A War of Compassion: Challenging the Species Barrier in the Works of Céline and Léautaud

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A War of Compassion:
Challenging the Species Barrier in the Works of Céline and Léautaud

by

Dawn Michele Mohrmann

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

Dawn Michele Mohrmann

Doctor of Philosophy in French Language and Literature

Washington University in St. Louis, 2022

Professor Pascal Ifri, Chair

Jacques Derrida, when affirming the undeniability of animal suffering in *L’Animal que donc je suis*, states that there is “une guerre en cours ... entre d’une part, ceux qui violent non seulement la vie animale mais jusqu’à ce sentiment de compassion et d’autre part, ceux qui en appellent au témoignage irrécusable de cette pitié” (50). This study investigates the nature of this ongoing war to which Derrida referred. I investigate both the nature of human cruelty and its counterpoint, empathy, which I propose as the response to the anthropocentrism that allows this struggle to continue. Through investigating theories of empathy, I establish the importance of developing empathetic reading practices in order to understand the perspective of the other. I investigate the roles of emotion, imagination, and holistic observation in creating the empathy that brings the reader out of the “I” mode, so that they can view the other as a “you.” Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Paul Léautaud participated in Derrida’s “guerre en cours” through their literature. They depict the depersonalization that accompanied the increased industrialization and mechanization of the early twentieth century and its effects on living beings, using their individual writing styles to create empathy for oppressed humans and...
animals alike in their readers. By using theories of empathy, ethics, and Céline’s and Léautaud’s literature, I ultimately establish a link between depersonalization and lack of empathy that affects both humans and animals. I propose literature as a solution capable of undoing the depersonalization of an increasingly mechanized world and restoring the empathy lost along the way. In this way, literature serves as ethical argumentation with the capacity to end the “guerre en cours" and bring about a new understanding of animals and other oppressed individuals.
Introduction

Ethics thus consists in this, that I experience the necessity of practicing the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live, as toward my own... The fundamental principle of morality which we seek as a necessity for thought is not, however, a matter only of arranging and deepening current views of good and evil, but also of expanding and extending these. A man is really ethical only when he obeys the constraint laid on him to help all life which he is able to succor, and when he goes out of his way to avoid injuring anything living. He does not ask how far this or that life deserves sympathy as valuable in itself, nor how far it is capable of feeling. To him life as such is sacred (Schweitzer 254).

Since Antiquity, certain authors and philosophers have separated themselves from the prevailing school of thought of their time regarding humans’ relationship to animals and nature. Although animals have traditionally been viewed in the Western world as lower life forms put here for man’s use and commodification, some independent thinkers have resisted this school of thought and spoken out against the animal abuses of their time, at times incurring the ridicule of their peers. Historically, those who have advocated for better treatment of animals than what was considered acceptable at the time have often also endorsed a simple, non-materialistic lifestyle. In the eighteenth century, the protagonists of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie* practiced kindness to animals, vegetarianism, and led a self-sufficient life away from the rest of society. Jason C. Hribal explains in “Animals, Agency, and Class: Writing the History of Animals from Below” that the followers of the Pythagorean movement, that spanned the 1640s to the 1790s, refused to kill or eat other animals, and some also gave up wool, leather, carriages, or even traveling by horse (105). In addition to respecting life, these practices had the value for religious adherents of alleviating need, a principle in the Quaker tradition (Hribal 107). In the nineteenth century, the vegetarianism movement also came to include leather and horse-drawn carriages for some adherents. Christophe Traïni explains in his book *The Animal Rights Struggle* that some nineteenth-century English religious sects advocated for more self-discipline, including kindness to animals (80). Evangelists gave up meat as part of their rejection of self-discipline, including kindness to animals (80).
indulgence. Traïni states: “Refraining from eating meat appeared particularly virtuous, firstly because meat production involved inflicting violence on animals, and, secondly, because meat constituted an important part of the kind of copious and luxurious diet only the rich could afford” (Traïni 80). At first a product of Protestantism, their asceticism eventually lost all religious affiliation (Traïni 81). Henry Stephens Salt’s Humanitarian League condemned inhumane practices that often overlapped with upper-class fashion and pastimes: “League members did not hesitate to condemn the fundamental brutality of a number of practices which were the preserve of the privileged classes: hunting, wearing fashionable clothing, and having a diet rich in meat” (Traïni 97).¹ This lifestyle contrasts with the increasingly materialistic way of life of the Western hemisphere and consequently with its political and economic interests, which have frequently pitted animal advocates against those holding political and economic power.

As consumerism has expanded, so has harm to animals inflicted for monetary gains. Yet, since the nineteenth century, concerned citizens have organized to increase awareness of the plight of these animals and advocate for more consideration of animals. Despite their efforts, a division of thought still exists between those who see animals as renewable resources to be exploited for humans’ material gain and those who call for a more ethical treatment of animals.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as the field of animal studies has developed, scholars have recognized that most previous thought regarding animal and environmental issues has been anthropocentric and focused on the human as subject with the right to exploit all other species. Descartes, with his notion of “animal-machines” in the seventeenth century, played a large role in both developing and justifying this mode of thinking. He drew a distinction between humans and all other

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¹ Salt’s Humanitarian League will be addressed in greater detail further on.
species that has been observed by many other philosophers since that time. Other theorists believe this distinction to exist, yet do not see animals as machines that can be treated inhumanely. But as Derek Ryan points out, in his book *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction*: “When hierarchical divides are constructed between humans and animals they are frequently based both on undervaluing animal life and inflating the significance of humanity” (Ryan 22). Consequently, they are frequently used to allow exploitation of animals and the environment. Animal studies, therefore, needs to address these hierarchical divides in order to prevent harm to animals.

Jacques Derrida, when affirming the undeniability of animal suffering in *L’Animal que donc je suis*, states that there is “une guerre en cours … entre d’une part, ceux qui violent non seulement la vie animale mais jusqu’à ce sentiment de compassion et d’autre part, ceux qui en appellent au témoignage irrécusable de cette pitié” (50). He establishes here that those who harm animals also harm those who have compassion for animals. According to this line of thought, those having compassion for animals become victims of a war against animals and compassion. The authors I study, Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Paul Léautaud, participated in this war, on the side of the animals. They rebelled against anthropocentric boundaries, created by humans, that attempt to impose unlimited physical power or to manipulate other species. The rhetoric of those waging this war has developed over the centuries, to the point where animal harm has become normalized in many instances, such as industrial agriculture and product testing in current times, and large-scale vivisection and work animal abuse in the past. It has developed to the point to where few ask the important question, “How can people inflict suffering despite displays of sentience?” I attempt to answer this question in this project, beginning with a short literary, intellectual, and social history of movements for and against animal welfare, and proceeding to Céline’s and Léautaud’s responses to this question through their critique of causes, such as war, power hierarchies, and a general lack of compassion, and the underlying rhetoric that tacitly supports cruelty to
animals. These acts may be committed by professionals, through butchery, war, or vivisection, or randomly by general members of the public. Céline and Léautaud indicate a link between violence, and suppression of emotion and empathy, just as in a war, for soldiers must suppress any empathy for those they harm or kill. Moreover, they extend this empathy to all the marginalized and downtrodden, a group that for them includes but does not limit itself to animals. In this study, I emphasize the relationship between empathy for animals and for other oppressed individuals, presenting empathy as the counterpoint to human cruelty. But in order to empathize, one must first refute the rhetoric and other obstacles meant to preclude the empathizing process. By calling the conflict between those who violate animal life and those who have compassion for animals a war, Derrida emphasizes the violence of those waging it, undermining rhetoric that portrays animal harm as “necessity” or even denies harm has occurred. This term also emphasizes the reliance on physical power. Céline and Léautaud defended, not only animals, but also humans who become victims of might makes right. Through their literature, they established that the solution to this war can only come about through compassion. Against those who condone and promote animal suffering, they fought back with and for compassion. As two rebels, they did not accept received ideas on animal objectification, but fought back instead with counter-ideas.

The Animal Movement: Going against the Grain

Rebellion and ridicule

Every great movement must experience three stages:

ridicule, discussion, adoption.—John Stuart Mill²

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² This epigraph is found on the first page of Tom Regan’s The Case for Animal Rights.
For every great change in society, the first change is usually ridicule, because the early reformers must battle against the accepted mode of thinking of their society. Montaigne begins an argument for respect and affection towards animals in his “Apologie de Raimond Sebond” with the phrase, “Et afin qu’on ne se moque de cette sympathie que j’ay avec elles (les bêtes),” demonstrating his awareness that sympathy for animals provokes the ridicule of others (455). Although the animal welfare movement continues to grow, those who concern themselves with animal well-being still go against the majority and encounter strong political opposition. In exploiting animals for personal gain, humans have increased their material wealth and dominance over nature. Thus, keeping animals classified as objects, or at least as lower species, has become both a political and economic goal for those who profit from an unquestionable divide between humans and animal “others.” Consequently, those who dare to oppose this divide have often been viewed as against human prosperity (or even as against humans), unmanly (if indeed a man), somewhere on the continuum between odd and crazy, or at a bare minimum, overly sentimental. Jean-Christophe Bailly writes in his book, Le Versant animal:

Parler des animaux. Je me suis rendu compte, malgré ruses et efforts, que très souvent les déclarations d’intensité que l’on peut faire à l’endroit des bêtes non seulement tombent à plat mais soulèvent une sorte de gêne, un peu comme si l’on avait par inadvertance franchi une limite et basculé dans quelque chose de déplacé, sinon d’obscène. Rien n’est plus pénible alors que le choix qui s’impose : se rétracter par discrétion ou s’enfoncer dans son discours par entêtement. La vérité est qu’un point de solitude est toujours atteint dans le rapport que l’on a avec les animaux (13).

Isolation becomes the result of having compassion for animals. The socially and politically acceptable manner of thinking is that animals are inferior beings and may or should, depending on the severity of the opposing thought, be treated accordingly. Thinking otherwise creates an alterity based, not on one’s genetics or native culture, but on one’s beliefs. Thus, at a time where many in the Western world pride themselves on the acceptance and promotion of various types of “otherness,” an otherness of thought is still not widely acceptable. Bailly emphasizes a typical reaction encountered when one
crosses the line of solitude to speak of “un animal aimé” : “Mais pour peu que l’on sorte de cette ligne et expose cet amour (cette solitude et ce lien) et alors vient presque toujours chez ceux à qui l’on s’est risqué à en parler un mouvement de recul, semblable à celui que l’on aurait peut-être soi-même devant un tel aveu fait par quelqu’un d’autre” (14). The extent of the social stigma is such that even those who feel the same, might have some type of negative reaction to such a confession.

The prevailing school of Western thought would have one believe that anthropocentrism is natural, rational and unquestionable. Yet Adam Weitzenfeld and Melanie Joy point out in “An Overview of Anthropocentrism, Humanism, and Speciesism in Critical Animal Theory”: “[A]nthropocentrism, which has narcissistically privileged humans as the center of all significance, is not an innate disposition but a historical outcome of a distorted humanism in which human freedom is founded upon the unfreedom of human and animal others” (3). They argue that this ideology remains human-centered by “marginalizing and subordinating nonhuman perspectives, interests, and beings” (Weitzenfeld and Joy 4). This marginalization and subordination has permitted global, capitalist “progress,” with which humanity is expected to be complicit. In anthropocentric thought, animals merit less consideration because of their lack of human speech and their vulnerability. Weitzenfeld and Joy, like Bailly, address the manner in which those who have compassion for animals are discounted:

Beings with anything less than full autonomy place less demand on one’s enlightened self-interest since they lack the power to fully reciprocate and self-actualize. To care about the exploitation and suffering of those institutionally or intrinsically less capable of reciprocating and self-actualization (such as animals) is considered irrational and sentimental. By this logic, caring for animals is childish, primitive, and feminine—identities the modern, rational subject is defined against (16).

Yet, their research emphasizes that this is not because of a natural, rational inclination, but because “enormous amounts of social energy are expended to forestall, undermine, and override sympathies for
animals” (Weitzenfeld and Joy 16). In the modern, industrial society, a large disconnect exists between what happens to animals behind closed doors and people’s daily lives, making abuse and mistreatment of animals an issue that one only encounters through research or an occasional news article. Consequently, people who would feel empathy and compassion if they had to actually encounter these practices, are distanced from the production chain of their daily lives, all the while supporting them with their purchases of products tested on animals and meat. Additionally, if objections are raised regarding animal treatment, the arguments of either prohibitive costs or some perceived benefit to humans tend to quiet these objections. One of the primary goals of the anti-speciesism movement is to avoid the renaming and deflecting typical of the political practices which promote seeing animals as disposable objects. This movement calls for seeing animals as animals—that is, as sentient beings that can suffer pain and fear—and consequently, seeing injustice simply as injustice.

All major reforms began with individuals who had the courage to oppose popular opinion. The movement for animal rights is sometimes compared to the movement to abolish slavery. Slavery was one widely accepted, comparable to the acceptance that industrial harm to animals profits from today. In an interview with Richard Dawkins, Peter Singer characterizes the two as issues of conformity. “We are very much a conforming animal and it’s very hard to do things sometimes against the prevailing norms and that’s why it was hard for people who had some scruples or doubts about slavery to actually imagine that they could abolish it and live without” (“Abortion and Animal Rights”). This statement is part of a conversation centered on meat eating and industrial farming. Dawkins, who eats meat, expresses a wish that people like Singer would have a greater effect on consciousness raising so that it “becomes the societal norm not to eat meat” (“Abortion and Animal Rights”). He admits that at the

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time of slavery he would have reluctantly become a slave owner because he would have “just gone along with what society does,” like those who eat meat today despite the mass suffering of animals that takes place in the meat industry (“Abortion and Animal Rights”). This interview highlights the prevalence of accepting societal norms and going along with them, whether reluctantly, willingly, or something in between. Chris DeRose, the founder of Last Chance for Animals, has also made a comparison from a cultural perspective between violence towards animals and slavery. When campaigning in South Korea for an end to the dog meat trade, he rejected the idea that this should be allowed because dog meat is part of the South Korean culture. He explains, “In our country we had a culture called slavery, we abolished it. It’s over, some cultures just don’t need to exist anymore” (Hancocks). This comparison opposes the idea of cultural relativity, that practices vary according to cultural norms but cannot be subject to moral judgement, and asserts that there is a non-subjective right and wrong regarding any type of oppression or violence towards any sentient beings.

Much of western culture promotes the idea that animals exist for our use and disposal. Tom Regan notes, in The Case for Animal Rights, how dissection in biology labs can sustain this idea. “What transpires in, say, a biology lab doesn’t occur in a vacuum. It is both an effect and a contributing cause of prevailing cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions about nonhumans. The acquisition of these beliefs and attitudes and the introduction into these traditions are part of our acculturation” (Case 367). In biology labs, the animals used for dissection become “learning tools” through their death, even though the anatomy learned from dissection can be learned by other means. The fact that animals are used and killed unnecessarily further contributes to the objectification of sentient beings and what Regan later calls the “throw-away attitude towards animals” (368). One justification used for complacency towards harm to animals is the approval of others, the wide-spread acceptance of systems that cause harm. Toxicity testing, drug testing, and intensive farming are all at least tacitly accepted in Western society
and those who oppose these practices are frequently judged negatively by others. Regan highlights the problem of appealing to “what most people think”:

Our prereflective intuitions...must be tested reflectively to determine how well they stand up under the conscientious attempt to reach an ideal moral judgment. Without making this attempt, those who are content to appeal to ‘what most people think’ have no rational basis to assume that what most people think in any given case is not based on their shared ignorance, their shared prejudices, or their shared irrationality. Merely to appeal to ‘what most people think,’ in other words, is not decisive in this, or in any other, moral context” (386-his emphasis).

Just because most people think one way or another does not mean that they are right. At one time, most people accepted segregation, but that was based on shared ignorance and prejudice and did not make them correct. Regan also lists the common cultural institutions that contribute to prejudice against animals. “[P]rejudices die hard, all the more so when, as in the present case, they are insulated by widespread secular customs and religious beliefs, sustained by large and powerful economic interests, and protected by the common law” (399). Viewed alternatively, no mainstream institutions exist that oppose prejudices against animals, or speciesism.

In his groundbreaking book *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer encourages his readers to overcome their fear of social disapproval and become vegetarian, even if others consider them “cranks”:

But if it should happen (being considered a crank), remember that you are in good company. All the best reformers—those who first opposed the slave trade, nationalistic wars, and the exploitation of children working a fourteen-hour day in the factories of the Industrial Revolution—were at first derided as cranks by those who had an interest in the abuses they were opposing” (AL 183).

He illustrates an important point, that oppression of living beings has frequently had enough popular support to continue with public knowledge, until reformers had the courage to face public disapproval. The first in the movement necessarily had to rebel against societal norms. Using animals as objects to fulfill human needs and desires has transpired for centuries, which has produced an unquestioned acceptance of their suffering to further human interests in the minds of many. Thus, those who oppose
this mode of thought are frequently met with criticism or ridicule. According to Singer, “When an attitude is so deeply ingrained in our thought that we take it as an unquestioned truth, a serious and consistent challenge to that attitude runs the risk of ridicule” (AL 185). This ridicule of those who sympathize with animals occurred even before Descartes’ famous animal-machines philosophy, which he and others used to justify cruelty towards animals. In his historic discussion of attitudes towards animals, Singer notes that Leonardo da Vinci was mocked for becoming a vegetarian out of concern for the sufferings of animals at a time when humanism promoted the superiority of man (AL 199). But as John Stuart Mill observes in the opening citation, this ridicule is a necessary step in bringing about any major reform.

Some reformers were pioneers because of their personal habits. Singer explains the sacrifice of early animal rights activists, who tried to live more humanely in general, including giving up meat and other practices inducing harm to animals: “For the pioneer vegetarians of the nineteenth century, giving up leather meant a real sacrifice, since shoes and boots made of other materials were scarce” (AL 231). He emphasizes here the extent to which animals advocates risked personal difficulty to improve the lives of animals. During this century, antivivisectionists encountered enormous opposition from the scientific and medical professions, including being labeled as “pathological,” as Traini points out: “Drawing on their knowledge of human nature, scientists went to some lengths to demonstrate that having antivivisectionist tendencies – far from simply resulting from a debatable philosophical choice – was purely and simply pathological” (151-his emphasis). This demonstrates how those who are before their time in opposing types of oppression supported by the majority can be characterized as mentally unstable due to their compassion for other beings. French psychiatrist Valentin Magnan was one who characterized the antivivisectionists as “sick.” He presented his paper “On the Madness of
Antivivisectionists” to the Biological society in 1884 in which he discussed three “sick people”: a vegetarian and two antivivisectionists. Traïni describes the account:

For each of them, the psychiatrist notes examples of their eccentric behavior, provoked by their constant concern for the suffering of animals: feeding stray dogs, taking in large numbers of cats, going into abattoirs to plead with butchers to stop their killing, collecting pieces of glass which could injure a horse if it fell, hurling abuse at coachmen who use a whip, remonstrating with passengers who do not allow animals the time they need to rest, etc. (152).

The concerned animal advocates here are considered eccentric in the nineteenth century for doing much of what became legislated or normalized in the twentieth century: stray dogs and cats are taken in and fed by shelters in the majority of European and North American nations, laws have been passed regarding the treatment of working carriage horses and streets are cleaned. Butchers, on the other hand, are still in business. Yet, the idea that merely feeding a stray dog or picking up glass that could injure a horse could be accepted as “eccentric behavior” from “sick people” highlights the oppression faced by the animal activists who refused to conform to the ideas of their time. What also can be noted here is the addition of pleading with the butchers in a largely non-vegetarian society, something that many could consider to be a threat to their way of life, to other behaviors that might be more readily accepted. This creates an association between feeding a stray dog and wanting butchers to stop feeding the population, and thus could lend compassionate behavior an air of extremism. It would appear that the psychiatrist is using a psychological strategy in order to maintain his way of life.

The scientific community of the late nineteenth century, which claimed scientific advances and used discrimination against women (of whom the animal protection movement was primarily comprised), was largely successful in portraying animal advocates as “sick people”: “[A]t the end of the 19th century scientists countermobilized and using the weapons of pathologization and gender discrimination, greatly contributed to the depiction of the animal protectionism as a movement which
attracted “sick people and blinkered fanatics”” (Traïni 156). This consequently delegitimized the animal protection movement and brought about a loss of support for the cause that lasted long into the twentieth century, including the period when Céline and Léautaud were actively writing. Like the animal advocates who came before them, they led a simpler way of life, not focusing on the accumulation of material goods. Not shying away from ridicule, they defended animals despite the lack of public acceptance of their cause. But, as with all progressive movements, if no one dared to speak out despite the ridicule, the movements would not gain ground.

The anti-speciesism movement: A new perspective on animals

Anti-anthropocentric thought views animals as members of society, with their own interests, rather than as a commodity. Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka argue in their book *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* that one should regard animals as “neighbors, friends, co-citizens, and members of communities” (24). More importantly, it challenges the points of view that human freedom equates with the subjugation of animals and nature, and that culture equates with the destruction of nature. As modern research has repeatedly revealed, the relationship between nature and humanity is an interdependent relationship and the destruction of nature also harms humanity. Yet, modern global capitalism insists on focusing on short-term material gains and ignoring long-term consequences.

Despite the effort to oppose it, there has been significant growth in movements to protect nature, both in terms of general environmentalism, including species protection, and animals specifically. Their supporters no longer follow the philosophy of “the end justifies the means,” and argue that the “means” are blatantly unjustifiable. Although there are currently more adherents to anti-speciesism than in the past, these adherents do not all share the same philosophy. Modern scholarly

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4 He cites the BSPA, 1912, P. 89.
anti-anthropocentric thought is divided into two camps: posthumanism and the more moderate form of anti-speciesism of those who believe that the superior capacities of humans make them responsible for caring for those beings who need protection. Both groups, however, seek to change the existing hierarchy of consideration, which allows for mass suffering of living, sentient beings for perceived benefits to mankind. Whereas posthumanism seeks to erase the hierarchy, the responsibility school of thought seeks to overturn the *might makes right* philosophy by advocating that the superior capacities of humans should be used for the benefit of all living beings. As James Ramsey Wallen states in his conclusion of “‘Our Natural and Original Illness’: Tracking the Human/Animal Distinction in Montaigne and Nietzsche,” regarding human exceptionality, “Most likely we are not apart. We are a part.” He emphasizes here that humans are at a minimum, less exceptional than many would like to think. Secondly, this implies that humans are only one part of a larger system and no single part of a system can be completely independent of the others, which has become a large focus of ecocriticism.

Yet although ecocriticism and animal studies frequently are lumped together, there is a difference between the two. Ecocriticism focuses on nature and ecosystems as a whole, whereas animal studies focuses on the value of individual nonhuman animals. Donna Landry explains the issue in a published e-conversation that was an attempt to “expand and record a discussion that took place at a recent meeting of the Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies” (Cole et al. 87):

> From an ecological perspective...the operative category in debates about biodiversity, sustainability, endangered status, conservation, and preservation is the species, not the individual. Keith Tester makes this clear when he writes that for an animal rights protester against fox hunting, for instance, it is the suffering or welfare of the individual fox that is at stake. For the ecologist, it is the welfare of the species as a whole that is at stake, and also the welfare of the entire habitat, not only of *vulpes vulpes* in isolation, but of foxes in their relations with all other species: the entire ecosystem of the bioregion in which said foxes live (Cole et al. 89).
That is to say that ecocriticism takes a more utilitarian stance than animal studies; it focuses on a “bigger picture” perspective where individual sufferings are not taken into account. In contrast, animal studies and animal activism concern themselves with the unjust sufferings of and harm to individual beings. Erica Fudge, in the same e-conversation, also distinguishes ecocriticism from scholarly animal studies: “[T]he ecological argument, in which the species rather than the individual is emphasized, sits at the heart of much literary ecocriticism, in which landscape and nature in general are the focus and animals perceived only as part of that landscape” (Cole et al. 93). In this perspective, animals and plants would have the same value, with neither taking precedence over the other, regardless of sentience. The word landscape itself both places animals in an aesthetic category, rather than a moral one, and relegates them to objects of sensory experience, instead of viewing them as subjects in their own right.

