Therefore, if one were to insist on the Spinozistic origins of the Radical Enlightenment and on the rise of an ethical consideration of animals as part of the Radical Enlightenment, it would be necessary to differentiate between Spinoza himself and subsequent Spinozistic philosophy (in itself a perfectly possible differentiation) and to document the connection between the Radical Enlightenment and discussions of animals. The latter is a much more difficult task, though perhaps not an impossible one. From a different perspective, the following pages will emphasize that many innovations in the consideration of animals during the long eighteenth century were developed initially, if not always in elaborate form, in seventeenth-century Holland, not least in the art of the Dutch Golden Age. This would tend to corroborate the place of Holland in the emergence of Enlightenment culture as it relates to animals, if not specifically emphasizing Spinoza. More broadly, the significant attention which developments in seventeenth-century Holland and eighteenth-century Scotland receive in the following pages underscores the unified view of the Enlightenment as both a pan-European phenomenon, and one which straddled both ends of the long eighteenth century.

Again, how this interacts with any clear view of progress in the human treatment of animals is a more complicated issue. Our unhistorical tendency from a presentist perspective is to view improvements in the treatment of animals in the nineteenth century, for example in the rise of various societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, as a clear sign of such progress, and the natural assumption is to locate their ideological origins in earlier Enlightenment thought. Yet, even given such progress, it was intertwined with increasing industrial utilization of animals, also the product of Enlightenment economic and scientific progress. The latter point might initially offer the possibility of a critical view of the Enlightenment and its seemingly insensitive domination of nature and animals. Over the years many philosophers, and not a few historians, have succumbed to this unhistorical and erroneous view of the Enlightenment, whether specifically regarding its attitude toward nature or, from an even more general perspective, severely critiquing the so-called "dialectic of the

16 Ibid., 39-44.

Enlightenment." However, if we limit ourselves to animals for a moment, such a view is even more unsubstantiated than the initial urge to connect the proclaimed improvement in the treatment of animals to eighteenth-century developments and the Radical Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was the source of most of the social and political progress we have made in the last three centuries, yet the story of its influence has not been a linear or simple one, and this is particularly true regarding the development of the treatment of animals.

Interestingly, therefore, a consideration of Enlightenment views of animals can contribute to our understanding of the Enlightenment in general, and of its considerations of more oft-studied human topics in the cultural, social, economic, and even political realms. The immediate tendency of trying to consider eighteenth-century attitudes toward animals would be to begin with the more well-known historical studies and debates of Enlightenment approaches to human issues in all these fields and to extrapolate from these to animal issues. However, this would tend to create problems of expectation – for example of "animal developments" comparable to the rise of new approaches to politics, whether these refer to the Radical Enlightenment's espousal of early ideas regarding universal suffrage (from which the Moderate Enlightenment by and large shrank) or to the actual revolutions of the late eighteenth century. How, if at all, such comparisons can be made based on serious historical evidence is no easy challenge. But to go even further, we might ask whether the opposite inference might also be possible – in other words, to begin with the study of animals and try to extrapolate from this to a novel perspective on traditional historiographical debates about human topics in the eighteenth century. The complicated relationship between the growing ethical sensitivity to animals and the growing distance of urban culture from nature, which, again, was relevant to nature in general, might, for example, pose interesting questions and qualifications regarding any simple tale of progress regarding human, or animal, rights. The fact is that the "Whiggish" view of progress, which in my opinion remains generally valid, can only gain in depth and sophistication by confronting such issues and complications. At this early stage of my own thinking about this problem, the only solution I can see on the horizon is to somehow view the development of attitudes toward animals in the long eighteenth century as predominantly part of the Moderate Enlightenment. On the one hand this would explain the moderate rather than radical limits to the modern sensitivity to animals which developed during this period, and on the other hand it will at the same time explain how this sensitivity, qua its limited nature, was able to gain a lasting foothold in modern

culture. Parallels with the influence of the Moderate Enlightenment on improvements in human social and political rights would suggest a similar historical trajectory – one of ineluctable, but far from smooth, progress which, contrary to the initial expectations of Moderate Enlightenment intellectuals, eventually led to more radical outcomes than they intended; outcomes, in fact, which were in large measure the consequences of their own ideas. As for scholarly substantiation for such a wide-ranging claim, all I can offer is the evidence presented in the following pages. While I have not made a point of explicitly noting the connection between this broad interpretation and the specific topics discussed in these pages, reading them with this in mind should offer clear substantiation for this interpretation.

All this, of course, is only by way of a general overview of a scholarly and intellectual terrain of which much remains to be studied. Yet if historians of attitudes toward animals wish to break out of the confines of esotericism, particularly vis-à-vis general Enlightenment studies, they have no choice but to begin to confront such questions.