In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, Donna Haraway explains that consideration for animal welfare does not deny that humans have unique capacities, but it does erase the historical gap between humans and other species: “Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture” (151). To emphasize that this breach between nature and culture does not in fact exist, she coins the term “natureculture” in her *Companion Species Manifesto* to describe domestic animals. In this book, she describes how humans and animals have interacted and consequently become interdependent over a period of many centuries. Thus, both humans and domestic animals have become what they are today as a result, not of human superiority, but of this relationship. Companion species are a perfect example of this simultaneous evolution. They first became domesticated centuries ago, yet retain some of their natural instincts, making them neither completely “nature” nor completely “culture.” Erica Fudge also recognizes, in the same e-conversation previously cited, that interactions between any individuals, “human or otherwise... construct those individual actors” and through these “intra-actions” animals can
have agency (Cole et al. 94). This reinforces the idea that animals can contribute in their own way to the formation of humans and that the formation of individual beings is not just one-way—that of the human formation of the animal, but reciprocal. She later in the conversation emphasizes the importance of reading animals in literature in order to discover more about both the people of that period and the world of the animals themselves. Literary animals “are silent but speak volumes about their world; they are the other and they are self. If we don’t read these animals we miss out on crucial aspect of the period, of its construction of itself and its construction of all of us animals (human and nonhuman) now” (Cole et al. 96). Here again, the intra-actions of individual beings effect the evolution of society. The well-chosen term “construction” emphasizes a building block effect of the individual actions and reactions that form the society of any given time, whose influence forms the societal base of future generations. A negative aspect, however, of the simultaneous evolution of humans and animals is that through this evolution, they have become extremely dependent on humans and as a result have become easy to abuse. Whereas dependence of humans, whether young, elderly, or disabled, leads most to believe that we have a responsibility to those dependent humans, the dependence of animals does not always provoke the same response.

Amongst the advocates for better treatment of animals, Élisabeth de Fontenay is a philosopher who believes that humans have a responsibility towards animals. Her philosophy revolves around the human capacity for good. Consequently, her version of anti-speciesism believes that humans have superior capacities, but that these capacities are precisely what should drive humans to protect those more vulnerable than themselves. According to Nathan Snaza in “The Place of Animals in Politics: The Difficulty of Derrida’s ‘Political’ Legacy”: “Fontenay does not think *la cause animal*... has much traction if humans are not able to approach and embrace it” (184). She does not, like some in the posthumanist field, think humans are simply one species amongst others. Rather she believes that humans, with their
capacity for pity, must have compassion for animals and oppose those who would inflict suffering upon them. Snaza summarizes her philosophy as follows: “[To] be ‘human’ is to be at once a particular kind of being, and to be capable—alone among all beings—of the ‘goodness’ that anchors responsibility” (186). Acknowledging aspects of human uniqueness does not therefore correlate to accepting unrestrained acts of power.

Peter Singer was one of the first to concretely advocate “animal rights” from a philosophical point of view and although his controversial utilitarian philosophy has largely been discarded in more recent years, as I will explain in the following chapter, parts of his Animal Liberation are still cited in most posthumanist and anti-speciesist work. Even if one rejects the utilitarian aspects of the work, however, the historical aspects and information about the animal welfare movement still have value. According to Ryan, Singer makes the important point that, unlike other protest movements, “the organizing of social protest has to come from the domineering species, rather than from the victims—this makes it distinct from movements for black, women’s and gay liberation” (121). Nonetheless, it is a movement of rebellion against dominating political factors. Yet, as Singer makes evident, the victims cannot stand up for themselves, they need others to fight their battles for them.

Compassion for all the living

People who demonstrate concern for animals are often criticized for not putting people first. Yet those who are concerned with the welfare of animals are frequently also more compassionate towards people, displaying a greater overall capacity for empathy, the weapon needed to fight the war of compassion. Montaigne, who argues against cruelty towards people and towards animals in De la cruauté, writes, “Je hay entre autres vices, cruellement la cruauté, et par nature et par jugement comme

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5 Two of the primary arguments against his utilitarianism are its implications for the disabled and its supporting the same system that oppresses animals.
l’extrême de tous les vices” (451). He emphasizes here that cruelty is in fact a vice and that he has an extreme hatred of all types of cruelty. He later emphasizes in the same essay that those who are cruel towards animals are frequently cruel in general: “Les naturels sanguinaires à l’endroit des bestes, témoignent une propension naturelle à la cruauté. Après qu’on se fut apprivoisé à Rome aux spectacles des meurtres des animaux, on vint aux hommes et aux gladiateurs” (454-5). Montaigne demonstrates with this argument the progression that is frequently cited of first becoming habituated to cruelty towards animals and then to cruelty towards humans, showing that those who condone cruelty to animals condone cruelty in general. Two centuries later, in his *Eloge historique et philosophique de mon ami*, a eulogy written to his lost dog, Favori, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre notes a development from children’s cruelty towards animals to violence towards people as adults: “Il (Favori) redoutait ces écoliers qui, petits, s’amusent à lancer des pierres aux pauvres chiens et qui ensuite, devenus grands, jettent des bombes aux hommes” (58). This remark demonstrates a progression that becomes more violent and deadly as the boys, who are cruel as children, become older and throw more dangerous objects. What this shows is not just a change from violence towards animals to violence towards humans, but also a development to activities that are more violent and destructive in general. It is certainly easier to avoid a rock than a bomb. Furthermore, this citation supports Montaigne’s observation that those who act cruelly to animals exhibit a general penchant for cruelty that only becomes worse with time.

Singer describes historical figures who worked both for human and animal rights; two of the founders of the RSPCA were also leaders of the anti-slavery movement in the British Empire, and well-known early feminists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were part of the vegetarian
movement (AL 221). In France, the abolitionist Victor Schoelcher, who was instrumental in ending slavery, also openly supported the first French domestic animal protection legislation in 1850 (Baratay 151). Émile Zola, who took up the controversial cause of defending Alfred Dreyfus in his famous letter “J’accuse...!,” also defended animals in “L’Amour des bêtes” where he expresses his compassion for all who suffer, human or animal: “N’est-ce donc que l’insatiable tendresse que je sens en moi pour tout ce qui vit et tout ce qui souffre, une fraternité de souffrance, une charité qui me pousse vers les plus humbles et plus déshérités?” (96). He envisions in this article a universal love of animals that will lead to a universal love of mankind (Zola 96). In a later article, “Enfin couronné,” he expresses a hope to minimize all suffering: “Si tous les hommes doivent être heureux un jour sur la terre, soyez convaincus que toutes les bêtes seront heureuses avec eux. Notre sort commun devant la douleur ne saurait être séparé, c’est la vie universelle qu’il s’agit de sauver du plus de souffrance possible” (235-6). Marguerite Durand, who was instrumental in the development of the Cimetière des Chiens in Asnières, the first pet cemetery in France and one of the first of the modern world, founded the feminist newspaper *La Fronde*, a newspaper created and produced exclusively by women (Traïni 135). These examples help demonstrate that animal welfare advocates concern themselves, not just with justice for animals, but with justice in general. This thus affirms that compassion for animals does not exist in a philosophical vacuum, but encompasses a deeper philosophy of empathy for the persecuted and the injustice of harming innocent individuals for a perceived benefit to other, more highly considered, individuals. The formation of the first organizations against animal cruelty was a reaction against human violence: “[T]he founders of the first societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals were outraged by the violence of man and were motivated by the desire to soften their mores” (Traïni 126-his emphasis). Those who

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oppose human violence towards animals, typically oppose all types of human violence. Gandhi, famous for his peaceful resistance to men, is also well-known for having been a vegetarian and for his opposition to violence against animals. Henry Stephens Salt, a nineteenth century British scholar, author, and activist born in India, helped influence Gandhi’s vegetarianism (although the two in fact met in London). Emilie Dardenne describes the influence of Salt on Gandhi:

L’ouvrage de Salt déclencha donc chez Gandhi une profonde réflexion sur ses pratiques alimentaires et plus généralement, sur le statut des animaux et sur la possibilité, voire la nécessité, de vivre sans causer la souffrance de ces créatures sensibles. À la suite de sa découverte, Gandhi s’est lancé dans le végétarisme militant, en fondant une association végétarienne locale dans son quartier de Londres. Gandhi et Salt se rejoignaient aussi sur la question des châtiments corporels auxquels ils s’opposaient vigoureusement (mais aussi sur le pacifisme et le non-violence) (Dardenne).  

Both were against all forms of human-inflicted suffering—those inflicted on people as well as those inflicted on animals. Salt himself opposed violence to such an extent that in 1891 he created the Humanitarian League, an organization which rejected violence and advocated compassion for all creatures (Traïni 96). Their goals focused on both animals and humans. Traïni lists these objectives:

“[T]he members of this new society campaigned on numerous fronts: for reform of the criminal law and the prison system; for the abolition of both capital punishment and corporal punishment; for an education system which taught the obligation to be kind to all sentient beings, and – last but not least – for more wide-ranging and strictly enforced animal welfare legislation” (96-7). Salt became disenchanted with society and relocated from Eton to a country house where he lived simply and focused on his writing. Dardenne explains his objectives there: “Il souhaitait ainsi se retirer de la ‘sauvagerie’ et du cannibalisme du monde dans lequel il évoluait. Selon lui, en effet, ce monde n’avait rien de civilisé, au sens noble du terme : les uns vivaient sur le dos des autres, en les exploitant, en se

7 Unpaginated article
nourrissant de leurs chairs, en faisant volontiers des milliers de victimes lors des guerres, en punissant durement les criminels plutôt qu’en tentant de les faire évoluer” (Dardenne). This list enumerates multiple types of aggression towards the weaker and more dependent members of society. Animals comprised only part of this group.

When members of the working class began to join the nineteenth-century antivivisection movement, they were concerned not only with the suffering of animals, but also with the treatment of the poor by the doctors and scientists of the time. Christophe Traïni explains their position:

> These new antivivisectionists were attacking the arrogance of scientists and doctors of bourgeois origin, who, they believed, treated their poorest patients as being of negligible importance, nothing more than material for the experiments they used to establish their domination... They believed that the agony that vivisectionists inflicted on animals reflected a general lack of sensitivity to the weak, whether they were animals or humans (131-2).

This, like Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s observation, reflects Montaigne’s philosophy that associates cruelty to animals with a general acceptance of cruelty. This example also demonstrates an abuse of power by those who have power over both humans and nonhuman animals. Like the abolitionists and early women’s rights leaders noted by Singer, these antivivisectionists fought oppression of both animals and people.

According to Traïni, a famous quotation of Lamartine has been used by animal welfare activists since the nineteenth century, which he cites in English: “We have not two hearts, one for the animals and the other for man. We either have a heart or we do not” (98). The examples given illustrate this citation. The aforementioned authors and activists defended the weak and those without a voice. They became a voice, an advocate, for those belonging to an oppressed race, sex, species, or social status, and worked to propagate compassion for all the living.
Thus, Céline and Léautaud, by taking a stand for animals as well as for those on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy, became part of a tradition that merits closer consideration. Céline repeatedly expressed sympathy for the sick and dying, children, and animals, and those who could not fend for themselves. Léautaud, as I will show, also demonstrated compassion for the helpless. This relationship does not, however, represent an anomaly, as I have established. Animals are also helplessness in the face of hierarchal human power with respect to other marginalized beings, and those with the courage to defend animals often defend others cast aside by society.

The Cruelest animal – the human

Céline and Léautaud did not hesitate to point out the cruelty of their contemporaries, and each lamented their era’s lack of compassion. Throughout history, humans have participated in acts of cruelty to animals and other humans. Yet, we tend to attribute benevolence to humans and cruelty to animals. Words pertaining to animals frequently portray them as inferior to humans in one way or another. Humans who are cruel are often referred to as “beasts” or simply “animals,” whereas the word “humane” connotes kindness. Comparison to animals is used often to “lower” the status of those who behave in an unkind or aggressive manner. Yet, humans commit far more aggressions than any other animal and for far more superficial and self-serving reasons. Singer explains the irony of this terminology:

We rarely stop to consider that the animal who kills with the least reason to do so is the human animal. We think of lions and wolves as savage because they kill; but they must kill, or starve. Humans kill other animals for sport, to satisfy their curiosity, to beautify their bodies, and to please their palates. Human beings also kill members of their own species for greed or power. Moreover, human beings are not content with mere killing. Throughout history they have shown a tendency to torment and torture both their fellow human beings and their fellow animals before putting them to death. No other animal shows much interest in doing this (AL 222).
Whereas animals generally only kill for self-defense or for food, humans kill nonhuman animals to
market new make-up or for a “trophy” to hang above their fireplace. Historically they have killed other
humans for resources, riches, and power over others. Not only do humans kill more than any other
species, they are also the only species that regularly destroys entire habitats. According to Cary Wolfe,
“homo sapiens is, hands down, the most destructive species on the planet in terms of its effect on
biodiversity, habitat, and so on” (Cole et. al, 100). No other species, even those which are perceived by
some as “violent” species, comes close to being as destructive as human beings.

Supply chain disguises and development

In the twentieth century, complex chains of production promote a disconnect between the
consuming human and the harm done to animals in order to put a final product on the stores’ shelves.
That harm could take the form of animal toxicity testing or intensive farming conditions, but the nicely
packaged end product never reveals any traces of the animal treatment that went into its production.
Despite the many differences amongst animals, many people often lump them together in a single
category—the animal—which is obviously opposed to humans. This division gives a privileged status to
humans while associating animals, such as a chimpanzee and an oyster, that have no similarities
whatsoever, other than being a part of the animal kingdom. Part of the violence of treating all animals
as a single category is that this view often portrays them as a group of living objects, with no inherent
value. Consequently, they are then considered disposable. According to this point of view, animals can
be sacrificed to “progress” without concern for their welfare. Development for humans’ profit has long
been treated as a justification for the destruction of all categories of nature, including animals. Pierre
Gascar writes:

Demain, à ce train, la nature ne devra un reste de vie qu’à des spectres. Inévitablement,
une œuvre d’extermination, comme celle à laquelle nous nous livrons, sous le couvert
du progrès, laisse subsister pour un temps, malgré son ampleur, quelques individus
isolés, qu’on perd d’autant plus facilement de vue que, rendus prudents, ils se cachent. Quand ils se montrent de nouveau, par accident, nous en éprouvons un malaise : on est toujours porté à lire une menace, dans la résurrection. Bref, les deux circaètes ne sont plus dans l’ordre des choses (11-my emphasis).

He is speaking here of the last pair of circaetus in a valley of the Jura. With the words “sous le couvert du progrès,” he demonstrates that not all of what has actually occurred is in fact, true progress. “Progress” has become the excuse for destruction without, in reality, always bringing about something better. After describing the manner in which the circaetus fly in circles for hours, Gascar poses the question: “Et si c’était un signe ?” He concludes that the eagles do have a message for humanity : “Mais il n’a pas la valeur d’un présage ; il traduit seulement le désarroi que les espèces animales en voie de disparition éprouvent de nos jours” (Gascar 12). Here he demonstrates that without physically coming into contact with these animals, humans have still put them in a state of distress. They have difficulty finding the food they need to survive and as he explains shortly after this, they have already had to change their diet due to habitat loss.

Animals are frequently the indirect victims of environmental alterations and destruction. One only need read the news to come into contact with stories of the effects of trash and pollution, some caused by pesticide runoff from rivers, on the oceans and the animals that live in them. In environmental literature, Frankenstein is often used as an example of an effect of man altering nature. Wolfe explains that the Frankenstein comparison should not even be necessary: “Indeed, one need not by captivated by Frankenstein scenarios to acknowledge that practices such as the current headlong rush into genetic engineering of plants and animals entail all sorts of unforeseeable consequences, inhumane practices, and potential biological disasters” (Rites 25). In other words, it should just be common sense that we cannot foresee all possible consequences of altering nature. Freidrich Engels warned over a century ago: “Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human
victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us.” Yet, those who focus only on short-term goals refuse to concern themselves with any of the side effects that result from the fulfillment of these goals.

In modern society, long supply chains keep the animal cruelty that is prevalent today hidden from daily life. Animal testing and factory farms are only the first steps of a very long chain of events where only the end product is seen by the public. Singer describes the dissociation created by this process in relation to farm animals: “We buy our meat and poultry in neat plastic packages. It hardly bleeds. There is no reason to associate this package with a living, breathing, walking, suffering animal. The very words we use conceal its origins: we eat beef, not bull, steer, or cow, and pork, not pig—although for some reason we seem to find it easier to face the true nature of a leg of lamb” (Singer AL 95). Additionally, we no longer have butchers that slaughter animals in the middle of urban areas and the modern slaughterhouses are never located in commercial areas. A modern city dweller never comes into contact with the conditions of the life and death of animals that become part of the products they buy, whether the product be the animal itself or a product that was brought to market via an animal testing process. The mechanization that ultimately led to this type of animal objectification also prompted Céline’s and Léautaud’s rejection of it, in their desire for more compassion and more simplicity. Rather than turning their back on animal harm, they illustrated it in their literature, creating awareness instead of concealment.

Chapter Breakdown

In this project, I hope to establish the nature of animal suffering, its relationship to human suffering, and the counterpoint to this suffering, empathy. As I will show, the Enlightenment brought

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8 Freidrich Engels, The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man (1876)
about new conceptions of empathy for the other, extending sympathy to previously excluded groups, and ultimately giving birth to the idea of individual rights. However, the industrialization and urbanization of the following century reversed gains made in empathetic understanding of others as these movements resulted in depersonalization and mechanization of human and nonhuman animals.

In my first chapter, I address the advent of animal literature and treatment in France, and later in other areas of Europe and the US, as important animal movements arose in these other areas and ultimately had a more universal effect. This section places my authors and their literature regarding animals in their historical context, importantly revealing a tension between mechanization on the one side and empathy on the other, as well as the recurrence of certain ideas in animal advocacy. I document how animal advocacy adapts to new arguments and practices. I then provide an overview of the increasing mechanization of animals that transpired later in the century and which still continues. This was what Céline and Léautaud tried to prevent by attempting to inspire empathy and denouncing the depersonalization of society in an era that generated large-scale mechanization of animals.

My second chapter establishes the theoretical basis for the final two chapters. I present arguments for developing empathy for nonhuman animals along with efforts to suppress it. I address the benefit of emotions in forming appropriate responses to the world and the consequences of eliminating these emotional responses, establishing a link between cruelty and the suppression of emotions. This chapter therefore suggests why literature is, at times, more effective than scientific or political arguments, in inducing an empathetic response in the reader and creating a common cause.

My third and fourth chapters focus on Céline and Léautaud respectively. Although the two never learned to appreciate each other, they have many similarities, and these chapters consequently illustrate how they used similar underlying ideas in their literature. Both advocate for a return to civilized emotions in response to the growing coldness of a mechanized society. They extend empathy
to animals through expressing the need to contemplate the animals’ own perspectives of their experiences. By illustrating this need to consider the experiential life of animals, they attempt to change the conceptual space relegated to them by power hierarchies.

My chapter on Céline focuses on the emotional suppression brought about by mechanization and his battle to emphasize the importance of emotion in general, and especially towards animals. He conveys that creativity and imagination can inspire empathy and compassion, resulting in more concern for all creatures. In addition to focusing in on the animals’ experiences, he presents their positive characteristics that have been suppressed or denied in order to forestall empathy.

My chapter on Léautaud focuses on the role of compassion in understanding the effects of human actions on animals. It expands on the importance of identification with their experiential life in creating knowledge. His vast experience with multiple animals in their daily environment puts him in a unique position to generate new knowledge about animals’ capacities.

I hope to establish with this study why these authors, previously excluded from the field of animal studies, deserve to have their place in the field. I also hope to establish that two “misanthropes” have made a large contribution to increasing understanding of empathy and compassion. Their status as rebels has doubtlessly excluded them from much consideration in a field based on ethics. However, it is this rebellion against societal norms that perfectly illustrates their willingness to risk disapproval, ridicule, and exclusion for the sake of their beliefs. In a field with much opposition, characterized by Derrida as a war, those fighting it need this type of courage to make progress. Whereas more socially acceptable authors take their place in animal studies literature, those who advocate objectification of animals have not ceased to cement their power, leading to the mass suffering of today’s animals used in industry. They remain more acceptable by virtue of not completely going against the grain, but ultimately, they did not bring about large-scale reform. Perhaps reconsideration of those who rebelled
without seeking public approval, such as Céline and Léautaud, can bring about new understandings of animals, and ultimately de-normalize and de-familiarize animal harm and suffering.
1. “The Animal”: Object or Fellow Creature?

1.1 Historical perspectives on animals

Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Paul Léautaud wrote during a period where increasing industrialization and mechanization created depersonalization and a decrease of empathy for animals and humans alike. They included animals in their texts, using passages that create empathy and depict the animal conditions of the time. Others before them had also tried to illustrate the plight of animals in their own day. A study of some of the more well-known and influential French authors provides a brief, albeit necessarily incomplete for reasons of space, literary and philosophical history inherited by these authors. This places their works in a literary and philosophical context that provides past ideas of animals, some of which recur. The fact that these ideas recur but fail to bring about lasting change depicts the “guerre en cours” noted by Derrida. When they gain ground, those who desire the objectification of animals fight back.

This section also traces social changes involving animals, providing a background of relevant animal movements and efforts made to improve their conditions. These efforts reflect both reactions to changing human conditions and changing attitudes towards animals. This again places the work of Céline and Léautaud within a relevant context in order to better understand their work.

Humanism

The sixteenth century, which saw a renewed interest in the classics, also saw a rebirth in the defense of animals, which had previously been advocated by Plutarch. Scientific advances recognized the relationship between humans and other living beings and questioned the central position that had up until then been attributed to man (Baratay, “Promotion” 132). In “La promotion de l’animal sensible. Une révolution dans la Révolution,” Éric Baratay explains the result of these developments: “Ainsi, le
XVIe siècle voit la renaissance de la notion, initiée par Plutarque, de communauté des êtres au nom d’un partage de la raison” (132). Two celebrated men of the Renaissance, Montaigne and Da Vinci, took up the cause of animals and viewed them as sentient beings.

Montaigne addressed animal cruelty in his essays. He advocates in favor of a more ethical treatment of animals and calls into question the prevailing conceptions of them used to justify their mistreatment. Baratay notes Montaigne’s view that humans should show benevolence towards animals before describing the sixteenth century reception of this idea: “Mais, comme en Grèce antique, cette promotion de l’animal est mal accueillie, perçue comme une déstabilisation sociale, l’homme disant avoir besoin des animaux pour vivre, d’où la réticence, jusqu’à nos jours, à réviser leur portrait d’êtres irraisonnables et instinctifs, justifiant leur traitement” (“Promotion” 132-3). Interestingly, he notes the continuation “jusqu’à nos jours” of the desire to keep animals confined to categories that restrict one to viewing them as beings without interests and welfare of their own. By starting with antiquity and continuing into today’s world, he demonstrates the continuity of the resistance to animal welfare concerns; the usage man can make of them takes precedence over their suffering.

Two of Montaigne’s essays, “De la cruauté” and “Apologie de Raimond Sebond,” give an ardent defense of animals and nature. In “De la cruauté” he first introduces his ideas on the treatment of animals by expressing the natural sense of pity that he feels when seeing them die:

De moy, je n’ay pas sçeu voir seulement sans desplaisir poursuivre et tuer une beste innocente, qui est sans deffence et de qui nous ne recevons aucune offense. Et, comme il advient communement que le cerf, se sentant hors d’ailaine et de force, n’ayant plus autre remede, se rejette et rend à nous mesmes qui le poursuivons, nous demandant mercy par ses larmes, ‘Et, par ses plaintes, couvert de sang, il semble implorer sa grâce’ (Virgile, Én., VII, 501) (Montaigne 432-3).

Montaigne introduces in this part of the essay the idea that animals suffer, including in that suffering some sense of emotional suffering, which is evident in the citation he chose from Virgil, written 16
centuries earlier. This citation also emphasizes the violence of the hunt with the expression “couvert de sang” placed between “plaintes” and “implorer sa grâce,” two expressions that reinforce the innocence and helplessness of the deer, and consequently demonstrate the injustice to which he previously alluded. He increases the sense of pity in the reader by depicting the stag weakened, collapsing and then crying for mercy after having already been wounded.

Hassan Melehy, in his article “Montaigne and Ethics: The Case of Animals,” remarks that: “Montaigne sets up the reciprocal relationship between human being and beast that is upset by the practice of hunting: the animal has no ‘deffence’ and ‘we’ have taken no ‘offense’ from it. These two contraries, or rather the lack thereof, are in balance with each other such that there is no antagonism between the two types of creatures except that which the practice of hunting, which belongs to one of them, imposes” (101). Melehy, in showing that before hunting there is no antagonistic relationship between the human and the stag, reinforces the stag’s innocence. He further highlights this innocence by stressing that the hunting is imposed on the deer by the human. The deer has not voluntarily entered into the position of the hunted and he cannot escape it.

In Montaigne’s essay, he follows this demonstration of cruelty towards a defenseless animal with the explanation that societies that treat animals cruelly are naturally disposed towards cruelty, giving the example cited previously of the Romans who became accustomed to the slaughter of animals and then progressed to men and gladiators (Montaigne 433). By showing this progression, Montaigne emphasizes the danger of those who are cruel towards animals, as they have lost at least some element of their ability to feel pity, a sentiment that will be extremely important to Rousseau two centuries later, for other living beings.

In order to defend his sympathy for animals, Montaigne calls upon religion, which was a key component of the defense or condemnation of an idea or action during that period:
Et, afin qu’on ne se moque de cette sympathie que j’ay avecques elles, la Theologie mesme nous ordonne quelque faveur en leur endroit; et considerant que un mesme maistre nous a logez en ce palais pour son service et qu’elles sont, comme nous, de sa famille, elle a raison de nous enjoindre quelque respect et affection envers elles (433).

Here he demonstrates that animals should not be treated as objects, but as living entities and that we should have affection for animals as we would for humans, since the same Creator made all living things, and thus by extension, they all have a right to “log(ent) en ce palais.”

Montaigne also addresses one of the more common claims of the anti-environmentalists of our time when he states: “Mais, quand je rencontre... les discours qui essayent à montrer la prochaine ressemblance de nous aux animaux, et combien ils ont de part à nos plus grands privileges, et avec combien de vraysemblance on nous les apparie, certes, j’en rabats beaucoup de nostre presomption, et me demets volontiers de cette royauté imaginaire qu’on nous donne sur les autres creatures” (435). He makes here an argument against speciesism by erasing a clear divide between man and other animals and calling any perceived absolute power of man over other animals “imaginaire.” That is to say that man does not have the right to any unlimited authority over the rest of creation, which he extends to trees and plants in the following paragraph, invoking an “obligation mutuelle” (Montaigne 435). While emphasizing the relationship with animals, he emphasizes that humans have a mutual relationship with all of nature that should entail duty and respect (Montaigne 435). By characterizing this relationship as interactive and as one that involves obligation, he demonstrates that nature is not a collection of objects for man to do with as he pleases.

In the following essay, “Apologie de Raimond Sebond,” Montaigne again criticizes the idea that animals and nature are completely at mankind’s disposal. He shows here that the idea that man is master of the universe is pure vanity:

Qu’il (l’homme) me face entendre par l’effort de son discours, sur quels fondemens il a basty ces grands avantages qu’il pense avoir sur les autres creatures. Qui luy a persuadé
He highlights here the insignificance and powerlessness of man who thinks that he is master of the universe by showing that all the major elements of the universe are outside the realm of his control. He also displays the arrogance of this way of thinking when he emphasizes the extent and age of the universe in comparison with man. Additionally, he emphasizes the impossibility of ever proving that privilege which man claims of being the master of nature, which was also demonstrated by highlighting the elements which man has no hope of being able to control, the heavenly bodies and the sea.

In this essay, Montaigne also asserts that man is not capable of knowing the thought processes of animals, but through his examples and argumentation, he shows some type of rational process and communication in various members of the animal kingdom, blaming the vanity of man in this area as well for his complete rejection of these two possibilities. He again poses questions, knowing that they cannot be answered with any certainty: “Comment cognoit il, par l’effort de son intelligence, les branles internes et secrets des animaux? par quelle comparaison d’eux à nous conclud il la bestise qu’il leur attribue?” (452). He then uses the famous specific example of his own cat: “Quand je me jouë à ma chatte, qui sçait si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fay d’elle” (Montaigne 452). Melehy points out that, when Montaigne poses this question, he “indicates a yielding of, or quiet flight from, the position of dominant human subject” (Melehy 98). That is to say that Montaigne, by questioning the subject-object relationship between man and animal, moves away from anthropocentric thinking by
recognizing his cat as being an agent in her own right. He shows by posing these questions that man can neither demonstrate nor prove any lack of mental activity or communication in other animals. All that can be known is that they cannot communicate with humans, nor can humans communicate with them, in the same way that humans communicate with each other. He follows this with numerous examples of some type of communication in horses, cattle, elephants, birds, and insects amongst other animals, thus showing that animals, even those with very little resemblance to humans, have some form of communication. In “Our Natural and Original Illness’: Tracking the Human/Animal Distinction in Montaigne and Nietzsche,” James Ramsey Wallen highlights that in this essay, an animal nature in humans becomes a positive, rather than a negative attribute:

Montaigne happily admits animals into a reformulated morality of good and evil, in which goodness consists in submitting to one’s animal nature rather than overcoming it. Montaigne cites lengthy examples of animals displaying loyalty, gratitude, kindness, and so forth, and argues that animals’ goodness, like our own, stems from natural inclination rather than free will... In this view, even the bird of prey can be good in its devotion to its mate or its hatchlings, or in the falcon’s loyalty to the falconer, or (at the very least) in not seeking to ‘honor and ennoble’ itself through dubious biens aquis” (464).

Here virtues become the property of animals and man’s vanity and materialism are represented as vices obviously unseen in the nonhuman animal kingdom. These vices lead people away from their simpler, more natural instincts common to both humans and nonhuman animals.

Montaigne addresses in these two essays arguments that are still used today to justify both abuse of animals and that of the environment. In the “Apologie” he uses precise examples to demonstrate the presence of the very qualities that those in favor of treating animals and the environment as disposable objects deny in order to further their material goals. However, by posing the questions that he does, Montaigne shows the indefensibility of these claims. Already in the sixteenth century, he portrayed animals as sensitive beings and wrote of a responsibility towards animals and nature.
Mechanism

The seventeenth century marked a large change in philosophy regarding animals. In Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction, Derek Ryan writes: “In modern Europe, by far the most influential statement about animals is attributed to René Descartes’ Discours de la Méthode, first published in 1637, which divides thinking humans from automated animals” (6). This work created a barrier between humans and animals that his followers used to justify animal cruelty. In his Discours he asserted that animals were similar to clocks and all their reactions to stimuli were the result of the disposition of their organs and could be compared to springs and wheels that activated specific responses. Because they could not speak, they could not think, and therefore had a completely different nature from that of humans. In Le Silence des bêtes, Élisabeth de Fontenay writes of Descartes:

[L]eur nature est d’une essence tout à fait différente de la nôtre : ils n’ont pas d’esprit ; ce qui agit en eux, c’est seulement la nature et un mouvement mécanique, exact et limité comme celui de l’horloge. L’âme raisonnable qui rend l’homme capable de parler, donc de penser, ne saurait quant à elle être tirée de la puissance de la matière : elle doit expressément être créée” (283).

What his Discours did not do was take into account any type of variety in animal responses to the same stimuli. Consequently one would expect that if it were true, animals would be completely predictable, like the clock to which he compared them. However individual animal personality was not taken into consideration and Descartes’ followers were able to “justify” their vivisection experiments on the basis of his animal-machine theory, which they accepted as fact.

Although Descartes also viewed human bodies as automata, he attributed a soul to them that separated humans from other animals. Keith Thomas writes of Descartes’ philosophy in Man and the Natural World:

[An]imals were mere machines or automata, like clocks, capable of complex behaviour, but wholly incapable of speech, reasoning, or, on some interpretations, even sensation. For Descartes, the human body was also an automaton; after all, it performed many unconscious functions, like that of digestion. But the difference was that within the
human machine there was a mind and therefore a separable soul, whereas brutes were automata without minds or souls (33).

In Descartes’ *Discours de la méthode*, animals, being closer to clocks than to humans, are incapable of mental activity. Descartes uses the lack of human language to create an unbridgeable gap between humans and all other animals. According to his *Discours*, all nonhuman animal language results from a sort of trigger being pushed which activates a specific response and does not reflect any mental process. He also argues that humans alone possess the faculty of reason, while all other animals act according to the disposition of their organs:

[B]ien qu’elles fissent plusieurs choses aussi bien, ou peut-être mieux qu’aucun de nous, elles manqueraient infailliblement en quelques autres, par lesquelles on découvrirait qu’elles n’agiraient pas par connaissance, mais seulement par la disposition de leurs organes. Car, au lieu que la raison est un instrument universel, qui peut servir en toutes sortes de rencontres, ces organes ont besoin de quelque particulière disposition pour chaque action particulière ; d’où vient qu’il est moralement impossible qu’il y en ait assez de divers en une machine pour la faire agir en toutes les occurrences de la vie, de même façon que notre raison nous fait agir” (Descartes 57).

Descartes insists that because animals do not possess the same level of understanding as humans and cannot communicate completely with them, that they therefore lack reason altogether: “Et ceci ne témoigne pas seulement que les bêtes ont moins de raison que les hommes, mais qu’elles n’en ont point du tout” (58). He admits that animals do some things better than humans, but insists that because they lack skill in other areas, they also possess no mind at all:

C’est aussi une chose fort remarquable que, bien qu’il y ait plusieurs animaux qui témoignent plus d’industrie que nous en quelques-unes de leurs actions, on voit toutefois que les mêmes n’en témoignent point du tout en beaucoup d’autres : de façon que ce qu’ils font mieux que nous ne prouve pas qu’ils ont de l’esprit ; car, à ce compte, ils en auraient plus qu’aucun de nous et feraient mieux en toute chose ; mais plutôt qu’ils n’en ont point, et que c’est la nature qui agit en eux, selon la disposition de leurs organes (Descartes 58-9).

Consequently, they are simply machines, like a clock: “[A]insi qu’on voit qu’un horloge, qui n’est composé que de roues et de ressorts, peut compter les heures, et mesurer le temps, plus justement que
nous avec toute notre prudence” (Descartes 59). Thus, the organs to which he attributes all animal
responses become the wheels and springs of a machine. The assertive language that Descartes uses to
deny reason, skills, and minds to animals (“point du tout,” “point du tout”, and “point”) negates any
possible middle-ground between machine and human as well as closing off any opening for questioning
of his theory.

He further discourages any disagreement with this theory by implying that believing in any
closer relationship between animals and men, is the same as denying that humans possess a
transcendent soul and consequently they would be, not at the same level as an animal which might be
loved by its owner, such as a dog or a horse, but at the same level as insects:

Au reste, je me suis ici un peu étendu sur le sujet de l’âme, à cause qu’il est des plus
importants ; car, après l’erreur de ceux qui nient Dieu, laquelle je pense avoir ci-dessus
assez réfutée, il n’y en a point qui éloigne plutôt les esprits faibles du droit chemin de la
vertu que d’imaginer que l’âme des bêtes soit de même nature que la nôtre, et que, par
conséquent, nous n’avons rien à craindre, ni à espérer, après cette vie, non plus que les
mouches et les fourmis (Descartes 59).

Assimilating humans and non-human animals becomes second only to denying God entirely, and if one
does not agree with Descartes, one has then strayed from the path of virtue. Yet, in his argument
equating animals with machines, Descartes focuses on lack of speech, skill, and reason, which does not
in and of itself require acceptance or rejection of any belief regarding transcendent souls for humans or
animals. The relationship between these attributes and the soul requires acceptance of yet another
part of Descartes’ theory, mind-body dualism, which disassociates thinking from physiological functions,

hence his need to disprove mental activity in animals. His use of insects rather than mammals for
comparative purposes seems to reflect a rhetorical strategy of using animals from which people would
most want to distance themselves and for which they generally would not have any sympathy, even
though, according to his belief that humans have souls but animals do not, he could have used dogs and horses instead of flies and ants. This choice, however, would not have the same effect on the reader.

His philosophy fit in with its time and he had many followers. Thomas explains the effect Cartesianism had in Europe: “The Cartesian view of animal souls generated a vast learned literature, and it is no exaggeration to describe it as a central preoccupation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European intellectuals” (35). He notes, however, that in England, Descartes did not have many devoted followers, and many refuted his ideas (Thomas 35). Thomas attributes the willingness to accept Descartes’ doctrine to the mechanism of the age:

Today, this doctrine may seem to fly in the face of common sense. But it is not surprising that Cartesianism had its supporters at the time. An age accustomed to a host of mechanical marvels – clocks, watches, moving figures and automata of every kind – was well prepared to believe that animals were also machines (33-34).

Furthermore, it justified the animal treatment already occurring. By believing that animals were automata, it alleviated guilt in those who mistreated animals:

But the most powerful argument for the Cartesian position was that it was the best possible rationalization for the way man actually treated animals. The alternative view had left room for human guilt by conceding that animals could and did suffer; and it aroused worries about the motives of a God who could allow beasts to undergo undeserved miseries on such a scale (Thomas 34).

By applying the Cartesian doctrine, one could refute the idea that animal abuse was cruel. Ryan also notes that Cartesianism excuses animal maltreatment: “Cartesianism gives humans an alibi for their lack of concern for, or even cruelty towards, animals” (9). During the time of Descartes, it became common to experiment on live animals without anesthesia. Because of Descartes’ automata theory, those who experimented on animals could proceed without any moral reservations. Leonora Cohen Rosenfield cites an eyewitness account of animal experiments done at the Jansenist seminary of Port-Royal during
the seventeenth century in her book *From Beast-Machine to Man-Machine: The Theme of Animal Soul in French Letters from Descartes to La Mettrie*, which was also cited by Singer in *Animal Liberation*:

They administered beatings to dogs with perfect indifference, and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the noise of a little spring which had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisect them and see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of conversation (Rosenfield 54).

Because Descartes had classified animals as machines, experimenters treated them as such. Descartes’ theory enabled them to experiment on live animals while denying that they were doing these animals any harm. This citation also demonstrates that once again, those who used animals for their own agenda, mocked those who had compassion for the animals.

Although many in the seventeenth century accepted Descartes’ automata theory, his arguments do not support the clear division between humans and other animals that he claims to prove. Descartes insists that animals that do not use language cannot be conscious, yet this argument would also discriminate against some humans, such as infants and certain people with disabilities. This inability to draw a line that excludes animals, but includes all humans highlights the difficulty of creating a boundary that clearly puts all humans on one side and all other animals on the other. In *The Case for Animal Rights*, Tom Regan emphasizes the lack of consistency in this criterion for consciousness:

The language test holds that individuals who are unable to use a language lack consciousness. This cannot be true. If all consciousness depended on one’s being a language-user, we would be obliged to say that children, before they reach an age when they can speak, cannot be aware of anything. This not only flies in the face of common sense…but more fundamentally, it makes utterly mysterious, at best, how children could learn to use a language… Since the language test implies that pre-language-using children are not conscious at all, and since this makes it mysterious (miraculous?) how they could learn to use a language, we have principled reasons for rejecting the test’s adequacy. However, once we have come this far, we cannot treat the language test as a kind of double standard, allowing that humans do not have to pass it in order to be conscious while insisting that animals do. If a young child can be conscious
independently of learning a language, we cannot reasonably deny the same of animals, despite the latter’s inability to say what they are aware of (15-16).

Regan also foresees the possible argument of the human potential to use language that one could make for small children. Against this argument, he notes that some mentally enfeebled humans lack the potential to use language, yet demonstrate consciousness of sounds and pains. Consequently, he concludes that this argument is unacceptable. One cannot deny that an animal which does not possess the potential to use language is conscious while affirming that a human without the potential to use language is (Regan 16).

Furthermore, Regan demonstrates the lack of scientific basis for denying consciousness to animals. No definitive biological differences exist which could support Descartes’ claim:

[T]hose who would view humans as the only conscious beings could not adequately ground this belief in considerations about human biology, physiology, and anatomy, since there is nothing in these aspects of human nature that is both relevant to our being conscious and uniquely human. How else, then, if not in this way, could one attempt to defend the thesis that humans, and humans alone, are conscious? Only by having recourse to some allegedly nonbiological, nonphysiological, nonanatomical or, in a word, nonphysical peculiarity of humans (Regan 27).

He continues to explain that this belief stems not from any defect in animals, but human conceit, based on the belief of human uniqueness, a belief that cannot be defended scientifically (Regan 31).

Even in seventeenth-century France, Descartes’ philosophy had its critics. Jean de La Fontaine criticized Descartes in his *Fables, Livre IX*. In a response to Descartes’ theory, La Fontaine refutes the idea of animal-machines. He replies directly to Descartes’ *Discours* in his own *Discours à Mme de La Sablière*. Jean-Pierre Collinet, who edited the first volume of La Fontaine’s *Œuvres complètes*, writes of this work: “La Fontaine donne ici, sur l’intelligence et l’âme des animaux son *Apologie de Raimond Sebond*. Mais, depuis Montaigne, Descartes est venu, avec son *Discours de la méthode* : le Discours à *Mme de La Sablière* se présentera donc devant la thèse des animaux-machines comme un essai de
réfutation” (1239). One begins to see the back and forth nature of the dispute here between objectifying animals and attributing agency to them. This notation also establishes the importance of the two previously discussed works in the history of ideas regarding animals in France. Each of them presents an alternate view in an ongoing struggle to define animals in a way that either condemns or justifies human treatment of them. Collinet refers to the importance of experience in finding fault with Descartes: “En théorie, il paraît difficile à refuter ; mais il achoppe contre l’expérience” (1239). La Fontaine finds the same fault as those in England, mentioned by Thomas – Descartes theory does not hold up to experience with animals (Thomas 35).

La Fontaine explicitly criticizes Descartes’ theory. His Discours refers directly to Descartes’ own: “Ils disent donc / Que la bête est une machine ; / Qu’en elle tout se fait sans choix et par ressorts : / Nul sentiment, point d’âme, en elle tout est corps. / Telle est la montre qui chemine, / A pas toujours égaux, aveugle et sans dessein. / Ouvrez-la, lisez dans son sein ; / Mainte roue y tient lieu de tout l’esprit du monde” (384). By mocking Descartes, he demonstrates the lack of logic in the animal-machine theory. His description illustrates its implications: an animal never makes any type of decision, nor has any feelings or objectives. Instead, all its actions, like those of a clock, are controlled by mechanical parts. In his portrayal of the animal-machine, no animal action is left to chance—one mechanical part triggers another until the end result is achieved, a result which, unlike a similar result in a human, never entails any mental activity: “Sans passion, sans volonté: / L’animal se sent agité / De mouvements que le vulgaire appelle / Tristesse, joie, amour, plaisir, douleur cruelle, / Ou quelque autre de ces états / Mais ce n’est point cela; ne vous y trompez pas / Qu’est-ce donc? Une montre. Et nous? C’est autre chose” (La Fontaine 384). Lest there be any unlikely doubt as to what he is referring, he then continues to mention Descartes by name. Additionally, in a contrast with “le vulgaire,” who believe that animals have various emotions, he then calls Descartes “ce mortel dont on eût fait un dieu,” thereby
demonstrating that those who believe in observable animal feelings would be considered inferior or unenlightened because their ideas would oppose those of this godlike higher authority (La Fontaine 384). In emphasizing that animals have no passion or will and that they operate like watches, but that humans are “autre chose,” he makes a distinct division between animals and humans which leaves no opportunity for comparison. In Descartes’ view, an impassible boundary exists with animals clearly on one side, humans on the other, and feelings and mental activity remain solely on the human side. La Fontaine disputes this boundary, in a strategy similar to that of Montaigne, with examples of deer that temporarily avoid death by using their various strategies to escape hunters, a partridge that uses a ruse to protect her young, beavers that all work together to build their dams, and bobacs who use clever war strategies amongst themselves. By choosing these examples which demonstrate mental activity that could not possibly be simply the result of clockwork, La Fontaine contests Descartes’ claims. He finishes the Discours by making the point that Descartes does not satisfactorily differentiate animals from plants:

“Ce que je sais Iris, c’est qu’en ses animaux / Dont je viens de citer l’exemple, /Cet esprit n’agit pas, l’homme seul est son temple. / Aussi faut-il donner à l’animal un point / Que la plante après tout n’a point” (387). In this example, he demonstrates that while Descartes clearly separates man and animals, he does not do enough to separate animals and plants, thereby implying that animals are more similar to plants than to humans. With the phrase, “Dont je viens de citer l’exemple,” he reminds the reader of his examples of animals demonstrating some type of intelligent thought process. By following this phrase with the remark that Descartes does not separate animals and plants, he further emphasizes the lack of credibility in Descartes’ animal-machine theory.

In L’Homme et la couleuvre, the first fable of Livre X, La Fontaine simultaneously emphasizes the cruelty of man and the innocence and usefulness of animals and nature. At the beginning of the fable, a man catches a non-venomous snake in a sack and the fable states, “On résolut sa mort, fût-il coupable
ou non” (La Fontaine 393). The fact that his death is decided regardless of guilt or innocence reflects the injustice of animal treatment in the seventeenth century, in particular in the case of a non-venomous snake who is not a food source and does no harm. The snake had done nothing to merit his death, but nonetheless, the man had resolved to kill it. Being informed of his destiny, the snake resorts to reason, informing the man that his (the man’s) idea of justice is essentially personal interest: “[T]a justice / C’est ton utilité, ton plaisir, ton caprice” (La Fontaine 393). That is to say that the man would justify to himself whatever adds to his immediate desires, and as one sees in the continuation of the fable, without taking into account true justice. The snake informs the man, who has called the snake “Symbole des ingrats,” that man is the truly ungrateful creature (La Fontaine 393). In response, the man asserts that it is his right to decide the issue: “Je pourrais decider ; car ce droit m’appartient” (La Fontaine 394). With this statement, he asserts a hierarchy over all other creatures; deciding an issue comparing man and animals is a right that belongs to man that requires no rational justification. He possesses an unrestricted dominion, based solely on the fact that he is man. To decide the issue, they call over a cow, who decides that the snake is correct. Her story, which could be read as the treatment of dairy cows in France in the seventeenth century, demonstrates her contribution to man’s well-being, as well as man’s ingratitude and cruelty when she has become too old to be useful:

Je nourris celui-ci depuis longues années ;
Il n’a sans mes bienfaits passé nulles journées ;
Tout n’est que pour lui seul ; mon lait et mes enfants
Le font à la maison revenir les mains pleines ;
Même j’ai rétabli ma santé, que les ans
Avaient altérée, et mes peines
Ont pour but son plaisir ainsi que son besoin.
Enfin me voilà vieille ; il me laisse en un coin
Sans herbe ; s’il voulait encor me laisser pâtre !
Mais je suis attachée, et si j’eusse eu pour maître
Un serpent, eût-il su jamais pousser si loin
L’ingratitude ? Adieu : j’ai dit ce que je pense (La Fontaine 394).
With her story, she tells how her efforts and struggles have all been used for man’s desires, reinforcing the idea that man views all nature as existing for his exploitation. While she struggles to provide for man, he enjoys what she provides on a daily basis. Yet, instead of showing gratitude and taking care of her in her old age, he restrains her in a corner without grass for grazing. Her story both reinforces the snake’s claim about man’s ingratitude and shows neglect and abuse (the cow is roped up with no food) towards an animal no longer capable of fulfilling man’s desires.

The man, unhappy with this judgement, wants a second opinion, so they consult an ox, who has no better judgement of man. Like the cow, he labors for man alone and receives no gratitude or recompense for his struggles:

Il dit que du labeur des ans
Pour nous seuls il portait les soins les plus pesants,
Parcourant sans cesser ce long cercle de peines
Qui revenant sur soi ramenait dans nos plaines
Ce que Cérès nous donne et vend aux animaux.
Que cette suite de travaux
Pour récompense avait, de tous tant que nous sommes,
Force coups, peu de gré ; puis, quand il était vieux,
On croyait l’honorer chaque fois que les hommes
Achetaient de son sang l’indulgence des Dieux (La Fontaine 394).

Not only does he endure hard labor, but he is also beaten. When he becomes too old to labor, he does not receive any appreciation or recognition of what he has given, or even basic care. Rather he is slaughtered, again for man’s benefit. With “Ce que Cérès nous donne et vend aux animaux,” the ox shows that man receives the fruit of the ox’s labor; he is given what the ox worked for. The ox, conversely, has to work for his needs; nothing is given freely to him. In this case as well, man is not simply unthankful, but also abusive.

The next judge is not an animal, but a tree. Consequently, this fable presents to the reader man’s destructiveness towards all of nature, as well as the idea that all nature is viewed as a commodity.
The tree aids man by functioning as a refuge from heat, rain, and wind. It decorates the landscape and provides shade, fruit, flowers, and firewood only to be chopped down. La Fontaine emphasizes that the tree does not need to be felled entirely in order to provide wood: “Que ne l’émondait-on sans prendre la cognée ? / De son tempérament il eût encore vécu” (395). It is necessary to point out that, once felled, a tree will provide a lot of wood for the immediate future, but will clearly cease to continue to produce any further possible product, which it would do if allowed to live. Yet, man chops down trees without any thought of his future need for fruit, shade, or even for more wood. Taken together, the three stories of man’s judges (the cow, the ox, and the tree) demonstrate both his lack of appreciation for what nature provides and his focus on his immediate desires.

The fable ends with man realizing that he has been found guilty, but wanting nonetheless to come out the winner. First he tells himself that he is good for listening to “ces gens-là” (La Fontaine 395). With this line of reasoning, he asserts the idea that man presumes he has authority over all of nature to do with as he pleases. He proceeds to kill the snake, despite the fact that the snake won the argument. The moral given after the death of the snake reinforces the examples: “On en use ainsi chez les grands. / La raison les offense ; ils se mettent en tête / Que tout est né pour eux, quadrupèdes, et gens, / Et serpents” (La Fontaine 395). This reflects the idea that that the powerful feel entitled to use all living beings for their own ends, despite the evident lack of logic and justice in their actions.

Descartes’ animal-machine theory, if it were true, could be used to justify man’s actions towards the animals in this fable. Yet, two entries before this, in the Discours à Mme de La Sablière, La Fontaine already demonstrated the absence of logic in Descartes’ theory. This fable continues to emphasize that treating animals as machines cannot be justified by reason. Man accepts the might makes right philosophy as rational—because he can physically control and abuse animals and nature, he believes that he has the right to do so.
Other fabulists of the era also challenged the Cartesian view of animals. In *Fiction without humanity*, Lynn Festa explains that they used the fable as a means of participating in the discussion of animals as machines:

Writers used the fable as a point of entry into broader debates over the Cartesian characterization of animals as mere machines and explored the naturalistic representation of animal behavior in the illustrations. What Frank Palmeri calls the autocritical fable — an apologue depicting the wolf, say, not as a brutal human being but as a representative of its own species — allows animals to exceed their allegorical status or subject it to reflexive critique, as they protest their treatment by unjust or degenerate man (209).9

The traditional style of fables, giving a voice to animals, could be utilized to critique humans by relating a message about the treatment of its species. La Fontaine was not alone in disagreeing with Descartes. Other poets and authors also saw a close relationship between humans and animals. Collinet noted several authors of the seventeenth century, such as Gaston Pardies and Jean-Baptiste Du Hamel, who believed in some type of animal intelligence. Although Descartes had his followers, acceptance of his animal-machine theory was not unanimous, even in his own century.

**The age of reason**

The seventeenth-century experiments, rationalized by Descartes’ philosophy, nevertheless revealed “a remarkable similarity between the physiology of human beings and other animals” (Singer AL 202). Consequently, there arose more doubt about the Cartesian theory of animal-machines. Voltaire openly disagrees with Descartes in the section entitled “Bêtes” of his *Dictionnaire philosophique*. He begins this article with “Quelle pitié, quelle pauvreté, d’avoir dit que les bêtes sont des machines privées de connaissance et de sentiment, qui font toujours leurs opérations de la même

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indignation with Descartes in this exclamation by opening with “Quelle pitié, quelle pauvreté” and ending the sentence with an exclamation mark, which further highlights that Descartes’ animal philosophy should be considered shocking. The word “pauvreté” in particular emphasizes the inadequacy of this philosophy. He continues with examples that demonstrate that animals do in fact learn and perfect their actions, such as birds building a nest in a shape that suits the environment (a half circle against a wall and a quarter circle when it is in a corner) and a dog who learns from the lessons given to it by its owner.

Voltaire then disputes the idea that one can judge that a living being has emotions, memory, and ideas only if that being speaks. He gives the example of his entering his home with a distressed demeanor, worriedly searching for a paper, opening his desk where he remembers having placed it, finding it, then reading it with joy. He then says that by this you (“tu”) judge that he has feelings of affliction and pleasure and also that he has memory and consciousness. He follows this with a similar example of a dog who has lost its master, still addressing himself directly to the reader:

Porte donc le même jugement sur ce chien qui a perdu son maître, qui l’a cherché dans tous les chemins avec des cris douloureux, qui entre dans la maison, agité, inquiet, qui descend, qui monte, qui va de chambre en chambre, qui trouve enfin dans son cabinet le maître qu’il aime, et qui lui témoigne sa joie par la douceur de ses cris, par ses sauts, par ses caresses. Des barbares saisissent ce chien, qui l’emporte si prodigieusement sur l’homme en amitié ; ils le clouent sur une table, et ils le dissèquent vivant pour te montrer les veines mésaraïques. Tu découvres dans lui tous les mêmes organes de sentiment qui sont dans toi. Réponds-moi, machiniste, la nature a-t-elle arrangé tous les ressorts du sentiment dans cet animal, afin qu’il ne sente pas ? A-t-il des nerfs pour être impassible ? Ne suppose point cette impertinente contradiction dans la nature (DP “Bêtes”).

Voltaire notes several issues in this entry that contradict Descartes. The dog who emits “des cris douloureux” evidently possesses both consciousness and emotional activity, otherwise his cries could not be “douloureux,” they would be unexpressive. The fact that he is agitated and worried and doesn’t
stop searching until he finds his master demonstrates both feelings and actions with intent, which is reinforced by his joyous reactions and the fact that he stops wandering when he finds him. Voltaire then points out that dogs are superior to man in friendship, which reinforces the “pitié” and the “pauvreté” in believing in the animal-machine philosophy. After having illustrated that dogs exhibit mental activity, he turns his criticism to the barbarity of the vivisectionists, which he emphasizes by calling them “des barbares” and contrasting the superficial reason for the vivisection (showing the mesaraic veins) with the extreme cruelty of the experiment—they nail the dog to a table and dissect it alive. By describing the vivisection after giving the example of the faithful, loving dog, Voltaire further emphasizes the injustice of this type of experiment. The dog gives love and friendship to man only to be painfully and barbarically cut open while still alive. He has done nothing to deserve this torture; in fact his loyalty should earn him quite the opposite treatment, similar to the cases of the cow and the ox in La Fontaine’s *L’Homme et la Couleuvre*. Having demonstrated the observable signs that dogs have feelings, he then gives the scientific evidence. Their physiology, including nerves, resembles that of humans. It would be illogical to believe that similar physiology has a completely different function in animals.

According to Singer, the growth of anticlerical sentiment during the Enlightenment helped change attitudes towards animals. He gives the example of Voltaire, who in this article as well notes similarities between humans and nonhuman animals. “Voltaire...compared Christian practices unfavorably with those of the Hindu. He went further than the contemporary English advocates of kind treatment when he referred to the barbarous custom of supporting ourselves upon the flesh and blood of beings like ourselves, although apparently he continued to practice this custom himself” (*AL* 203). When one compares Voltaire’s example to this one, it would appear that the scientific evidence of

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10 Part of this citation appears to be a direct quotation, but only the final set of quotation marks made the printing, which occur after the second “ourselves.” The beginning set is missing.
human and animal similarities called into question, not just vivisection, but other violent treatment of animals as well. The experiments that Descartes sought to justify by comparing animals to clocks, ended up providing evidence that revealed their injustice.

Rousseau, like Voltaire, was a French Enlightenment author who included animals in his philosophy. Unlike Montaigne, he does not attribute any type of reasoning to animals, in fact he denies this ability, but he does invoke a sense of pity towards and amongst them. Of the two “principes antérieurs à la raison” that he mentions in the preface of his Second Discourse, one is “une répugnance naturelle à voir perir ou souffrir tout être sensible et principalement nos semblables” (Rousseau, “Discours” 126 – my emphasis). When he writes “tout être sensible,” he demonstrates that he is speaking about all living creatures because he proceeds to clarify that expression with “principalement nos semblables” which would be unnecessary if those similar to us were the only beings to which he was referring. Like Montaigne, he remarks that seeing any sensitive being suffer is something that humans should want to avoid. Juxtaposing these two authors, who wrote two centuries apart, suggests a certain denaturalization of humans who are able to see (or worse, cause) animal suffering voluntarily.

Rousseau also, again like Montaigne, invokes the idea of having a responsibility towards other sensitive creatures:

[T]enant en quelque chose à nôtre nature par la sensibilité dont ils (the animals) sont doués, on jugera qu’ils doivent aussi participer au droit naturel, et que l’homme est assujetti envers eux à quelque espéce de devoirs. Il semble en effet, que si je suis obligé de ne faire aucun mal à mon semblable, c’est moins parce qu’il est un être raisonnable que parce qu’il est un être sensible ; qualité qui étant commune à la bête et à l’homme, doit au moins donner à l’une le droit de n’être point maltraitée inutilement par l’autre (Rousseau, “Discours” 126).

He uses logic here to assert that animals do in fact have a right not to be mistreated and this stems from their ability to feel and to suffer. In his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Jeremy Bentham also regards suffering as the most important question in animal treatment. He states: “But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal,
than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor Can they talk? but can they suffer?” (Bentham—his emphasis 311). Rousseau likewise acknowledges some ability in animals to combine ideas as well as a sense of understanding. “Tout animal a des idées puis qu’il a des sens, il combine même ses idées jusqu’à un certain point, et l’homme ne diffère à cet égard de la Bête que plus ou moins : Quelques Philosophes ont même avancé qu’il y a plus de différence de tel homme à tel homme que de tel homme à telle bête ; Ce n’est donc pas tant l’entendement qui fait parmi les animaux la distinction spécifique de l’homme que sa qualité d’agent libre” (Rousseau, “Discours” 141). This reasoning blurs the line that those who wish to mistreat animals see as a clear divide, with man as a thinking being on one side and animals as unthinking beings clearly on the other.

Rousseau contends that in the state of Nature, animals do not want to attack either each other or man. After bears and wolves have several experiences with man armed with natural weapons, they will not be eager to attack him: “[L]es Bêtes féroces qui n’aiment point à s’attaquer l’une à l’autre, s’attaqueront peu volontiers à l’homme” (Rousseau, “Discours” 136). Once man has learned to use weapons that he has found in his environment for his defense, the state of nature is relatively safe. Rousseau emphasizes that animals do not naturally want to attack man, nor do they see him as a source of nourishment, except in cases of extreme hunger: “[I]l ne paroit pas qu’aucun animal fasse naturellement la guerre à l’homme, hors le cas de sa propre défense ou d’une extrême faim, ni témoigne contre lui de ces violentes antipathies qui semblent annoncer qu’une espèce est destinée par la Nature à servir de pâture à l’autre” (Rousseau, “Discours” 137). It would follow that any attack on man by an animal could be attributed either to a real or perceived threat or to lack of food, which usually is brought about by loss of habitat, frequently due to its destruction by man.
Rousseau argues that, like humans, animals show signs of pity, a virtue with which Nature endows all sensitive beings. For Rousseau, pity is:

> si Naturelle que les Bêtes même en donnent quelquefois des signes sensibles. Sans parler de la tendresse des Mères pour leurs petits, et des périls qu’elles bravent, pour les en garantir, on observe tous les jours la répugnance qu’ont les Chevaux à fouler aux pieds un Corps vivant ; Un animal ne passe point sans inquiétude auprès d’un animal mort de son Espèce : Il y en a même qui leur donnent une sorte de sepulture ; Et les tristes mugissemens du Bétail entrant dans un Boucherie annoncent l’impression qu’il reçoit de l’horrible spectacle qui le frappe” (Rousseau, “Discours” 154).

What Rousseau has observed is not fear, due to an instinct for self-preservation, but an emotion of sadness due to seeing other members of their species dead or dying. Rousseau also notes a similar need for freedom in animals and humans. He remarks that animals not born in captivity struggle to regain their liberty. “Animaux nées libres et abhorrant la captivité, se bris[ent] la tête contre les barreaux de leur prison” (Rousseau, “Discours” 182). They will harm themselves in order to attempt to return to a more natural way of life. This statement emphasizes the importance of letting animals live their life naturally instead of being caged to fulfill human desires. The role of animal imprisonment becomes important later in the century, when the French rebel against all forms of imprisonment, both animal and human, as I will explain. Animals and humans share a sense of pity and a desire for freedom.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre is another eighteenth century author who advocated a natural way of life and kindness towards animals. He became outraged when he saw a game in Passy where a goose was hung by its neck for blindfolded players to hit with a stick. This provoked him to write to a journal, criticizing the powerful who, as noted by Maurice Anatole Souriau, both ignored the responsibilities of their wealth and allowed such activities to occur (257). His protestation was ultimately rejected as too long, however Souriau published small excerpts from it in his early twentieth century book, _Bernardin de Saint-Pierre d’après ses Manuscrits_. He wrote, “Si vous ne connaissez plus de crimes que ce qui vous nuit, si vous avez rompu tous les liens de la reconnaissance envers la nature et ses enfants, croyez-vous
rompre de même ceux qui vous attachent aux hommes ? Dans les bourreaux des animaux se forment peut-être votre meurtrier” (Souriau 257-8). He, like Montaigne, recognizes here an overall disposition towards violence of those who are cruel to animals. In Paul et Virginie, he recognizes that the contrary is also true. The micro-society of the Isle de France depicted in this novel lives according to the laws of nature and they are kinder than both all those around them and those who they left behind in France. As part of their natural lifestyle, they have two goats “élevées près des enfants” which both shows the tranquility of the goats that exist peacefully with the children and establishes a link between those kind to animals and a more perfect society (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre P & V 97). He first describes their dog, Fidèle, as “un gros chien qui veillait la nuit au-dehors,” thereby demonstrating the protection the family received, not from building barriers or keeping guns, but from keeping an animal known for faithfulness and protection. Fidèle stays true to his name and finds the children, Paul and Virginie, when they are lost alone in the woods, and consequently saves their lives. With the description of the moment that Fidèle discovers them, Saint-Pierre demonstrates the loyalty and affection of the dog towards the children. “Fidèle était à leurs pieds, aboyant, hurlant, gémissant, et les accablant de caresses” (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, P & V 110). In doing this, Fidèle both communicates to Domingue that he had found them and displays his joy at being reunited with them. He shows his loyalty again at the end of the story, by dying of grief shortly after his master dies. By placing the death of Fidèle in the description of the fate of the human characters, Saint-Pierre demonstrates that Fidèle was an integral part of the micro-society. Virginie also emphasizes this when she writes to her mother from France, “caressez pour moi Fidèle, qui m’a retrouvée dans les bois” (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, P & V 152). Like his name, Fidèle’s actions emphasize the faithfulness and usefulness of dogs to humans. He protects them at night while they sleep and he is able to trace the scent of Paul and Virginie in the woods with a capacity that humans do not have, an extremely acute sense of smell.
Like Rousseau, Saint-Pierre stresses the peacefulness of animals who have not had occasion to become afraid. The vieillard in *Paul et Virginie* describes the isolated forest where he lives peacefully surrounded by nature as a retreat where many species of unknown birds migrate at the end of summer. In addition to the birds, the local monkeys play in the trees, unthreatened by humans. “Les singes, habitants domiciliés de ces forêts, se jouent dans leurs sombres rameaux… Jamais le fusil meurtrier n’y a effrayé ces paisibles enfants de la nature” (P & V 158). By portraying them as “enfants de la nature,” he echoes the protestation that he wrote to the journal criticizing the abuse of the geese, where he wrote about “reconnaissance envers la nature et ses enfants,” and he emphasizes that they have a right to exist. They do not threaten the vieillard and he does not threaten them. Both coexist in tranquility.

When he emphasizes that the micro-society follows a vegetarian diet, Saint-Pierre demonstrates the peacefulness and the health benefits of this way of life.

[V]os repas champêtres… n’avaient coûté la vie à aucun animal ! des calebasses pleines de lait, des œufs frais, des gâteaux de riz sur des feuilles de bananier, des corbeilles chargées de patates, de mangues, d’oranges, de grenades, de bananes, d’attes, d’ananas, offraient à la fois les mets les plus sains, les couleurs les plus gaies, et les sucs les plus agréables (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *P & V* 119).

With this description using the superlative, Saint-Pierre highlights that a vegetarian diet can be more appealing to the eye and more delicious than a meat-based diet. By including this description and emphasizing that no animals died for their meals, he both implies that animals have a right to live out their natural lives and retains the non-violent lifestyle of the micro-society.

In his *Éloge historique et philosophique de mon ami*, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre remarks that only men, not animals, have national boundaries and divisions of language within a species group. Animals do not recognize borders or cultural differences: “L’homme seul a divisé la terre en royaumes ; elle est pour le reste de ses habitants une patrie commune, qui n’a ni frontières, ni barrières, et où chaque espèce parle toujours le même langage, et conserve les mêmes mœurs” (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre,
Éloge 49). He makes this remark during a brief mention of the War of the Spanish Succession, where he states that the companion animals of the Spanish families “n’avaient jamais cessé de vivre en paix,” implying that animals can exist peacefully while the men create violence fighting each other in wars (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre Éloge 49). This invokes the previously stated idea that man, not any nonhuman animal, is the most violent of all living beings.

Historically during the eighteenth century, the first veterinary school in the world was opened in Lyon, France in 1761 (Baratay, “Promotion” 135). It became quite prestigious and reports and speeches from their public formal assemblies were widely read and distributed in France and other parts of Europe (Baratay, “Promotion” 135). Also in eighteenth century France, some began to compare caged animals to oppressed subjects, demanding more liberty for both. At the time of the Fête de la Fédération, animal exhibitors were not allowed in Paris due to this comparison with imprisonment (Baratay, “Promotion” 137). Baratay writes, “Le naturaliste Lacépède soutient en 1795 que les ménageries sont des œuvres de despotes... Elles sont des symboles d’oppression de la nature et des bêtes, mais aussi de la société et des sujets” (“Promotion” 137). These instances blur the division between human and animal by asserting both that what was unacceptable for humans was also unacceptable for animals and by viewing all those who take away liberty from any living beings as oppressors.

Although no official animal welfare movement existed until the following century, one remarks the beginnings of consideration for animals in France in the eighteenth century. The philosophers refuted Descartes’ animal-machine theory and asserted the similarities between both human and animal anatomy and behavior. Animals gained enough importance for the creation of the veterinary school and the growing demand for liberty was applied not just to humans, but to animals as well.

Industrialization
Vivisection is a social evil, because if it advances human knowledge, it does so at the expense of human character. — George Bernard Shaw

The nineteenth century saw both the advent of animal rights organizations and the introduction of animal rights legislation, both beginning in Britain. Already in 1809, the Society for the Suppression of Wanton Cruelty to Animals was founded in Liverpool, but it dissolved shortly thereafter. However, one of the most prominent animal welfare organizations in the world, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which continues its work today, was formed in London in 1824. When Queen Victoria became a patron of the organization in 1840, the society changed its name to the current name, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, also known as the RSPCA (Traïni 11). Following the British model, similar animal protection societies were founded shortly thereafter in Germany (1837), Austria (1842), and Switzerland (1849) (Traïni 12). Italy, Russia, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United States all created their own animal protection societies in the nineteenth century as well (Traïni 12). The Société protectrice des animaux, modeled after the RSPCA and a similar society in Bavaria, was established in Paris in 1845, with later groups developing in Lyon and Fontainebleau (Traïni 12). This SPA also still exists today.

Later in the nineteenth century, societies specifically dedicated to combatting vivisection sprang up across Europe. England again paved the way for the other European nations with the Society for the Protection of Animals Liable to Vivisection in 1875, followed by the Society for the Abolition of Vivisection (Traïni 14). Ten years later, Great Britain had 15 anti-vivisection societies, Switzerland had 3 and France and Germany each had 2 (Traïni 14). In France, three famous nineteenth century authors took up the fight against vivisection, Jules Michelet, Victor Schoelcher, and Victor Hugo. Hugo was the président d’honneur of the Société française contre la vivisection, founded seven years after the Society
for the Protection of Animals Liable to Vivisection, in 1882 (Baratay, *La Mort* 467). Although some anti-cruelty laws existed in both France and England at this time, none of them applied to vivisection.

The first attempt at legislation was made before the formation of animal welfare organizations, yet it was several years after this initial attempt before any animal protection legislation was enacted. In England in 1800, a law prohibiting bull-baiting was introduced in the House of Commons, but defeated. Its reception was anything but promising. George Canning, the foreign secretary, called bull-baiting “innocent,” compared it to boxing and dancing, and described the law as “absurd” (Singer AL 204). *The Times* published an editorial stating that “whatever meddles with the private personal disposition of man’s time or property is tyranny. Till another person is injured there is no room for power to interpose” (Singer AL 204). In 1821, another attempt was made in Parliament to further animal welfare. In this instance, Richard Martin, an Irish member of Parliament introduced a bill to protect horses, mules, cows, sheep and other animals considered “cattle” from maltreatment. The bill, “An Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle,” which became known as “Martin’s Act” was met with laughter and then defeated. Singer cites an account that shows the general attitude towards animals in Parliament at this time.

When Alderman C. Smith suggested that protection should be given to asses, there were such howls of laughter that *The Times* reporter could hear little of what was said. When the Chairman repeated this proposal, the laughter was intensified. Another member said Martin would be legislating for dogs next, which caused a further roar of mirth, and a cry ‘And cats!’ sent the House into convulsions (AL 204).  

The manner in which this suggestion was ridiculed emphasizes how little animals were valued by the politicians of this era, even in the region that introduced the idea of animal rights legislation. The fact that the idea of creating protections for horses, dogs, or cats was accompanied by laughter

demonstrates that animals were considered objects rather than sentient beings. Although Martin’s Act did not initially pass, it became law in the following year, 1822 (Traini 11). Following this initial legislation, Parliament also enacted bans on bearbaiting in 1835 and cockfighting in 1849 (Traini 33). France followed Britain’s example with its own anti-cruelty legislation, 28 years after Martin’s Act became law (Traini, 13). On July 2, 1850, la loi Grammont, introduced by General Jacques Philippe Delmas de Grammont, became an official French law. The law penalized public mistreatment of animals with fines ranging from 1 to 15 francs and prison sentences of one to five days (Traini 13). As with animal protection organizations, Britain had also paved the way for protective legislation in France.

In addition to the creation of animal welfare organizations and laws, this century also witnessed the establishment of the first animal shelters. The first refuge for abandoned dogs, referred to as a “Dog’s home” was created in London in 1860 (Traini 112).12 This organization, like current animal shelters, aimed to find new homes for abandoned pets. Parisian women belonging to the Popular League against Vivisection formed their own shelters for lost and abandoned animals, referred to as “zoophile refuges” (Traini 112)13. Although the London shelter is specifically referred to as a refuge for dogs, the Parisian animal refuges took in both dogs and cats and attempted to reunite these animals with their owners (Traini 112). Thus, it appears from the two different descriptions that the Parisian animal shelters differed slightly in scope and goals from their London counterpart. These French refuges, run by women, initially received no funding from the SPA due to the fact that the male hierarchy of this organization did not consider refuges a function of “a serious protection society” (Traini 112). Instead, the leadership believed that these types of organizations were a product of “a thoroughly

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feminine ‘oversensitiveness’” (Traïni 112). However, due to pressure from activists, they eventually granted “occasional funding” to the shelters (Traïni 112). Eventually, later in the nineteenth century, the SPA opened its own shelters, due to increased pressure from activists (Traïni 115). Like protection organizations and legislation, once animal shelters came into existence, they gained support and increased in number.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Darwin’s studies showed many types of similarities between animals and humans. Singer notes that Darwin found a type of morality in non-human animals, which he reports in the fourth chapter of The Descent of Man. “[T]he human moral sense can also be traced back to social instincts in animals that lead them to take pleasure in each other’s company, feel sympathy for each other, and perform services of mutual assistance” (AL 206). The fact that these are moral attributes negates the idea that animals are purely instinctual beings. Not only does Darwin observe mental activity in terms of emotions, but he also notes a type of teamwork in the animal community. His observations demonstrate that animals resemble humans in more ways than were previously thought.

The transition away from a hierarchical mentality, where the sufferings of those considered “lower” beings were deemed inconsequential, also contributed to the expansion of concern for animal wellbeing (Traïni, Chapter 6). Beginning with compassion for those of a different social status, this “compassionate egalitarianism—progressively extended to relations between humans and animals” (Traïni 94). Traïni explains the change which occurred during this century: “Hitherto violence inflicted on animals had provoked fear and repugnance. Now such acts also increasingly began to evoke compassionate feelings, thanks to the ability to feel, through empathy, another being’s sufferings” (94). Traïni uses the work of Alexis de Tocqueville to explain the historical aristocratic mentality that was indifferent to the pain and difficulties endured by those of lower social classes due to their perceived
difference from the aristocracy. However, in the nineteenth century, these historic divisions between the different levels of society lost the importance they had once held. Writers were able to use this development to invoke sympathy for all living beings that suffered various injustices. The Romantic poets paved the way for this change, depicting animals in their poetry who were, like the poets themselves, treated unjustly by men.

Victor Hugo was one such poet who included mistreated and abused animals in his poetry. In “Melancholia,” he describes the abuse of a horse pulling a stone, whipped until he can go no more, and ultimately collapsing and dying:

On entend, sous les coups de la botte ferrée
Sonner le ventre nu du pauvre être muet !
Il râle ; tout à l’heure encore il remuait ;
Mais il ne bouge plus, et sa force est finie ;
Et les coups furieux pleuvent ; son agonie
Tente un dernier effort ; son pied fait un écart,
Il tombe, et le voilà brisé sous le brancard ;
Et, dans l’ombre, pendant que son bourreau redouble,
Il regarde Quelqu’un de sa prunelle trouble ;
Et l’on voit lentement s’éteindre, humble et terni,
Son œil plein des stupeurs sombres de l’infini (210).

Hugo illustrates the fate of a horse worked to death, which was not an uncommon event in the nineteenth century. Before this section, he depicts the man whipping him incessantly, to the extent that he is bleeding, but still continues to work. By focusing simultaneously on the actions of the carter and the suffering of the horse, Hugo emphasizes that his death could have been avoided without the abuse and overwork. Depicting him dying under a torrent of blows of the whip illuminates the injustice of this preventable death. Hugo draws attention to the horse’s suffering by describing in detail the last moments of his life. In so doing, he creates empathy not only for this fictional horse, but for other horses who suffer similar treatment.
In his poem, “Le Crapaud,” Hugo creates pity for an abused toad, ultimately saved by a donkey who diverted his cart to avoid stepping on him or rolling over him, calling to mind Rousseau’s horses who will not trample on living creatures. First, a priest steps on the toad’s head. Next, a woman pokes his eye out with her parasol. Then four schoolboys stick a branch in his wound, beat him with a shovel, and throw pebbles at him. When they are preparing to finish him off with a stone, they see a donkey pulling a cart and put him in the pathway so the cart will run him over instead. But the donkey, lame, skinny, deaf, and worn-out himself, redirects the cart:

L’âne vit le crapaud, et, triste,− hélas ! penché
Sur un plus triste,− lourd, rompu, morne, écorché
Il sembla le flairer avec sa tête basse ;
Ce forçat, ce damné, ce patient, fit grâce ;
Il rassembla sa force éteinte, et, roidissant
Sa chaîne et son licou sur ses muscles en sang,
Résistant à l’ânier qui lui criait : Avance !
Maîtrisant du fardeau l’affreuse connivence,
Avec sa lassitude acceptant le combat,
Tirant le chariot et soulevant le bât,
Hagard, il détourna la roue inexorable,
Laissant derrière lui vivre ce misérable ;
Puis, sous un coup de fouet, il reprit son chemin (180).

After seeing this, the boy holding the stone lets it drop. Hugo then praises the pity and goodness of the donkey, finishing the poem with: “Le grand ignorant, l’âne, à Dieu, le grand savant” (181). This poem emphasizes the importance of taking notice of animals’ suffering and having pity on them, simultaneously illustrating a sense of pity in animals themselves. In each of these poems, humans provoke animals’ suffering, showing no compassion for the animals they abuse. Hugo uses the poems to draw attention to their experience, rather than the humans’, thereby forcing his reader to focus on the effect of human actions, and react with pity. While inspiring empathy for the animals, they simultaneously condemn the human actions causing the suffering, and thus, promote viewing these actions as unjust. The statement that Hugo made to the Société Française contre la Vivisection
reinforces his condemnation of animal harm: “My name is nothing. It is in the name of the whole human race that you make your appeal. Your society is one which will reflect honour on the nineteenth century. Vivisection is a crime. The human race will repudiate these barbarities” (“Victor” 152). By referring to vivisection as a crime, he explicitly brings animals into the category of justice, establishing that humans’ treatment of them makes a difference in their lives, as well as the humans’.

Hugo serves as another example of someone who worked to better both human and animal life, striving to expand society’s sphere of concern to include the most excluded, from condemned criminals to toads. Ève Morisi writes in Captital Letters: Hugo, Baudelaire, Camus, and the Death Penalty: “Hugo... forged a new kind of writing to reach the affectivity of his audience, in addition to using reason” (22). He used a style meant to create emotion in his readers in order to inspire them to care about those deemed unworthy, recognizing the need to appeal to compassion to change the public’s perspective. In his Préface to Écrits sur la peine de mort, Raymond Jean also notes Hugo’s ability to appeal to emotion: “L’avantage incontesté de Victor Hugo sur tous ceux qui ont débattu, débattent ou débattront de la peine de mort, est sa capacité d’émotion et d’imagination visuelles” (9). Like Morisi, he emphasizes the importance of emotion in ethics. As I will show in the next chapter, both emotion and imagination are necessary for empathy. By combining these elements, Hugo enables his readers to empathize with the misérables. Both through literature and politics, he brought attention to the marginalized, fighting against unnecessary suffering and death wherever he found it. He not only attempted to end the death penalty for humans, but also for animals, by accepting the presidency of the antivivisection society.

Although it was becoming more acceptable to fight for the protection of animals, the nineteenth century witnessed significant animal abuse as well. The horse became probably one of the greatest animal victims of the nineteenth century, when Paris was called “l’enfer des chevaux,” and horses were
literally worked to death, as Hugo aptly illustrated in “Melancholia.” Baratay describes the abuse of both horses and dogs, which were also used to pull small carriages:

Dans les textes viennent en premier lieu les violences faites aux équidés tirant des voitures, des fiacres, des chariots, et aux chiens de trait, attelés à de petites carrioles : trop gros efforts demandés, trop lourdes charges à tracter, très longs parcours à effectuer, multiples coups reçus pour faire avancer des bêtes très sollicitées, souvent peu nourries, mal soignées. ‘N’est-il pas choquant, écrit l’un des candidats au concours de 1802, de voir […] un charretier brutal qui jure d’une manière effroyable et qui déchire à coup de fouet les flancs décharnés de ses chevaux excédés de fatigue et d’inanition.’ D’autant que les chevaux travaillent jusqu’à l’épuisement, malgré la douleur et la fatigue, et que leur surmenage peut prendre une forme aiguë extrême, l’animal s’écroulant foudroyé d’une attaque au cœur (“Promotion” 139).

His list emphasizes the multiple sufferings, inflicted simultaneously, on the transport animals of the nineteenth century, who were treated violently until collapsing from overwork, heavy loads, and lack of sustenance.

Notable French authors such as Émile Zola took up the struggle for animal rights amidst the nineteenth century intellectual revolution regarding animal treatment. Zola expressed a sentiment in “L’amour des bêtes” that foreshadows what Léautaud will remark later in the twentieth century:

“Pourquoi la rencontre d’un chien perdu, dans une de nos rues tumultueuses, me donne-t-elle une secousse au cœur ?” (85). He continues with an observation that expresses animal emotion, long before this quality had any type of mainstream acceptance: “Pourquoi la vue de cette bête, allant et venant, flairant le monde, effarée, visiblement désespérée de ne pas retrouver son maître, me cause-t-elle une pitié si pleine d’angoisse, qu’une telle rencontre me gâte absolument une promenade ?” (Zola, “L’amour” 85). The adjectives that he uses, “effarée” and “désespérée” emphasize a state of distress that would likely be similar for a human unsure of being able to find her way home, while the word

“visiblement” emphasizes the visual evidence of the dog’s emotional distress. He then notes how seeing a lost dog fills him with worry because he doesn’t know what will happen to that dog:

Pourquoi, jusqu’au soir, jusqu’au lendemain, le souvenir de ce chien perdu me hante-t-il d’une sorte de désespérance, me revient-il sans cesse en un élancement de fraternelle compassion, dans le souci de savoir ce qu’il fait, où il est, si on l’a recueilli, s’il mange, s’il n’est pas à grelotter au coin de quelque borne? (Zola, “L’amour” 85).

By using the expression “fraternelle compassion,” he establishes a relationship between humans and dogs based on similarity. The word “fraternelle,” implies brotherhood, and those who are brothers share both genetics and a common background, nature and nurture. Thus, Zola establishes a physical similarity and an understanding that crosses the species boundary. He continues to emphasize physical similarities when he worries if the dog is eating or shivering. Dogs, like humans, can feel hunger and cold. When he states that his worries incite compassion, he establishes that dogs can suffer from not having their needs met, such as their need for nourishment and warmth, for if the lack of these necessities did not cause any type of physical or emotional distress, there would be no reason for worry or compassion.

When writing of lost dogs that he has encountered over the years, he reverses the argument so frequently uses to deny consideration for animals, their inability to “speak,” and uses it as a reason to pity them. “Pourquoi ai-je ainsi, au fond de ma mémoire, de grandes tristesses qui s’y réveillent parfois, des chiens sans maîtres, rencontrés il y a dix ans, il y a vingt ans, et qui sont restés en moi comme la souffrance même du pauvre être qui ne peut parler et que son travail, dans nos villes, ne peut nourrir?” (Zola, “L’amour” 85-6). One can deduce from this emphasis on their lack of speech that these lost dogs cannot, unlike humans, ask for directions or help finding their way home, nor can they tell anyone where they live, hence one should pity a lost dog. He also emphasizes another reason for pitying the dogs—they cannot feed themselves by their work. Consequently, a dog who is lost cannot trade any
services for food and must rely on the pity and generosity of others in order to eat. Zola elaborates, a few pages later, on the significance of lost dogs not being able to communicate their needs:

Pour moi, lorsque je m’interroge, je crois bien que ma charité pour les bêtes est faite, comme je le disais, de ce qu’elles ne peuvent parler, expliquer leurs besoins, indiquer leurs maux. Une créature qui souffre et qui n’a aucun moyen de nous faire entendre comment et pourquoi elle souffre, n’est-ce pas affreux, n’est-ce pas angoissant ? (Zola, “L’amour” 88).

Instead of viewing lack of human speech as a reason to justify inflicting suffering on animals, he uses it as a reason to have compassion. This statement could be seen as a precursor to the slogans used today to improve conditions for nonhuman animals which state that humans should speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. It is implied that, because they cannot communicate how and why they are suffering, it is often difficult to get to the source of this suffering and end or alleviate it. The questions posed at the end of this citation indicate that this situation, the suffering of creatures who cannot convey their sufferings in order to bring about a remedy, should provoke compassion in everyone. Zola does not say that it has these qualities for himself alone. Instead he phrases the questions in a generalized sense, using “n’est-ce pas,” thereby implying that “affreux” and “angoissant” describe the nature of the situation and not just emotions that are unique to him. This would logically lead to Elisabeth de Fontenay’s position that humans have a responsibility towards other animals. Given that the suffering of those who cannot speak is something dreadful and distressing, humans should attempt to eliminate situations that provoke this suffering when possible.

Long before any official recognition of the concept of speciesism, Zola states, “Pourquoi les bêtes sont-elles toutes de ma famille, comme les hommes, autant que les hommes ?” (Zola, “L’amour” 86). He recognizes here a commonality amongst sentient beings, which he has enforced by his previous recognition of the mental activity of the lost dog and the fraternal compassion that the sight of this dog provokes. Like others in previous centuries, he also notes that those who do not share his love of
animals mock those who do: “Ceux qui ne l’éprouvent pas en plaisantent, s’en fâchent, le déclarent absurde, tout comme ceux qui n’aiment pas certaines femmes ne peuvent admettre que d’autres les aiment” (Zola, “L’amour” 88). His comparison of animals to women who are not liked by certain men, demonstrates a type of closed-mindedness of those who refuse to accept the perspective of others who think differently from themselves. Without offering any factual or logical contradictions, they simply resort to insults and ridicule.

Zola’s final aim in this article is to end all suffering, both human and animal, which reinforces the idea that those who have compassion for animals are also more compassionate to all who suffer. Zola notes both that dogs do not have a nationality and that all dogs suffer when struck with a cane. His response to this problematic is for all people to agree on a universal love of animals which might lead to a universal love of humanity: “Alors, est-ce qu’on ne pourrait pas, de nation à nation, commencer par tomber d’accord sur l’amour qu’on doit aux bêtes ? De cet amour universel des bêtes, par-dessus les frontières, peut-être en arriverait-on à l’universel amour des hommes” (Zola, “L’amour” 96). Another way of looking at this would be that if all of humanity could believe together that they should love animals, perhaps this would extend to loving others who love animals. Zola imagines all dogs everywhere being caressed with the same affection and protected by the same civil code, without regard for nationality. This would lead to these same people realizing that those laws protecting the animals should also be applied to humans with neither animals nor humans being beaten and all having a right to food. His final goal is a world at peace and devoid of suffering.

Alexandre Dumas, another celebrated nineteenth century French author, wrote a short novel entitled Un cas de conscience about an intelligent, faithful bloodhound who was instrumental in Garibaldi’s Italian campaigns. In this novel, he adds statements asserting that dogs, like humans, have been created by God. When the character Garibaldi recalls having been ungrateful towards Mustang
(the bloodhound), the response is: “Oh! envers un chien!” (Dumas, *Cas* 35). Garibaldi refutes this dismissive attitude by equating his ingratitude towards Mustang with ingratitude towards man: “Aux yeux du seigneur... je crois le crime aussi grand que si c’était un homme” (Dumas, *Cas* 35). By this confession, Garibaldi asserts that God expects people to show gratitude towards all beings he has created, animals and humans alike. Later in the novel, a “devote” poisons Mustang for monopolizing the attention of an English woman she had hoped to convert to Catholicism, who had been giving her money for her charities, but quit when Mustang came into her life. (Mustang was her estranged son’s dog.) When she seeks absolution for the poisoning (for which she is not sorry), her confessor replies: “[C’]est odieux ce que vous fites là; c’est plus qu’un meurtre physique, c’est un meurtre moral; c’est la destruction par méchanceté d’une créature de Dieu” (Dumas, *Cas* 97). With these statements, Dumas refutes the philosophy of some religious groups that all that is not human exists for man to do with as he pleases, with no accountability. Mustang had been instrumental in the Italian conflicts. In this service, he became injured twice, yet both times continued his duty. Garibaldi parts company with Mustang after his second injury and for a period of time thinks no more about him. Yet when he recounts the story, he states that he should have made him a colonel, especially in light of the fact that he had given the rank to men less worthy than Mustang. Thus, in addition to refuting a religious argument against concern for animal welfare, this novel illustrates that dogs, at a minimum, can prove themselves more useful in certain circumstances and more worthy of recognition than some men.

The nineteenth century was a time of significant advances and significant abuses. The formation of animal rights societies and the introduction of protective legislation finally gave a unified voice to those who recognized animals as sentient beings who should be treated as such. Yet the abuse of horses was so wide-spread that scenes of their maltreatment made their way into world literature, including the well-known and often analyzed horrifying horse dream in Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and
Punishment. Additionally, the practice of vivisection was expanding and despite the multiple groups formed to stop it, it continued into the twentieth century. With animal abuses, such as those towards carriage horses, very much in the public eye, they became impossible to ignore. Thus the increase in abuses resulted in an increase of awareness, which finally resulted in the first large movements of animal protection.

Historically, as animal advocacy gained ground, new means of exploiting animals developed. As awareness increased of these exploitations, animal advocates again pushed back, creating the war in progress, noted by Derrida. As this tradition continued, animal exploiters learned to conduct their exploitation in secret in order to avoid opposition. For example, Upton Sinclair gave his readers a glimpse into an early twentieth-century industrial slaughterhouse, as I will show. Others who worked in slaughterhouses in recent times have shared their experiences, and some animal advocates have worked undercover to expose slaughterhouse animal treatment. This brought about ag-gag laws to defend the industry. Céline and Léautaud wrote at a time before much of the twentieth-century secrecy took hold. They work at a time when animal abuse still took place in public and much of that which did not still made its way into public discourse. They write explicitly of animal maltreatment, creating awareness that then invites this opposition, so that animal welfare can once again progress.

This continues the progression described in this section. When writers attempt to expand the conceptual space of animals, others try to push them back into the space from which they just escaped. Jean-Christophe Bailly writes in a section of *Le Versant animal*, that I will examine more at length in chapter four: “[C]e qui s’est vu, et continûment, c’est que les animaux n’ont jamais pu tenir en place – ni par eux-mêmes ni dans la pensée et les rêves des hommes–, c’est que cette limite-frontière entre l’homme et la bête, les animaux, sans effort, librement, n’ont jamais cessé de la rendre vacillante” (15). Animals themselves contribute to this constant adjustment of their conceptual space. In the
seventeenth century, one of the criticisms of Cartesianism was the basic realization that it did not align with people’s experience with animals. Thus, the animals in these cases refuted the Cartesian concept of animal-machines. Montaigne, La Fontaine, Rousseau, Hugo, and Zola all attempted, in their respective eras, to re-inspire a sense of compassion for animals that had previously been lost. When compassion for animals subsides, one often finds that society has become more mechanical in nature, and that spills over onto ideas of animals and their treatment, which was the case for Céline’s and Léautaud’s time. Descartes sought to explain living organisms mechanically, with the addition of the soul to the human, in an age, as Thomas stated, “accustomed to a host of mechanical marvels” (33). Rousseau and Voltaire wrote in a century that expanded concern for animals, extoled the bon sauvage, and saw an increase in the pastoral. (Queen Marie-Antoinette herself spent time at her hamlet, complete with animals.) But the nineteenth century saw an increase again in mechanization, as well as mechanized views of animals that denied, or refused to admit, the concept of an inner life, leading to a new need to undo the damage, as Céline and Léautaud attempted to do.

1.2 The Animal Condition in Recent Times

Céline and Léautaud each lived with multiple animals, giving them much direct experience interacting with animals. Through this experience, they learned that others underestimated animals, and denied them traits that they themselves witnessed. Both, consequently, attempted to inspire compassion for these animals, showing their suffering as suffering, and the injustice of animal maltreatment. Additionally, they provided examples of animal characteristics that contradict views of them as mechanical beings, or stimulus-response machines. Since their era, however, industrialists have strived to keep them in these categories. This gave birth to the intellectual animal rights movement, which owes a great deal to the philosophers Peter Singer and Tom Regan, respectively, who each published their own work presenting important facts about contemporary animal treatment, outlining
new ideas, and more deeply philosophizing recurring ones. As is often the case with ground-breakers, new works appeared after them, that, while still acknowledging a debt to Singer and Regan, disputed their underlying philosophies. More recent authors dispute their works for using the same philosophical bases that allow the continuation of animal harm – hierarchies based on similarities to humans, with only those most similar to humans receiving any consideration, and, especially in Singer’s case, leaving even those humans who do not measure up to a certain standard, in uncertain territory.

According to Cathryn Bailey, in “A Man and a Dog in a Lifeboat: Self-Sacrifice, Animals, and the Limits of Ethical Theory,” part of the problem lies in the use of hypothetical scenarios. As philosophers, they undergo pressure to come up with solutions for worst-case scenarios that do not apply to daily life and hopefully, will not happen at all. She views our expectations of moral philosophy as part of the problem:

[T]here is nothing "abstract" or morally neutral about "hypotheticals” that implies a value ranking of human and animal life. In fact, such scenarios can be seen as subtly reinforcing sexism and racism as well as anthropocentrism. Moreover... the use of such examples both assumes and reinforces a very particular notion of the nature and proper scope of moral philosophy. Ultimately, animal ethics as it has too often been understood in the West, implicitly reinforces the obsolete view that ethics is properly understood as based on universal, rationally discoverable principles, the goal of which is to instruct individuals caught in moral dilemmas (Bailey 131).

She argues that this view of moral philosophy too often leads to inaction. Furthermore, they often become circular arguments, as almost all take for granted that human life trumps all other life forms, based on the fact that when necessary to choose, humans usually do choose human life. Yet, with animal ethics, this underlying assumption allows prejudices to remain unquestioned: “[I]n the case of animal ethics, what most people apparently accept as obviously justified by common sense is part of what is at issue. In this case, the question is about the extent to which our deeply held intuitions are actually expressions of our anthropocentric prejudices” (Bailey 141). As Bailey shows, Singer tries to
define the value of life differently, without having it correspond directly with species. But if one rejects this traditional line, moral philosophy expects that one must replace it. Singer’s utilitarian replacement of the species line, which he replaces with “features like consciousness, capacity to enjoy life, etc.” has led to his rejection by some disability scholars and activists (Bailly 143). Bailly presents Singer’s hypothetical scenario that if one’s daughter was in a burning house with a dog, one would save one’s daughter before the dog, not due to her humanity, but “because the girl’s greater mental capacity gives her a greater interest in life” (143). This line of reasoning has led to a rejection by many, especially disability scholars, of Singer’s utilitarian philosophy, because it suggests “that many people, notably, the physically and mentally disabled, may not deserve to live” (Bailly 143). However, Bailly points out that moral philosophy should not be expected to serve as a “pocket calculator,” but instead guide everyday, practical decisions:

Both Regan and Singer have been instrumental in bringing ethics out of the ethereal "meta-ethical" realm, and their work has surely had more practical impact than almost any other philosophers in recent memory. But I think we would be better off if we were to acknowledge not only that there will never be an acceptable principle-based way to determine whose life values most in certain extreme cases (such as the "man and a dog" scenario), but that it would not even be desirable that there be such an outcome. We will never have a moral theory that functions as precisely as a pocket calculator, but that ought not to become an excuse for proceeding blithely onward in the face of obvious suffering. Otherwise, skepticism about the detailed applicability of moral theories can become an excuse for quietism. One claims to care, but alas, attempts to apply the moral theory find it wanting, and one throws up one’s hands (143-44).

A reading of Singer and Regan indeed provides relevant arguments against allowing the continuation of animal suffering that does not entail that one turn their philosophies into pocket calculators, but instead provides valid considerations when faced with the multiple ways animal suffering occurs. As Bailey

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15 The man and a dog in a lifeboat was Regan’s hypothetical example.
states, referencing Carol J. Adams, “We should acknowledge suffering, but not compare it” (144). In fact, this is what the authors in the previous section, as well as Céline and Léautaud attempt to do. They do not provide their reader with a calculator to measure one living being’s suffering against another’s, but instead describe animals in a way that guide their readers to acknowledge the animals’ suffering. If one focuses solely on quantitative concerns, one loses sight of this suffering, and thus is less likely to develop compassion for the individual who suffers.

This section acknowledges many of the relevant elements of Singer’s and Regan’s pioneering works that brought attention to the actual daily treatment of animals and provided insight into animal traits formerly denied or ignored, thereby showing their readers that this treatment matters to the animals. This allows their readers to understand that when one does nothing, industry keeps pushing the limits further. It also reveals the consequences of ignoring the works that came before them that illustrate why one should have compassion for animals. When society loses sight of animal experiences and fails to have empathy, this allows animal exploiters to continue unhindered.

The general view in any given society on the acceptable treatment of animals reflects the ethics of that society. This clearly varies by culture. Often, what is accepted as right or wrong is viewed by the population as unqualifiedly so based on the society’s approval or disapproval. This is ethical relativism, which implies that the exact same act can be both right and wrong. According to Regan, this does not meet the requirement of consistency, which is a minimum requirement for any ethical principle (131-2). An example of this would be the battery cages for egg hens in Europe versus those in the US. In Europe, there must be some facilities allowing for the hens to perch, nest, and scratch (RSPCA). In the US there

are no such requirements on a national level.\textsuperscript{17} It cannot be ethically right in the US to deny hens these natural actions, but ethically wrong in Europe. On an ethical basis, it must be one or the other. Consequently, majority approval does not signify that any action is in and of itself ethical, especially when outside forces, such as industries, employ efforts to shape the thinking of a society.

**Political influences**

Industries not only exhibit a large amount of control over what a society considers ethical, they also play a large role in politics. The role of politics in the lack of current and past animal welfare is indisputable. A direct correlation between the ability to treat animals as objects and profit creates a strong interest in their continued oppression. While this correlation exists both in Europe and the US, the ways to bring about change on each continent sometimes differ. Corporations and large industries in the US, which has less anti-cruelty legislation than Europe, have a greater influence over individual politicians. Singer highlights the difference of the agribusiness influence across the Atlantic:

> Another reason for the difference between the United States and Europe is that the U.S. political process is simply more corrupt. Elections are many times more costly—the entire 2001 British general election cost less than Senator John Corzine spent to win a single New Jersey Senate seat in 2000. Moreover, fund-raising in Europe is largely done by the political parties, not by individual candidates. These differences allow the agribusiness industry far greater control over Congress than it can hope to have over the political process in Europe. That is why the most successful American campaigns—like the campaign against the use of animals to test cosmetics, which initially targeted Revlon, and the more recent discussions with McDonald’s on the way the animals they buy are treated—have focused on corporations rather than on Congress (AL xii).

Consumer based corporations have a direct need for public approval. They depend on customers to purchase their products in order to remain in business. Consequently, negative publicity and boycotts have proven effective in bringing about some amount of change in the US, whereas in Europe, political

\textsuperscript{17} This is currently changing somewhat on a state level. Since the time I initially wrote this first chapter, more states have enacted laws regarding battery cages. Some of the state laws are phase-out legislation that have an end date that has not yet arrived.
agreements, such as the Treaty of Amsterdam, effect change. This treaty among the member nations of the European Union improved animal conditions to a certain extent. Forty years after having classified animals as “agricultural products” in the original treaty for the EU in 1957, Europe changed their status to “sentient beings” in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, finally ending their status as objects in the European Union (AL xii-xiii).

In the US, the political influence of those who profit from animal testing impedes progress against cruel experiments. What occurs in experiments would not be allowed by ordinary citizens, but because they claim to increase in knowledge, experimenters escape legal regulation. According to Singer:

There are laws that prevent ordinary people from beating their dog to death, but in the United States scientists can do the same thing with impunity, and with no one to check whether their doing so is likely to lead to benefits that would not occur from an ordinary beating. The reason for this is that the strength and prestige of the scientific establishment, supported by the various interest groups—including those who breed animals for sale to laboratories—have been sufficient to stop attempts at effective legal control (AL 74-5).

So although legislation exists to protect certain animals, they don’t apply to the situations where most animals are maltreated. In the above passages, Singer demonstrates the very powerful political influence of economic interests groups in the United States, with which those who attempt to improve conditions for animals must compete.

In the meat industry also, those who make large profits from animals have influence over policy, both in the US and abroad. In addition to the treatment of the meat animals themselves, the need for grazing land has led to deforestation, which has affected multiple additional species across the globe. Singer points out that in the competition for land, preservationists cannot compete with the money of agribusiness: “Forests and meat animals compete for the same land. The prodigious appetite of the affluent nations for meat means that agribusiness can pay more than those who want to preserve or
restore the forests. We are, quite literally, gambling with the future of our planet—for the sake of hamburgers” (AL 169). Singer, like so many other animal rights proponents, was quite ahead of his time. Several years before the mainstream recognition of the link between the meat industry and global warming, he warned others of this connection in his book. Forests absorb and contain carbon dioxide which would be otherwise in the atmosphere. Yet forests are unsuitable for grazing animals or producing crops used to feed animals raised for meat, which results in the conflict described by Singer. The meat industry further contributes to global warming by the carbon dioxide produced by their animals, which was not noted by Singer but has become an argument for a more plant based diet used in recent years.

Even animal rights groups which were once revolutionary have not escaped the influence of businesses and politicians. Singer describes how these groups became more complacent over time.

When first founded, the RSPCA and ASPCA were radical groups, far ahead of the public opinion of their times, and opposed to all forms of cruelty to animals, including cruelty to farm animals, who then, as now, were the victims of many of the worst abuses. Gradually, however, as these organizations grew in wealth, membership, and respectability, they lost their radical commitment and became part of the ‘establishment.’ They built up close contacts with members of the government, and with businessmen and scientists. They tried to use these contacts to improve the conditions of animals, and some minor improvements resulted; but at the same time contacts with those whose basic interests are in the use of animals for food or research purposes blunted the radical criticism of the exploitation of animals that had inspired the founders. Again and again the societies compromised their fundamental principles for the sake of trivial reforms (AL 218).

So, even groups who exist for the sake of protecting animals fail to bring about much change on either side of the Atlantic. Those with money and power not only possess the ability to influence politicians, but protection groups as well.

Animal welfare
Although both ethical and political progress have been made, particularly in Europe, industry animals still do not have rights to the fulfillment of their basic needs. Animals, unlike victims of racial or sexual inequality, cannot fight for their own rights. Thus like children and some of the disabled, they need others to defend them. Giving ethical consideration to animals means providing them with their individual needs, which vary by species. Nonetheless, common biological needs exist that are independent of species. Regan explains these basic needs that should be met for all animals: “Despite many possible differences, however, certain conditions are universal for all humans and animals, if each is to have a reasonable chance to live well. Adequate nourishment, shelter, water, and rest, for example, are such conditions. They constitute basic biological needs of both humans and animals.” (88).

But animals, like humans, have emotional needs as well. If one is to protect the welfare of animals, one must provide for both the emotional and biological needs of the animals. Regan explains the similarities between human and nonhuman animal welfare needs:

[Most agree that typical humans have a family of psychological and social needs, including the need for companionship, security and liberty... These human needs find their counterparts among animals. Psychological and social needs, not just basic biological propensities, are as much a part of their nature as is true in the human case. For example... animals have an emotional life, a life that includes affection and hate, fear and anger, security and loneliness. To the extent that animals live in an environment that provides opportunities for the satisfaction of those preferences correlated with their needs, to that extent they are benefited. To be situated in such an environment, in other words is a welfare-interest of these animals (90).]

Many animals, like humans, are social and consequently have social interests. They are benefitted when these needs are fulfilled and harmed when they are not. Moreover, all their needs must be met on a regular basis. Regan explains how having all of one need met, such as food, but not another, such as water, is not sufficient. Neither is it enough, he says, to have all of their needs met only some of the time. If this requirement of continuous fulfillment of all needs is not met, they cannot live according to their desires and capacities (Regan 89). Additionally, for them to have full autonomy, they must be able
to act in a way that they believe will fulfill their preferences. This is true regardless of whether their actions actually result in this fulfillment (Regan 84-5).

Equality

Despite animals having basic needs, many industries and governments continue to treat the animals either as if they did not have these needs, that is to say as objects, or as if these needs are irrelevant because they are lower life forms. Consequently, the idea of equality is frequently addressed in animal studies. The notion of animal equality is still a revolutionary idea that provokes great animosity, fear, and divisions in thought, including what that would mean and how it would be applied. Those who advocate for better animal treatment emphasize that this principle does not and cannot include giving all the same rights that humans generally have to nonhuman animals. Singer highlights this point: “The basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment; it requires equal consideration. Equal consideration for different beings may lead to different treatment and different rights” (AL 2 - his emphasis). Some use humor to erase the fear that the idea of equality would mean treating animals as if they were human beings, such as stating that equality for animals does not include the right to vote. Equality simply means that their needs, some of which are the same (food and water) and some of which are different (one could confine a cow to a fenced-in pasture, but not a human) are taken into account in the same way that one would take a human being’s needs into account.

Fights for equality mark modern history. From the eighteenth-century battles against the nobility to the abolition of slavery, rights for women, and civil rights, there has always been resistance against extending rights to previously oppressed groups. Yet none of these struggles has turned on each and every human being exactly equal in every respect. Rousseau pointed out in his Discours sur l’origine
that humans have natural inequalities. Singer also recognizes that humans are naturally inequal, but that human rights do not depend on actual equality:

Those who defend hierarchical, inequalitarian societies have often pointed out that by whatever test we choose it simply is not true that all humans are equal. Like it or not we must face the fact that humans come in different shapes and sizes; they come with different moral capacities, different intellectual abilities, different amounts of benevolent feelings and sensitivity to the needs of others, different abilities to communicate effectively, and different capacities to experience pleasure and pain. In short, if the demand for equality were based on the actual equality of all human beings, we would have to stop demanding equality (AL 3).

He continues, “Equality is a moral idea, not an assertion of fact” (AL 4). Thus, the idea of equal consideration for animals does not assume that they possess equal capacities. It instead requires that their needs, whatever they may be, be met, recognizing that these needs vary among species and individuals. Singer explains: “Precisely what our concern or consideration requires us to do may vary according to the characteristics of those affected by what we do: concern for the well-being of children growing up in America would require that we teach them to read; concern for the well-being of pigs may require no more than that we leave them with other pigs in a place where there is adequate food and room to run freely” (AL 5). The failure to have equal concerns for the needs of other species is speciesism, defined by Singer as “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species” (AL 6). Different animal studies philosophies view the implications of speciesism in various ways. One of the first philosophers to reimagine the criteria for rights to include other species was Jeremy Bentham. In his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, he both calls animals “agents” and recognizes that they are capable of both happiness and suffering. Bentham resurrects animals from the status of “things” and calls the disregard of their interests “insensibility” (310). In Chapter 17, where he addresses the question of “What other agents then are there, which, at the same time that they are under the influence of man’s
direction, are susceptible of happiness?,” he provides two responses (310). The first is other people. (On a side note, this shows that the word “man” is to be taken literally in this writing and is not a stand-in for humanity in general.) It is in his second response that he, more than two centuries before the Treaty of Amsterdam, recognizes animals as sentient beings: “Other animals, which, on account of their interests having been neglected by the insensibility of the ancient jurists, stand degraded into the class of things” (310-his emphasis). This progressive statement introduces the idea of legal protections for animals. Bentham first acknowledges that animals have interests. When he recognizes the neglect of these interests by “ancient jurists,” he implies that said interests should have some type of legal protection. The second part of this sentence also recognizes injustice done to animals with the word “degraded,” which shows that their status has been lowered from their actual state. However, it is his note to this statement that is often quoted in animal studies literature, where he puts forth the question of suffering as more important than those of the ability to speak or the ability to reason. The title itself of the note, “Interests of the inferior animals improperly neglected in legislation,” makes an important point. The fact that they have been “improperly neglected,” confirms that their interests should be and should have previously been addressed by legislation protecting these interests. This note compares the cruel treatment of slaves with the cruel treatment of animals. In this statement, Bentham advocates extending legal rights to animals by calling the suppression of these deserved rights “tyranny” (The last part of this note has been previously cited, but in order to show his argument in its entirety, it is re-cited here):

The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the os sacrum are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the
faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer? (311-his emphasis).

Thus, according to Bentham, the criteria for rights should be the capacity for suffering. As Singer mentions, a stone cannot have interests, because a stone cannot suffer. His example compares a stone and a mouse being kicked along the road. The stone cannot be said to have an interest in not being kicked, whereas the mouse can, because the mouse would suffer from this action and the stone would not (AL 7-8). He continues, “If a being suffers there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration” (AL 8). He asserts the arbitrariness of all other characteristics, such as intelligence or rationality, comparing them to choosing race or sex as the dividing characteristic.

Additionally, there are human beings who lack the characteristics that have been used in attempts to create a dividing line between humans and non-human animals, such as speech and reason. These humans include infants and the mentally disabled. Singer explains that to take this line literally, excluding these humans from the field of consideration “would mean we have the right to perform painful experiments on retarded humans for trivial reasons; similarly it would follow that we have the right to rear and kill them for food” (AL 240). Singer makes an argument here based on values already accepted by society. Knowing that a baseline exists for human treatment, he does not attempt to bring certain humans down from this baseline, but raise certain animals up to it.

Singer also discusses pain in a video conversation about eating meat with Richard Dawkins. He asserts that one who does not care about the sufferings of animals is ignoring the reality of the situation:

When we are talking about vertebrates, particularly the animals we eat, the pigs and cows and chickens, there’s no doubt that they can feel pain and there is no doubt that they do feel pain in the way that we rear them and produce them. If you say well, why
care and of course it is possible not to care, but then you are just cutting yourself off from a part of reality which is there. You’re denying that it matters. When you look at it as objectively as you can it’s obvious that it matters to them as it matters to you (Singer and Dawkins).

The fact that these animals meet Bentham’s criteria for suffering is indisputable. Although one can, in fact, choose not to care, one cannot deny that they do suffer pain and harm from their conditions. Thus, ignoring the situation can be equated with not accepting reality for what it is. In another work, Singer asks:

Why do we lock up chimpanzees in appalling primate research centres and use them in experiments that range from the uncomfortable to the agonizing and lethal, yet would never think of doing the same to a retarded human being at a much lower mental level? The only possible answer is that the chimpanzee, no matter how bright, is not human, while the retarded human, no matter how dull, is (Prologue 6-his emphasis).

He replies that this is indefensible speciesism. Speciesism does not take into account the capacities of the individual or the actual harm done, which could in some cases actually be worse for the nonhuman animal. Singer gives the example of a wild animal captured with the intent of release who may experience general terror out of fear for its life, unable to know the future intentions of its capturer (Prologue 7). This example recalls Rousseau, who explains how caged animals not raised in captivity, will harm themselves in their attempt at freedom, which although not unheard of, is much less common with imprisoned people who have a better understanding of their situation.

Choosing species as a dividing characteristic has led to countless instances of animal cruelty, many for the most superficial human interests. Singer notes:

[O]rdinary human beings—not a few exceptionally cruel or heartless humans, but the overwhelming majority of humans—take an active part in, acquiesce in, and allow their taxes to pay for practices that require the sacrifice of the most important interests of members of other species in order to promote the most trivial interests of our own species (AL 9).
This statement shows just how much our daily lives involve practices that have animal suffering at their root. For many people, the body, beauty, and cleaning products that they use on a daily basis, as well as the food that they eat, all came into being through practices that involve animal cruelty.

Our ordinary language also often objectifies animals. Hunters use the term “harvest” to describe the killing of animals. Singer explains how this term equates hunted animals to crops or non-living substances. “The term indicates that the hunter thinks of deer or seals as if they were corn or coal, objects of value only in so far as they serve human interests” (AL 234). Not only the hunters, but also the agencies that regulate hunting use terminology which denies sentience to the animals that they kill. In addition to “harvest,” the word “bag” is frequently used to denote the process of killing wild animals. Like our terms for meat, these words minimize the fact that in “harvesting” or “bagging” a deer, a turkey, or another legally hunted animal, one has actually killed a (usually) healthy, thriving, living being. As Singer notes, the word harvest is often used for hunting of “excess” population (AL 234). The idea of an “excess population” itself objectifies the animals. If an animal is an “excess,” it is considered a burden that needs to be eliminated. According to Singer, the objectification created by the “harvest” mindset forms a barrier to finding solutions that eliminate the need for future “harvesting”:

“The trouble is that the authorities responsible for wildlife have a “harvest” mentality, and are not interested in finding techniques of population control that would reduce the number of animals to be ‘harvested’ by hunters” (AL 234). When one objectifies animals, it becomes a cycle; because one sees animals as objects, one has no incentive to consider their interests nor to attempt to eliminate their suffering.

Different philosophies on animal ethics have different ways of ascribing rights to animals. The utilitarian view, which is attributed to Singer, views individuals as the sum of their experiences, both good and bad. Regan compares this to seeing them as an empty cup with no inherent value of their
own. Only what goes into the cup has value. The result can be an extremely unfair distribution of harms (and benefits) because only the overall number of benefits is considered. This is akin to the “greater good” theory practiced in many fields that can cause immense harm to one or some individuals completely unjustly. Regan’s view is that all moral agents and moral patients have inherent value unrelated to the intrinsic value of their experiences. He defines normal mammalian animals as subjects-of-a-life and asserts that they all have innate value, regardless of their use or lack thereof to humans.

Individuals are subjects-of-a-life if they have beliefs and desires; perception, memory, and a sense of the future, including their own future; an emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference and welfare interests; the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychophysical identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them, logically independently of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else’s interests. Those who satisfy the subject-of-a-life criterion themselves have a distinctive kind of value—inherent value—and are not to be viewed or treated as mere receptacles (Regan 243).

Treating them as receptacles, according to Regan, is wrong and unjust. This perspective leads to the belief that harm done to one individual can be compensated for with aggregate gains “without any wrong having been done to the loser” (Regan 249).

Derrida views the general grouping of animals into a single category, “l’animal,” as the root of violence towards animals. He states: “Quand on dit l’animal, on a déjà commencé à ne plus rien comprendre. On a déjà commencé à justement enfermer l’animal dans un bocal. Il y a des animaux avec des différences considérables entre différents types d’animaux” (Derrida, “Question of the Animal”—oral emphasis his). He asserts that putting animals such as a chimpanzee and an ant in the same category is a type of violent repression done to the animal by man which leads to violent treatment such as slaughterhouses and industrial treatment of animals (Derrida, “Question of the Animal”). Not differentiating between extremely different living beings becomes part of our acculturation of then viewing all animals as objects. If one extrapolates from what he says, taking
literally that chimpanzees and ants are thought of as belonging to the same general group, and
considering that the majority of people see nothing wrong in stepping on an ant in order to kill it, then
that minimizes harm done to the chimpanzees, which are viewed as members of the same group, in
animal experiments or “development” projects leading to habitat destruction.

Animal awareness and the species boundary

The lack of language and reason have been the traditional reasons to deny consideration to
animals. Yet, as we have seen, animal rights philosophers recognize that infants and certain other
people also lack language and have less reason than some animals, but are not denied just treatment.
Moreover, what is often simply a difference in degree between animals and humans is often attributed
to a difference in kind. Regan notes that both the complexity and similarity of human and nonhuman
animal anatomy and physiology demonstrate that this holds true for the difference between the human
and animal mind (a reminder here that for Regan’s arguments, he considers animal to mean mammal)
(18). Regan explains that one can attribute both beliefs and desires to mammals based on their
behavior:

Both common sense and ordinary language underwrite this view; the attribution of
beliefs and desires to these animals is logically independent of questions about their
having or lacking immortal (immaterial) souls; the behavior of these animals is
consistent with attributing beliefs and desires to them; and evolutionary theory
supports the view that animals frequently behave as they do because they desire what
they desire and believe what they believe (Regan 34).

The way we interpret animal behavior is based on observation. Similar behavior in other species with
similar anatomy can reasonably be attributed to some type of mental activity. Regan states that when

18 Regan explains that the importance of this is because: “[T]here is no scarcity of objections that contest, either in
whole or in part, the propriety of attributing beliefs and desires to animals or of explaining their behavior in these
terms” (35). Eileen Crist explains the problem, as I note in the following chapter, of explaining animal behavior in
this manner, namely that it portrays them as mechanical without any mental activity.
an argument such as this is very strong, the burden of proof is on the opposition, because they are the ones harboring irrational, counterintuitive beliefs.

Up until this time, scientists had attributed much animal behavior to instinct. In “The Long Road to Animal Welfare: How Activism Works in Practice,” Wayne Pacelle, writing about the time period following the initial release of Singer’s Animal Liberation, which preceded Regan’s work, writes:

Around this time, moreover, something of a scientific revolution occurred in discussions about animal intelligence. Although some scientists still treated animals as mere production units or living test tubes, others were taking a fresh look at animal cognition. The zoologist Donald Griffin challenged long-accepted notions of behaviorism, the theory that animals act on the basis of instinct and primal desires alone. Scientists working in the field, such as Jane Goodall with chimpanzees, Cynthia Moss and Joyce Poole with elephants, and Irene Pepperberg with parrots, showed that animals have complex social and emotional lives (70).

Many of the arguments used to justify animal maltreatment revolve around limiting the mental capacity of animals. Although animal behaviorists have documented more and more complex mental activity in animals, others ignore this work, or continue to raise the bar if they must acknowledge an advancement made in understandings of animals, as I will show in my third chapter.

Many people who advocate for animals note the ability of the great apes to use sign language, yet other animals without this ability also communicate effectively with humans. Vicki Hearne, the well-known horse and dog trainer and author who wrote about the animal-trainer relationship, explains the mutual comprehension between the handler and the horse. “With horses as with dogs, the handler must learn to believe, to ‘read’ a language s/he hasn’t sufficient neurological apparatus to test or judge, because the handler must become comprehensible to the horse, and to be understood is to be open to understanding, much more than it is to have shared mental phenomena” (107). Here we see that animal communication is deeper than scientific phenomena and cannot be measured by biological studies. Hearne later talks about a Spanish rider she saw in an instructional film who, while “performing
some very complicated and beautiful dressage maneuvers” showed “no detectable movement” of his legs and hands (112). She calls this type of riding a “wonderfully rich and subtle conversation” between rider and horse (Hearne 112 – her emphasis). The horse and rider are able to communicate so effectively that the horse does exactly what is expected without any audible or visible signals passing between them. In “Speciesism, Identity Politics, and Ecocriticism: A Conversation with Humanists and Posthumanists,” Cary Wolfe explains that animals do communicate, but humans need to challenge their traditional modes of perception in order to understand them:

Real ‘listening’ means being willing to have our own modes of perception, our own habits of knowledge, our own prerogatives of power, interrogated by taking seriously the radical alterity of other, nonhuman, ways of being in the world, ways that demonstrably can be communicated to us, and are all the time, if we know how to listen (Cole et al. 103-his emphasis).

Other animals do not speak our languages, yet that does not preclude human and non-human communication. Humans simply must be open to non-linguistic modes of transmitting meaning.

In Animal Rites, Wolfe states that much of what we have previously thought of as exclusively human, such as reason, tool use and making, altruism, language and the production of linguistic novelty, has been discovered in other species and published in major news journals such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report as well as broadcast on PBS and cable television (2). He then cites Donna Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto” to show that most specific scientific traits used to divide man from nonhuman animals have been disproven:

By the late twentieth century in the United States scientific culture, the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached. The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted, if not turned into amusement parks—language, tool use, social behavior, mental events. Nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal... Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human
uniqueness; they are clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture (Wolfe, *Rites* 2).  

The discovery of these qualities in animals blurs the dividing line between humans and other animals. Traits used to separate humans from other animals have gradually disappeared as knowledge about them has increased.

Many philosophers who work with animal ethics protest the drawing of a species boundary, since characteristics that have traditionally been associated only with homo sapiens are now attributed to other species as well. The great apes, being the closest relatives to humans, share many characteristics that had previously been viewed as exclusively human. They can not only use sign language, but also form emotional and social relationships. Singer describes the progress made in our knowledge of these animals and questions the species boundary:

> The work of observers of free-living great apes like Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Birute Galdikas, and of Roger and Deborah Fouts, Francine Patterson, Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, and Lyn Miles—all of whom have taught apes to use human sign languages to communicate with us—has shown that chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans are thinking, self-aware beings, capable of planning ahead, who form lasting social bonds with others and have a rich social and emotional life. The great apes are therefore an ideal case for showing the arbitrariness of the species boundary. If we think that all human beings, irrespective of age or mental capacity, have some basic rights, how can we deny that the great apes, who surpass some humans in their capacities, also have these rights? *(AL* xiii).

Primatologist Jane Goodall, the most well-known great ape expert, discovered many similarities between chimpanzees and humans, including using tools:

> Chimpanzees, like humans, can learn by observation and imitation, which means that if a new adaptive pattern is ‘invented’ by a particular individual, it can be passed on to the next generation. Thus we find that while the various chimpanzee groups that have been studied in different parts of Africa have many behaviors in common, they also have their own distinctive traditions. This is particularly well-documented with respect to tool-using and tool-making behaviors. Chimpanzees use more objects as tools for a greater

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variety of purposes than any creature except ourselves, and each population has its own tool-using cultures (12).20

Because many of the traditional barriers between humans and nonhuman animals have been shown not to be barriers at all, opponents of speciesism advocate equality for those animals who possess these traits formerly considered exclusively human. Wolfe explains the ethical outlook on the situation:

[W]hen our generally agreed-on markers for ethical consideration are observed in species other than Homo sapiens, we are obliged to take them into account equally and to respect them accordingly. This amounts to nothing more than taking the humanist conceptualization of the problem at its word and being rigorous about it—and then showing how humanism must, if rigorously pursued, generate its own deconstruction once these ‘defining’ characteristics are found beyond the species barrier (42).

Because there has been general agreement on what factors merit ethical consideration, it would be unethical to change them according to one’s own interests. This would prove that the original barrier did not exist because of any true scientific belief, but instead in order to treat animals as objects for personal gain.

Mental events

One of the main factors that warrants ethical consideration is the capacity for mental events, in particular the capacity to feel pain because of the suffering that can accompany it. Pain is not something that one can directly observe. We can see signs of pain, but cannot directly measure the pain felt by another being, human or nonhuman. Singer remarks, “Pain is a state of consciousness, a ‘mental event,’ and as such it can never be observed” (AL 10). He notes that no one can experience the pain of another, regardless of species. All we can use to note their pain are observable indications. We infer, based on our observations, that other humans feel pain like we do, but, “In theory, we could always be mistaken when we assume that other human beings feel pain” (Singer, AL 10-his emphasis). To gage the pain of another human we must rely on things like sounds, expressions, and actions.

20 Also cited by Cary Wolfe in Animal Rites.
Other species give external indications very similar to humans in instances that provoke pain.

Singer describes the similarities between humans, mammals and birds:

[We know that these animals have nervous systems very like ours, which respond physiologically as ours do when the animal is in circumstances in which we would feel pain: an initial rise of blood pressure, dilated pupils, perspiration, an increased pulse rate, and, if the stimulus continues, a fall in blood pressure. Although human beings have a more developed cerebral cortex than other animals, this part of the brain is concerned with thinking functions rather than with basic impulses, emotions, and feelings. These impulses, emotions, and feelings are located in the diencephalon, which is well developed in many other species of animals, especially mammals and birds (AL 11).]

Moreover, he notes that the similar behavior in animals with like nervous systems that serve a common evolutionary function, logically points to similar sensations of pain:

A capacity to feel pain obviously enhances a species’ prospects of survival, since it causes members of the species to avoid sources of injury. It is surely unreasonable to suppose that nervous systems that are virtually identical physiologically, have a common origin and a common evolutionary function, and result in similar forms of behavior in similar circumstances should actually operate in an entirely different manner on the level of subjective feelings (Singer, AL 11).

It would in fact be against all visual evidence to assume that these animals do not feel pain in the same way humans do. His observation of the virtually identical nervous systems followed by the lack of logic in believing that they would not function similarly echoes Voltaire’s entry in the Dictionnaire philosophique, but he has added even more reasons to reject that these comparable nervous systems would not function similarly. Unfortunately, this shows that animal pain, or at least the subjective feelings that accompany it, continued to be denied for three centuries (since the time of Descartes) after the similarity in the nervous systems was known.

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It is not just pain that has been recognized in animals. British government committees on cruelty to wild animals, experiments on animals, and on the welfare of animals under intensive farming methods agreed that animals feel pain, suffer from physical injuries, and additionally are capable of suffering from fear, anxiety and stress (Singer, AL 13). Baratay notes in his article the physical observations which confirm that mammals do indeed suffer physically, psychologically, and emotionally in a manner similar to humans:

La proximité physiologique des chevaux, chiens et bovins avec l’homme, notamment la présence d’un néocortex et d’un système de transmission de la douleur, développé, complexe, avec fibres et substances, construit et fonctionnant de la même manière, autorise à dire que leur douleur et leur souffrance sont réelles, semblables et égales en proportion aux humaines. La différence installée dans la précipitation, dans la seconde moitié du XXe siècle, entre la douleur physique et la souffrance psychologique, pour différencier l’animal de l’homme, n’a évidemment pas tenu longtemps puisque les vertébrés, notamment les mammifères, ressentent des émotions liées à la douleur (peur, angoisse) ou tout à fait indépendantes (ennui, solitude, frustration), qu’on peut rassembler sous le terme de souffrance. D’ailleurs, les expressions concrètes sont similaires dans leurs dimensions physiologiques (augmentations cardiaque, respiratoire, hormonale ; sudation ; perte de poids), psychologiques (dépression avec apathie ou agressivité, stéréotypies) et comportementales (retraits, vocalises, postures), même s’il y a évidemment des particularités d’espèce, comme les narines et les pupilles dilatées du cheval ou le cou rentré du chien ("Promotion" 139-40).

When animals exhibit similar physical, behavioral, and emotional responses to humans to similar stimuli, to assert that they do not feel similar suffering goes against all logic, especially when viewed in light of the fact that their nervous systems also resemble those of humans.

Right to life

Even for some of those who are concerned with the pain and suffering of animals, a death where the animal does not appear to suffer greatly does not constitute a wrong done to the animal. The

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right to life itself is another divisive issue, especially in a meat-based society, where animal death is a large part of daily life. Animal rights philosophers who support animal right to life do not hold the point of view that killing an animal is equal to killing a human. Singer and Regan go to great lengths to dispel this false belief. Singer states, “The only position that is irredeemably speciesist is the one that tries to make the boundary of the right to life run exactly parallel to the boundary of our own species” (AL 18-19). According to his philosophy, the right to life cannot morally be attributed only to the human species and denied to other “beings who are similar in all relevant respects” (Singer, AL 19).

Animals however, are constantly treated as disposable beings and often for something as unnecessary as bringing another oven cleaner to market. Singer emphasizes the need to change the complacency regarding animal treatment: “What we must do is bring nonhuman animals within our sphere of moral concern and cease to treat their lives as expendable for whatever trivial purposes we may have” (AL 20). Regan explains that unnatural death is always a harm, regardless of the manner of death: “To bring about the untimely death of animals will not hurt them if this is done painlessly; but they will be harmed. And it is the harm that an untimely death is, not just the painful methods frequently used, that should occasion our ethical curiosity” (103). Unnatural death is harm by cutting short what could be a full life. Untimely death also means the loss of autonomy and agency. Regan explains quite frankly the loss caused by death, which generally is accepted regarding humans but overlooked or rejected regarding animals:

And an untimely death is a deprivation of a quite fundamental and irreversible kind. It is irreversible because once dead, always dead. It is fundamental because death forecloses all possibilities of finding satisfaction. Once dead, the individual who had preferences, who could find satisfaction in this or that, who could exercise preference autonomy, can do this no more. Death is the ultimate harm because it is the ultimate loss—the loss of life itself (100 – his emphasis).
He reinforces here that animals do have interests and that clearly, their death is not in their best interest. Their future, which could have held multiple opportunities for satisfaction, has been permanently eliminated.

**Animal Experimentation**

The area in which there is perhaps the greatest awareness of animal cruelty is animal experimentation. This experimentation is often unnecessary and unrequired and frequently has little to no benefit or application to humans. According to Singer: “Many experiments inflict severe pain without the remotest prospect of significant benefits for human beings or any other animals” (AL 36). Because of awareness of animal experimentation, there has been a significant amount of opposition to this practice. Nonetheless, it still continues. Singer describes the problem:

> This opposition has made little headway because experimenters, backed by commercial firms that profit by supplying laboratory animals and equipment, have been able to convince legislators and the public that opposition comes from uninformed fanatics who consider the interests of animals more important than the interests of human beings (AL 40).

This statement shows that a century after the nineteenth century vivisectionists characterized their opponents as fanatics who opposed science, the same rhetoric is still used to disqualify the arguments of people opposed to animal suffering.

As with terminology used in the meat industry, such as the word “meat” itself used to re-term tissue from dead animals, the animal experimenters have terminology that avoids acknowledging the cruelty that they commit towards animals. Singer explains: “Detachment is made easier by the use of technical jargon that disguises the real nature of what is going on” (AL 50). Animals become just an object used for their research. In her book, *Intelligence and Personality*, psychologist Alice Heim notes the role of such jargon in the field of psychology and how it is used to mask the reality of psychological experiments:
The work on ‘animal behavior’ is always expressed in scientific, hygienic-sounding terminology, which enables the indoctrination of the normal, non-sadistic young psychology student to proceed without his anxiety being aroused. Thus, techniques of ‘extinction’ are used for what is in fact torturing by thirst or near-starvation or electric-shocking; ‘partial reinforcement’ is the term for frustrating an animal by only occasionally fulfilling the expectations which the experimenter has aroused in the animal by previous training; ‘negative stimulus’ is the term used for subjecting an animal to a stimulus which he avoids, if possible. The term ‘avoidance’ is O.K. because it is an observable activity. The terms ‘painful’ or ‘frightening stimulus’ are less O.K. since they are anthropomorphic; they imply that the animal has feelings – and that these may be similar to human feelings... The cardinal sin for the experimental psychologist working in the field of ‘animal behavior’ is anthropomorphism. Yet if he did not believe in the analogue of the human being and the lower animal even he, presumably, would find his work largely unjustified (150).

They cannot have it both ways. If animals bear no resemblance to humans, the psychology experiments serve no purpose and therefore are unjustified. If they are similar to humans, then cruel experiments torture animals and cannot be justified either. Singer sums up this problematic:

So the researcher’s central dilemma exists in an especially acute form in psychology: either the animal is not like us, in which case there is no reason for performing the experiment; or else the animal is like us, in which case we ought not to perform on the animal an experiment that would be considered outrageous if performed on one of us (AL 52).

The idea that “painful” would be an unacceptable word seems especially ironic, since clearly the animals would avoid painful stimuli; yet, if the experimenter believes that they do not feel pain, this then begs the question, to what do they attribute this avoidance? Once again, it is useful to recall that Voltaire challenged the idea that animals do not feel pain in the 18th century. Heim published her book 200 years later. The science supports Voltaire. Yet, for two centuries, scientists had denied that a similar nervous system meant similar feelings.

The speciesism in animal experiments is evident. Animals serve as research supplies. Singer highlights this fact: “Speciesism allows researchers to regard the animals they experiment on as items of equipment, laboratory tools rather than living, suffering creatures. In fact, on grant applications to
government funding agencies, animals are listed as ‘supplies’ alongside test tubes and recording instruments” (AL 69). This, along with the technical terms used to describe experiments, would logically seem to increase detachment from the actual consequences to the animals.

Professional rewards also contribute to the propagation of animal experiments. Experimenters earn prestige, grants and travel opportunities from their research on animals. Singer compares these rewards to the animal experiments themselves: “[J]ust as a rat can be conditioned to press a lever in return for a reward of food, so a human being can be conditioned by professional rewards to ignore the ethical issues raised by animal experiments” (AL 71). He cites two former experimenters, Roger Ulrich and Don Barnes, who acknowledged that they had been conditioned in part by the rewards and prestige. Ulrich ultimately recognized that his research results did not justify the continuation of the experiments and wondered if the scientific community and their support “were actually a part of the problem” (Singer, AL 70).23 Barnes states, “I represented a classic example of what I choose to call ‘conditioned ethical blindness.’ My entire life had consisted of being rewarded for using animals, treating them as sources of human improvement or amusement” (Singer, AL 71).24 Both of these experimenters no longer condone their experiments.

Singer explains that we already do not accept the pursuit of knowledge at all costs. For example, we do not permit “painful or lethal experiments on human beings without their consent, although there are many cases in which such experiments would advance knowledge far more rapidly than any other method” (Singer, AL 92). He suggests that we extend our existing restrictions to protect

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23 Singer cites Monitor, a publication of the American Psychological Association, March 1978.
animals. Regan also criticizes animal testing on ethical grounds. He asserts that no gains to humans justify the actions against animals used in these studies:

As in the case of humans, so also in the case of animals: overriding their rights cannot be defended by appealing to ‘the general welfare.’ Put alternatively, the benefits others receive count morally only if no individual’s rights have been violated. Since toxicity tests of new drugs violate the rights of laboratory animals, it is morally irrelevant to appeal to how much others have benefited (Regan 381-his emphasis).

Additionally, Regan emphasizes that risks are not morally transferable to others. He states that those who desire the benefits of drugs, willingly accept the risk that comes with taking them. However to transfer harm to other living beings in order to minimize one’s own risk violates their rights and treats them “as if their value were reducible to their possible utility relative to the interests of others” (Regan 378).

The case for animal experiments is weakest for commercial product testing, as there is no true need for another mascara or bathroom cleaner. The market is already flooded with choices. Regan refutes the rhetoric used for toxicity tests for new products:

[T]he defense of these tests, offered by appeal to the worse-off principle, assumes that premarket toxicity tests that harm animals can be justified by appealing to what might happen after new products are marketed, if these premarket tests were not performed. But morality does not work in the way this defense assumes it does... [E]ven if it were true that employing harmful toxicity tests on animals could be justified by appealing to what might happen assuming a product already is on the market, it would not follow that the decision to develop and market the product is justified. In this latter case, what is wanted is a moral justification that, in the nature of the case, cannot be given by appealing to the harm that might happen after the product already has been introduced (373-his emphasis).

In this line of thought, one cannot justify introducing another new product that will use animal testing as part of the product development. The desire to profit from a new product does not justify harming animals in order to make material gains for oneself.

Farm animals
With the ever-growing push for big profits, animals continue to be regarded as objects, thereby eliminating a sense of obligation or sympathy towards them by those who hold this view. Singer uses the mad cow disease epidemic to illustrate one of the results of this mindset: “Now with hecatombs of animal corpses on the evening news, millions of people have seen indisputable evidence of the fact that modern animal agriculture is based on treating animals as things, mere means to our ends, with no other reason for existing” (Animal Liberation). With the evidence of mass animal death before them, he notes that many people have been inspired to become vegetarians. While supporting this movement, he is also critical: “[B]ut the wonder is that it has taken so long for people to understand the real nature of the animal industry today” (Singer, Animal Liberation). At the time of his writing the 2002 edition, much more attention had been devoted to animals used for product testing and research than to the farm animal industry, yet he notes, “for every animal used in research in the United States, more than 100 are produced to be eaten or to lay eggs” (Animal Liberation). In addition to being the source of a greater volume of suffering, the agricultural industry also has less oversight since farm animals are always considered as property, hence their group classification as “livestock.” Farm animals are a commercial product, a source of profit for their owners, with little regulation of their treatment. Singer explains: “Moreover, what producers can do to animals is never subject to ethics committee supervision and is often specifically exempted from anticruelty legislation” (Animal Liberation). Thus, even though improvements have been made in protecting animals in other areas, the agricultural industry lags behind in treating animals as sentient beings.

For Singer, the treatment of farm animals logically stems from the objectification of animals. He states, “Once we place nonhuman animals outside our sphere of moral consideration and treat them as things we use to satisfy our own desires, the outcome is predictable” (Singer, Animal Liberation). He shows that a

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25 The animals were put to death in an effort to contain the disease.
public that buys products produced by intensive farming techniques supports both the suffering of animals and the politics that allow this suffering to continue:

The people who profit by exploiting large numbers of animals do not need our approval. They need our money. The purchase of the corpses of the animals they rear is the main support the factory farmers ask from the public (the other, in many countries, is big government subsidies). They will use intensive methods as long as they can sell what they produce by these methods; they will have the resources needed to fight reform politically; and they will be able to defend themselves against criticism with the reply that they are only providing the public with what it wants (Singer, AL 161-2).

He advocates vegetarianism as a boycott of the conditions of intensive farming, arguing against those who “justify eating flesh by saying that the animal was already dead when they bought it” (Singer, AL 163). The past cannot be changed, but the future can. Buying products produced by inhumane conditions implies tacit approval of those conditions.

Regan emphasizes that the suffering of farm animals includes more than the intense farming conditions. These animals also suffer from the loss of autonomy and normal activity:

Farm animals raised intensively, for example, not only suffer from, and as a result of, various digestive ailments—including ulcers and chronic watery bowel movements caused by diets ill-suited to their nature and needs—26—their suffering itself and the debilitating consequences of their condition diminish their ability to do what they want to do and what they would find satisfaction in doing. Dairy cows who suffer acutely when they stand on a wire-mesh or concrete floor not only must bear the harm as infliction (the acute pain that comes from standing) but also the harms as deprivations that flow from their diminished activity (Regan 99).

This example illustrates the two types of harm that can be inflicted on both humans and other animals—harm by infliction and harm by deprivation. Whereas harm by infliction has received the most attention, harm by deprivation is still a harm that must be considered.

The need for protein is one of the principal arguments used to allow for the perpetuation of the inhumane treatment of farm animals. Yet, other sources also provide protein and many vegetarians and

26 Regan notes: See Mason and Singer, Animal Factories, pp. 21ff.
vegans, including athletes, are healthier than their non-vegetarian peers. Regan highlights that meat is not at all necessary for a healthy diet:

To concede the necessity of meat in a healthy diet is to concede more than is meat’s due. The essential amino acids are essential, that is true; but there are alternative ways to obtain them, ways that do not rely on meat... Certain amino acids are essential for our health. Meat isn’t. We cannot, therefore, defend meat-eating on the grounds that we will ruin our health if we don’t eat it, or even that we will run a very serious risk of doing so if we abstain. Any ‘risk’ we run can be easily overcome by taking the modest trouble required to do so (Regan 337).

Whereas it can be true that meal planning becomes more complicated going from a meat-eating diet to one that does not include meat, the claim that meat is necessary for good health is false. Plant sources also provide amino acids, but sometimes must be combined to provide all the essential ones. He continues to explain that the excuses of habit and convenience do not justify eating meat by noting that habit and convenience are not a moral argument for participating in a practice that harms innocent individuals. To make his point, he emphasizes that certain people have the habit of discriminating against women or minorities, but their habits in no way justify their actions (Regan 337-8). Additionally, according to Regan, the fact that those who would suffer from loss of income by the elimination of the meat industry does not excuse its continuation. He explains:

Just as the benefits others obtain as a result of an unjust institution or practice is no moral defense of that practice or institution, so the harms others might face as a result of the dissolution of this practice or institution is no defense of allowing it to continue. Put alternatively, no one has a right to be protected against being harmed if the protection in question involves violating the rights of others (Regan 246). The continuation of an unethical institution cannot be justified on the grounds that people profit from it.

Additionally, there are no guarantees when one starts a business that one will always be able to make a living from that business. An industry that continues to worsen animal conditions in the name of profit cannot expect that concerned citizens will not eventually act to stop it.
Singer and Regan made huge strides in advancing animal welfare. Pacelle credits Singer’s book as “the greatest catalyst for change,” noting that it inspired the creation of hundreds of new animal protection groups (70). But for every step forward in animal welfare, industry fights back, continuing a war against compassion. The works of Singer and Regan are invaluable for the research put into them and creating awareness of animal cruelty. Yet, since that time many have found their philosophical bases inadequate or unacceptable, and new theories of ethics have been put forth. Yet, their philosophies were in line with their time, using reason in an era focused on reason and industry. As Bailey noted, however, problems arise when one expects philosophy as a field to create quantitative values of life. In general, the idea of placing quantitative values on life is what many of those who fight for the marginalized combat. As I will show, Céline in particular, fought the overly mathematical approach to life in his era. Philosophies based on reason have done a great deal to generate an understanding of the problem, but the quantitative nature of their work has failed to provide a solution. The authors who wrote to improve the condition of the marginalized did not compare the values of lives, but instead focused on empathy, the importance of which I examine in the following chapter.

1.3 Conclusion: The Continuing Battle

Although authors, philosophers, and activists have been demonstrating that animals are sentient beings for centuries, huge numbers of animals are still not treated as such because they are used for profit. This is not because people do not have natural sympathies towards animals, but because they have been conditioned to believe that their pain is necessary or irrelevant. Great effort has been and is still made to conceal the reality of the animal condition: slaughterhouses and laboratories are never seen by the greater part of the population, appealing packaging does not reveal the origins of products (especially in the case of meat), ads for meat products show happy, healthy animals, and above all huge amounts of rhetoric are applied to every arena in which animals
suffer. Additionally, those who try to obtain better treatment for animals are refuted and mocked and frequently characterized as being against humans. Yet if one looks objectively at those who have taken a stand for animals—Montaigne, Voltaire, Rousseau, Zola, and especially Victor Hugo, one could hardly describe them as such. What they have in common is not a dislike or hatred of humans, but a hatred of cruelty and the strength to take a stand where others do not.
2. Appreciating Singularities: Emotion and Empathy in Ethics

At the time Céline and Léautaud were writing, mechanization was giving increasing importance to the role of reason, while minimizing the importance of emotion. Machines were replacing living beings as sources of labor, while, simultaneously, living beings became treated more like machines. Society’s treatment of animals at this time reflected this mechanistic view of life. Many treated them coldly and cruelly, not responding with any emotion to their pain and distress. These authors recognized both the internal experiences of these animals and the role played by the suppression and discouragement of emotion in reaction to them, resulting in their advocacy of concern for animals, as well as their criticism of this increasing mechanization. They rebelled against society’s treatment of animals as machine-like objects and its casual coldness. Seeing the implications of mechanization where others did not, they warned of its consequences for animals. Both had vast personal experience with animals enabling them to read their behavior and communication in ways that those less familiar with animals cannot. While others insisted on the animals’ lack of language and reason as the basis for treating them as objects, these authors showed the varied ways they do communicate. They illustrate through animal behavior the many similarities between animals and humans, including emotions, which are frequently denied to animals as a way of fighting criticism of their abuse and maltreatment. Through their work, they reveal these attitudes to be indicative of the larger problem of the increasing reason / emotion binary of their time.

This binary played a large role in the attitudes towards animals throughout the twentieth century. As a result, the first major philosophical works advocating animal protection, those of Peter Singer and Tom Regan, focused on argumentation based on reason. Those in the feminist tradition, however, have highlighted the long-lasting connection between reason and the masculine identity as a
cause of this focus, while adding emotion as a legitimate mode of argumentation. Recent scholarship has, in fact, recognized the importance of emotion as both an inherent part of all beings as well as a necessary element of morality.

2.1 Animals and mechanization

The American author Upton Sinclair illustrates well the increasingly mechanistic view of animals at the beginning of the twentieth century in his 1906 novel *The Jungle*. The novel shows the conditions of the Chicago slaughterhouses where Sinclair himself worked while doing research for his novel. It emphasizes both the objectification of the animals and the lack of compassion of, and ultimately for, the slaughterhouse workers. Known primarily for its depiction of immigrant life and generating The Meat Inspection Act and The Pure Food and Drug Act, due to its depiction of unsanitary slaughterhouse conditions, the novel has more recently attracted the interest of animal studies scholars, due to its previously ignored passages on the slaughterhouse animals themselves. In the novel, the first step in the pig slaughter process is open to visitors, a procedure causing so much alarm in the pigs that their cries leave no doubt of their sentience:

It was a long, narrow room, with a gallery along it for visitors. At the head there was a great iron wheel, about twenty feet in circumference, with rings here and there along its edge. Upon both sides of this wheel there was a narrow space, into which came the hogs at the end of their journey; in the midst of them stood a great burly Negro, bare-armed and bare-chested. He was resting for the moment, for the wheel had stopped while men were cleaning up. In a minute or two, however, it began slowly to revolve, and then the men upon each side of it sprang to work. They had chains which they fastened about the leg of the nearest hog, and the other end of the chain they hooked into one of the rings upon the wheel. So, as the wheel turned, a hog was suddenly jerked off his feet and borne aloft.

At the same instant the car was assailed by a most terrifying shriek; the visitors started in alarm, the women turned pale and shrunk back. The shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing—for once started upon that journey, the hog never came back; at the top of the wheel he was shunted off upon a trolley, and went sailing down the room. And meantime another was swung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in frenzy—and squealing. The uproar was appalling, perilous to the eardrums; one feared
there was too much sound for the room to hold—that the walls must give way or the ceiling crack. There were high squeals and low squeals, grunts, and wails of agony; there would come a momentary lull, and then a fresh outburst, louder than ever, surging up to a deafening climax. It was too much for some of the visitors—the men would look at each other, laughing nervously, and the women would stand with hands clenched, and the blood rushing to their faces, and the tears starting in their eyes (Sinclair Chapter III).

The pigs become literally assembly-line objects while the workers show no acknowledgement of the fact that their products are living beings. However, the pigs give every possible indication, while hanging by a foot, that they feel fear and pain. Sinclair’s description of the mechanical process of turning animals into meat protests against the treatment of the pigs, asserting that they have a right to not be subjected to this impersonal, mechanical process:

It was porkmaking by machinery, porkmaking by applied mathematics. And yet somehow the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking of the hogs; they were so innocent, they came so very trustingly; and they were so very human in their protests—and so perfectly within their rights! They had done nothing to deserve it; and it was adding insult to injury, as the thing was done here, swinging them up in this cold-blooded, impersonal way, without a pretense of apology, without the homage of a tear. Now and then a visitor wept, to be sure; but this slaughtering machine ran on, visitors or no visitors. It was like some horrible crime committed in a dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and of memory (Sinclair Chapter III).

The repeated emphasis on innocence highlights the injustice of this process, amplified by the coldness of the workers. The pigs deserve compassion for their suffering, but the workers ignore their cries and continue the slaughter. Already in 1905, as the industrial production of meat was in its early stages, one of its first critics remarked the lack of empathy for animals whose sentience was completely disregarded. When he states, “so perfectly within their rights,” Sinclair acknowledges that this industrialization of slaughter violates the pigs’ natural right to be treated as living beings.

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27 From Project Gutenberg’s unpaginated e-book
28 The novel was first published in serial form in 1905.
Depersonalization, a constant factor in animal exploitation, ignores the individuality of the pigs, while treating them as a stage in the manufacturing process (the terminology that has since been applied to slaughterhouses, as will be shown). Sinclair protests this objectification, focusing on the uniqueness of each pig:

Each one of these hogs was a separate creature. Some were white hogs, some were black; some were brown, some were spotted; some were old, some young; some were long and lean, some were monstrous. And each of them had an individuality of his own, a will of his own, a hope and a heart’s desire; each was full of self-confidence, of self-importance, and a sense of dignity. And trusting and strong in faith he had gone about his business, the while a black shadow hung over him and a horrid Fate waited in his pathway. Now suddenly it had swooped upon him, and had seized him by the leg. Relentless, remorseless, it was; all his protests, his screams, were nothing to it—it did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all; it cut his throat and watched him gasp out his life (Sinclair Chapter III).

Each pig had its own personality that was ignored as they all became processed in the same industrialized manner. Sinclair mentions the trust of the hogs a second time, denouncing their killing as a betrayal. When he states, “as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all,” he critiques the mechanization of the animals, establishing the injustice of the disregard for their sentience and suffering. In this process, the slaughterhouse owners and workers ignore the pigs’ perspective, denying part of the reality of what they do. When one disavows all emotion in evaluating a situation, one is left with an incomplete picture. Sinclair completes the picture by filling in the details the others refuse to see.

Sinclair’s descriptions illustrate the callousness towards animals at the time. Even the onlookers with “tears starting in their eyes” did not so much as protest to the other onlookers. They all were complicit in their silence, demonstrating how sympathy deteriorates and cruelty becomes normalized. For all the details in his descriptions, people reacted to the novel the most about what directly affected their own life, the sanitary conditions of the plants. Sinclair famously said of the book’s reception: “I
aimed at the public’s heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach.” This novel depicts suffering of both animals and people, continuing the tradition of Voltaire, Hugo, and Zola, of defending the oppressed of varying species, concentrating therefore not on species membership, but on justice and oppression. Céline and Léautaud continue this tradition, focusing on critiquing oppression of all species. They, and Céline in particular, critique mechanization as a force for minimizing emotion and its importance, which Sinclair illustrated in his novel.

2.2 Eliminating the reason/emotion binary

I argue in this chapter that both reason and emotion play a role in understanding others and making appropriate ethical decisions. Eliminating either one or the other can lead to subjective bias. Although those arguing exclusively from the position of reason have promoted reason as objective, others have seen the weakness in this argument. Benjamin Franklin summed this up nicely when he wrote (after renouncing vegetarianism because he was unable to resist the smell of frying fish): “So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do” (33-his emphasis). Reason often focuses on a personal goal, while ignoring the bigger picture. It is in fact this disregard for the bigger picture, as illustrated by Sinclair, which enables much animal objectification to continue. When using reason to intentionally shut out emotion, one refuses to acknowledge the perspective, and often the suffering, of others. Emotion, and in particular empathy, allow one to see the consequences of actions that one would be able to ignore while focusing solely on an intellectual reading of the situation.

Countering prejudice with empathy: The Enlightenment

The increasing mechanization of the nineteenth century, brought about by industrialization and urbanization, undid much of the previous progress made in understanding the importance of empathy.
During the Enlightenment, advocacy for better treatment of humans and animals increased, with the newfound focus on sensibility. Singer states: “The tendency of the age was for greater refinement and civility, more benevolence and less brutality, and animals benefited from this tendency along with humans” (AL 202). The eighteenth century, with its expanding focus on the experience of the individual, gave birth to the idea of explicit human rights. The idea of individual rights gradually encompassed more and more groups, and one finds the same factors that moved human rights forward in movements for animal welfare. These factors increased in the eighteenth century, then decreased with the industrial revolution, leading Céline and Léautaud, amongst others, to undo the damage.

Lynn Hunt examines the eighteenth-century movement in her book, *Inventing Human Rights*. She presents the movement towards sensibility and empathy as a driving force of basic rights. Their development depended, not only on reason, but also on appeals to emotion:

Human rights are difficult to pin down because their definition, indeed their very existence, depends on emotion as much as on reason. The claim of self-evidence relies ultimately on an emotional appeal, it is convincing if it strikes a chord within each person. Moreover, we are most certain that a human right is at issue when we feel horrified by its violation (Hunt 26).

Whereas she defines human rights, the same applies to movements for animal welfare, whether or not these movements use the nomenclature of “rights.” Feeling “horrified by” animal maltreatment has led ethicists, philosophers, authors, and activists to protest actions and attitudes they establish as violations of some type of right or bond, whether that be an inherent right, a relational bond (especially one of loyalty), the combination of animal weakness with regard to humans and the capacity to suffer, or simply as a violation of implied laws of humanity.

Forming ideas of human rights depended both on perceived ideas of others, and importantly, on empathy. Hunt writes: “To have human rights, people had to be perceived as separate individuals who were capable of exercising independent moral judgement... But for these autonomous individuals to
become members of a political community based on those independent moral judgements, they had to be able to empathize with others” (27). The eighteenth century brought about a focus on empathy which enabled people to feel connections with those who differed from them in various ways. Empathy permitted the growth of rights to previously disenfranchised groups, as people overcame their prior belief systems:

[T]he newfound power of empathy could work against even the longest held prejudices. In 1791, the French revolutionary government granted equal rights to Jews; in 1792, even men without property were enfranchised; and in 1794, the French government officially abolished slavery. Neither autonomy nor empathy were fixed; they were skills that could be learned, and the ‘acceptable’ limitations on rights could be – and were – challenged (28-29).

Hunt illustrates the power of prejudice here by documenting how those previously considered inferior rose to a legal level of equality once those prejudices had been destroyed. She links the constant movement of human rights to their foundation in emotion: “Rights cannot be defined once and for all because their emotional basis continues to shift, in part in reaction to declarations of rights. Rights remain open to question because our sense of who has rights and what those rights are constantly changes” (Hunt 29). As more groups gain rights, those deemed further removed from the majority group begin to seem less different. The above timeline illustrates how rights shifted to encompass those previously denied them group by group.

Several factors contributed to the increased sensibility of the age. Previously, people identified most with those in their own social class. However, eighteenth century novels, such as Samuel Richardson’s Pamela and Clarissa, and Rousseau’s Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse, allowed empathy to develop across a broader spectrum, encouraging the reader to see that even those whose circumstances differed tremendously from theirs had similar emotional experiences. These novels contributed to the expanding focus on empathy: “Julie encouraged a highly charged identification with the characters and
in so doing enabled readers to empathize across class, sex, and national lines” (Hunt 38). Empathy, through its process of identification, creates an awareness of the inner lives of others. Hunt emphasizes that eighteenth century novels brought about a focus on similarities, traversing prior boundaries:

In the eighteenth century, readers of novels learned to extend their purview of empathy. In reading, they empathized across traditional social boundaries between nobles and commoners, masters and servants, men and women, perhaps even adults and children. As a consequence, they came to see others – people they did not know personally – as like them, as having the same kinds of inner emotions (40).

Identifying with others led to an expansion of sensibility and a less mechanistic view of life. Not only novels, but other cultural developments also contributed to this expansion. Theater, opera, and painting all changed in ways that brought new focus to inner experiences.

Evolving autonomy and empathy led to a new understanding of suffering, and consequently to calls for the abolition of torture. Hunt describes how “imagined empathy” requires “a leap of faith, of imagining that someone else is like you” (32). Novels of the eighteenth century contributed to this imagining. Through them, one could then relate to those with different backgrounds and customs, and consequently imagine themselves in their shoes: “Accounts of torture produced this imagined empathy through new views of pain. Novels generated it by inducing new sensations about the inner self. Each in their way reinforced the notion of a community based on autonomous, empathetic individuals who could relate beyond their immediate families, religious affiliations, or even nations to greater universal values” (Hunt 32). These greater universal values ultimately led to movements to end public punishment and torture. Voltaire famously took up the cause of Jean Calas, a Protestant accused of murdering his son to prevent his conversion to Catholicism, and then sentenced to death, in his Traité sur la tolérance. He set out to prove his innocence, establishing that religious intolerance provoked his condemnation, torture, and ultimate public execution by breaking on the wheel. Throughout this affair, Calas continued to claim his innocence. Although Voltaire did not originally condemn the punishment
itself, he ultimately ended up renouncing all judicial torture. His transformation led to seeing cruelty in an act he previously accepted:

Voltaire never once used the general term ‘torture’ (employing instead the legal euphemism ‘the question’). He denounced judicial torture for the first time in 1766 and thereafter linked Calas and torture together frequently. Natural compassion makes everyone detest the cruelty of judicial torture, insisted Voltaire, though he himself had not said so earlier... What had long seemed acceptable to him and many others now came into doubt (Hunt 75).

Voltaire’s own change in perspective emphasizes the shifting values that occurred during the century.

As the issue of torture gained more widespread attention, its abolition gained support.

Calls to end torture and public punishment came from both sides of the Atlantic. Hunt discusses a pamphlet written by American physician Dr. Benjamin Rush, dedicated to the subject – An Enquiry into the Effects of Public Punishment upon Criminals and upon Society. Rush outlines the harm done to society by spectacles of cruelty, one of the most important being the destruction of sympathy. Hunt writes: “Public punishment proved most objectionable, in his view, for its tendency to destroy sympathy, ‘the vice-regent of the divine benevolence in our world.’ These were the key words: sympathy – or what we now call empathy – provided the grounds for morality” (109). Thus, this destruction of sympathy rendered society less moral. She describes how this occurs:

Public punishment short-circuited sympathy: ‘as the distress which the criminals suffer, is the effect of a law of the state, which cannot be resisted, the sympathy of the spectator is rendered abortive, and returns empty to the bosom in which it was awakened.’ Public punishment thus undermined social feeling by making spectators increasingly callous; spectators lost their feelings of ‘universal love’ and the sense that criminals had bodies and souls like their own” (Hunt 109).29

29 She cites Benjamin Rush, An Enquiry into the Effects of Public Punishment upon Criminals, and upon Society: Read in the Society for Promoting Political Enquiries, convened at the house of His Excellency Benjamin Franklin, Esquire, in Philadelphia, March 9th, 1787.
Ultimately this movement towards greater compassion led to the abolition of torture. New concepts of personhood, individuality, possession of one’s own body, and identification with others changed the way society viewed pain and suffering.

Rush also believed that cruelty to animals destroyed the sensibility on which morals were based. In “Animals Made Americans Human: Sentient Creatures and the Creation of Early America’s Moral Sensibility,” Bill Leon Smith emphasizes that Rush believed in a link between treatment of animals and morality: “In 1786, Benjamin Rush explained to the American Philosophical Society that cruelty to animals destroyed a person’s moral sensibility. If Americans’ moral sensibilities were not developed and protected, it would ruin the young nation. He therefore decried the lack of a legislative system that would protect animals from ‘outrage and oppression’” (127). 30 Like others who called for an end to animal maltreatment, Rush took up many social causes. Smith notes: “Rush’s agenda of personal and social changes included temperance, education reform, abolitionism, and the humane treatment of animals” (132). One of the signers of America’s Declaration of Independence, Rush believed sensibility and kindness to animals were indispensable for developing a kind, ethical society and grounding the new nation in moral values.

In France, Voltaire and Rousseau, who also advocated for compassion for animals, played a key role in promoting empathy for others. In addition to his previously cited entry in the Dictionnaire philosophique,31 Voltaire included compassion towards animals in his other work, emphasizing their ethical relevance. In his Éléments de la philosophie de Newton, he noted:

Il y a surtout dans l’homme une disposition à la compassion aussi généralement répandue que nos autres instincts ; Neuton (sic) avait cultivé ce sentiment d’humanité, et il l’étendait jusqu’aux animaux ; il était fortement convaincu avec Locke, que Dieu a

30 He refers to Benjamin Rush, “An inquiry into the influence of physical causes upon the moral faculty [speech delivered in Philadelphia, February 27, 1786],” Essays, literary, moral & philosophical, Philadelphia, Printed by Thomas and Samuel F. Bradford, (Original work produced 1786) 1798.
31 Chapter 1
donné aux animaux (qui semblent n’être que matière) une mesure d’idées, et les mêmes sentiments qu’à nous. Il ne pouvait penser que Dieu, qui ne fait rien en vain, eût donné aux bêtes des organes de sentiment, afin qu’elles n’eussent point de sentiment.

Il trouvait une contradiction bien affreuse à croire que les bêtes sentent et à les faire souffrir. Sa morale s’accordait en ce point avec sa philosophie ; il ne cédait qu’avec répugnance à l’usage barbare de nous nourrir du sang et de la chair des êtres semblables à nous, que nous caressons tous les jours, et il ne permit jamais dans sa maison qu’on les fit mourir par des morts lentes et recherchées pour en rendre la nourriture plus délicieuse.

Cette compassion qu’il avait pour les animaux, se tournait en vraie charité pour les hommes. En effet, sans l’humanité, vertu qui comprend toutes les vertus, on ne mériterait guère le nom de philosophe (Voltaire, Éléments 222-23).

Importantly, Voltaire associates compassion towards animals with compassion towards humans, a link in which Léautaud also believes, encompassing both under the umbrella of humanity. His last point illustrates that humanity includes compassion for all that can suffer, which, as the prior statements reveal, includes animals. Voltaire, summarizing Newton, makes the same point made famous by Jeremy Bentham – the capacity to suffer merits ethical consideration. In his listing of authors from the period of Louis XIV, in his work, Essay sur l’histoire générale et sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations, depuis Charlemagne jusqu’à nos jours, he writes of the Jesuit, Ignace Gaston Pardies, who contradicted Descartes’ view of animals:

Prétendre avec Descartes que les animaux sont de pures machines privées du sentiment dont ils ont les organes, c’est démentir l’expérience & insulter la Nature. Avancer qu’un esprit pur les anime, c’est dire ce qu’on ne peut prouver. Reconnaître que les animaux sont doués de sensations & de mémoire, sans savoir comment cela s’opère, ce serait parler en sage qui sait que l’ignorance vaut mieux que l’erreur. Car quel est l’ouvrage de la Nature dont on connaisse les premiers principes (Essay 266).

Voltaire chooses to include elements of Pardies that support an inner life of animals. He reiterates here the lack of logic in believing that animals have no feeling, implying that everyday experience with animals gives evidence to the contrary. But he not only includes feeling, he also includes memory, expanding on the mental capacities of animals. Just as eighteenth-century novels expanded
understanding of humans’ inner experiences, eighteenth-century philosophy conveys the idea that animals have inner experiences as well.

Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume also referenced the concept of humanity with regard to animal treatment in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principals of Morals*. He called for “gentle usage” of animals, indicating the Enlightenment shift towards sensibility, and stating that this gentle usage stems from the “Laws of Humanity” (Hume 45). Not leaning towards any legal rights for animals, he states instead that, “Our Compassion and Kindness the only Check, by which they curb our lawless Will” (Hume 45). His comments, while not establishing any official restraints against animal maltreatment, urge gentleness, due to their weakness in comparison with humanity. He interestingly follows this section with the European treatment of “barbarous Indians,” comparing it to treatment of animals: “The great Superiority of civiliz'd Europeans above barbarous Indians, tempted us to imagine ourselves on the same Footing with regard to them, and made us throw off all Restraints of Justice, and even of Humanity, in our Treatment of them” (Hume 45-46-his emphasis). He foreshadows future arguments in animal welfare here, by the comparison of animal treatment with the treatment of humans deemed inferior by the more powerful. Each must submit to a hierarchy established on physical power.

Whereas Hume recognized compassion and kindness as curbs of human behavior, for Rousseau pity filled that role. All other social virtues stemmed from it: “[D]e cette seule qualité découlent toutes les vertus sociales” (Rousseau, “Discours” 155). As noted in the previous chapter, Rousseau believed both humans and animals to be capable of feeling pity, and worthy of receiving it. In his Second Discourse, on the relationship between nature and society, he explains how pity, or commiseration, leads one to identify with another who suffers (Rousseau, “Discours” 155). It serves as a call to action when faced with this suffering: “C’est elle qui nous porte sans réflexion au secours de ceux que nous
voyons souffrir” (Rousseau, “Discours” 156). He addresses the process of empathizing both in this work and his treatise on childhood education, Émile. In order to truly care about another’s suffering, one must open up one’s mind to see the world differently. Rousseau elaborates how compassion stems from the imagination:

A seize ans l’adolescent sait ce que c’est que souffrir ; car il a souffert lui-même ; mais à peine sait-il que d’autres êtres souffrent aussi : le voir sans le sentir n’est pas le savoir, et... l’enfant n’imaginant point ce que sentent les autres, ne connaît de maux que les siens : mais quand le premier développement des sens allume en lui le feu de l’imagination, il commence à se sentir dans ses semblables, à s’émouvoir de leurs plaintes, et à souffrir de leurs douleurs. C’est alors que le triste tableau de l’humanité souffrante doit porter à son cœur le premier attendrissement qu’il ait jamais éprouvé (Émile 145-46 -my emphasis).

He explains here how imagination leads to knowledge; one must both see and feel, through the imagination, to understand that others suffer like oneself. It is this process of identifying, which he extends to animals, that allows one to feel pity:

Pour devenir sensible et pitoyable, il faut que l’enfant sache qu’il y a des êtres semblables à lui qui souffrent ce qu’il a souffert, qui sentent les douleurs qu’il a senties, et d’autres dont il doit avoir l’idée comme pouvant les sentir aussi. En effet, comment nous laissons-nous émouvoir à la pitié, si ce n’est en nous transportant hors de nous et nous identifiant avec l’animal souffrant, en quittant, pour ainsi dire, notre être pour prendre le sien ? (Rousseau Émile 146-47).

He moves here from other humans to other animals, linking the memory of one’s own pains and sufferings, and compassion, showing that one’s personal troubles, instead something to be avoided, make one a more caring person. Identifying with another being changes one’s perspective; one then can see through the other’s eyes instead of one’s own.

For Rousseau, pity, a natural sentiment, inspires virtue, but reason often leads to pride for those living in society and overrides compassion for others (“Discours” 156). In Émile, Rousseau remarked that one often uses reason to go against one’s conscience. He points out the deceptive quality of reason, which can lead one down the wrong path : “Trop souvent la raison nous trompe, nous n’avons que trop
acquis le droit de la récuser : mais la conscience ne nous trompe jamais ; elle est le vrai guide de
l’homme ; elle est à l’âme ce que l’instinct est au corps ; qui la suit obéit à la nature, et ne craint point de
s’égarer” (Rousseau, Émile 166-67). The conscience guides one’s decisions pre-reflectively and leads
one to make moral choices. He explains that reason is often what one uses to override the voice of
one’s conscience : “Je n’ai qu’à me consulter sur ce que je veux faire ; tout ce que je sens être bien est
bien, tout ce que je sens être mal est mal : le meilleur de tous les casuistes est la conscience ; et ce n’est
que quand on marchande avec elle qu’on a recours aux subtilités du raisonnement” (Rousseau, Émile
166). Here again, one naturally has knowledge of what is good and bad; one does not need to consult
one’s reason, which one uses to justify going against one’s conscience. He tacitly states here that one
uses reason to excuse what one knows is wrong, making it a tool for unethical decisions. Franklin later
echoes Rousseau’s arguments when he states that being a reasonable creature “enables one to find or
make a reason for everything one has a mind to do” (33). One can use reason to justify what one
previously found unacceptable, or formerly viewed as wrong.

The Enlightenment gave us both the age of reason and the age of sensibility, providing the
easy to read example that these moral guides do not work in opposition or in isolation, but in tandem. Voltaire and
Hume used reason to call for more compassion, rather than override it, while Rousseau elaborated on
the deceptive quality of isolated reason. Similarly, the newfound focus on individual rights stemmed
from an awareness of common ground amongst previously separate groups, establishing that distinctive
characteristics and common ground also did not oppose each other. Rather, the common ground grew
out of the sensibility of the age, as growing tolerance, compassion, and pity inspired awareness of
individual experiences, but individual experiences that resembled one’s own. The Enlightenment
philosophers invoked a sentiment of humanity that provided new grounds for ethics towards humans
and animals. As literature, theater, visual art, and philosophy progressed, perspectives changed, and empathy gained ground against torture, intolerance, and Cartesian mechanism.

Towards a greater knowledge: Renewing the importance of emotion

These important gains in identification, compassion, and benevolence, however, did not last. Urbanization and industrialization brought about a renewed mechanization, and impersonal views of living beings came along with this. As the difficulties encountered by humans changed, the idea of rights began to encompass more, and brought about more debates on the subject. As a consequence, human rights began to be opposed to animal rights, on the one hand, and on the other, reason pushed emotion into the background.

Henry Stephens Salt recognized that some who consider themselves “practical” regarding animal welfare also use this concept to ignore what they do not want to see. In Animals’ Rights, he links this with those who postpone animal rights, justifying themselves by claiming to focus on human rights, as if the two were mutually exclusive:

It is an entire mistake to suppose that the rights of animals are in any way antagonistic to the rights of men. Let us not be betrayed for a moment into the specious fallacy that we must study human rights first, and leave the animal question to solve itself hereafter; for it is only by a wide and disinterested study of both subjects that a solution of either is possible… To omit all worthier reasons, it is too late in the day to suggest the indefinite postponement of a consideration of animals’ rights, for from a moral point of view, and even from a legislative point of view, we are daily confronted with this momentous problem, and the so-called “practical” people who affect to ignore it are simply shutting their eyes to facts which they find disagreeable to confront (Salt 27-28—his emphasis).

He shows here that people use the term “practical” as a smokescreen to continue to enable their indifference to cruelty. They use false reasoning by implying that focusing on animal rights somehow negates a focus on human rights. Meanwhile, the animals continue to suffer from various causes. Salt
recognizes that instinct and intuition are just as much a part of our intellect as reason, while emphasizing the need for compassion:

The isolation of man from Nature, by our persistent culture of the ratiocinative faculty, and our persistent neglect of the instinctive, has hitherto been the penalty we have had to pay for our incomplete and partial “civilization” … But let us not for a moment be supposed that an acceptance of the gospel of Nature implies an abandonment or depreciation of intellect—on the contrary, it is the assertion that reason itself can never be at its best, can never be truly rational, except when it is in perfect harmony with the deep-seated emotional instincts and sympathies which underlie all thought.

The true scientist and humanist is he who will reconcile brain to heart, and show us how, without any sacrifice of what we have gained in knowledge, we may resume what we have temporarily lost during the process of acquiring that knowledge—*the sureness of intuitive faculty* which is originally implanted in men and animals alike (114—my emphasis).

Like Rousseau before him, Salt emphasized the importance of nature and natural knowledge, which for Rousseau was the conscience and for Salt, instinctive. Both assert negative consequences when one abandons one’s natural knowledge to reason. Instead, conscience and science must come together for one to be at one’s best. Reason cannot replace the conscience or instinct, but must work alongside it.

Céline and Léautaud wrote in the period shortly following Salt. As Salt established, society had once again minimized the importance of emotion. Emphasis on isolated reason took over, and emotion took on a negative connotation, undoing Enlightenment progress. Céline and Léautaud opposed these changes, but in so doing they fought against public opinion, which did not catch up until after their era.

Many animal theorists and philosophers since the first half of the twentieth century have recognized the value of emotion in forming appropriate responses to the world. Emotions and compassion limit purely selfish interest. Hume stated that “compassion and kindness” “curb our lawless will,” indicating the importance of emotion as a control on behavior. Yet, many members of society allow societal hierarchies to dictate when natural emotions “should” be overcome, particularly in the case of animals. However, many ethical theorists, including those who argue based on reason alone,
such as Regan, recognize the necessary link between ethics and emotion, as well as the detachment that using only reason creates.

The nineteenth-century antivivisectionist Anna Kingsford successfully completed medical school in France despite the pushback she received both for not participating in any vivisection during her studies and for being a woman. Although she managed to avoid direct participation in vivisection, she was unable to avoid hearing the cries of the vivisected animals, which deeply affected her, and spent her adult life fighting against vivisection. Kingsford fought the rhetoric of antivivisectionists as overly sentimental by writing about how sentiment generates morals:

> They speak sneeringly of ‘sentiment.’ The outcry against vivisection is mere sentiment... [W]hat is so great, so noble, as human sentiment! What is religion, what is morality, but sentiment? On what divine feeling are based the laws which bid men to respect the lives, the property, the feelings of their fellow men? Sentiment is but another name for that moral feeling which alone has made man the best that he is now, and which alone can make him better and purer in the future (Maitland 86).

Long before the current studies of feminist animal theorists, philosophers, and scientists acknowledging the importance of emotion in ethics, she recognized that true respect for the interests of others must have some emotional basis. She also includes the “feelings of their fellow men,” asserting that emotions, along with property and life, must be considered in concepts of morality if one is to truly value the other. Material goods, while relevant, comprise only part of one’s interests.

A complete person consists of much more than their faculty of reason. Consequently, ethics must not be reduced to only the ratiocinative capacity. Michael Allen Fox and Lesley McLean, in “Animals in Moral Space,” present multiple ways of making ethical claims, showing that the traditional argument, relying on reason alone does not constitute the only acceptable method:

> There are many ways of arguing in ethics: logical reasoning, dramatization, the use of examples or vignettes, anecdotes, parables, metaphorical comparisons, psychological sketches, storytelling—all of these devices and more have been used to forward conclusions. Philosophers are now beginning to appreciate that no single device, such
as the first of these, exhausts the field, and that all are quite fruitful. Those that are not objective in the customary sense, do not lack anything to be respectable or valid; rather their forcefulness comes from the impact they exercise upon imagination, intuition, and feeling—those aspects of a full person that have been traditionally neglected, even reviled, by self-appointed defenders of ‘rationality’” (147).

Of note in this list is storytelling, which qualifies literature, the subject of this study, as a source of ethical argumentation. Fox and McLean further argue that emotions are necessary to recognize and react to cruelty: “The recognition of an act as cruel is not merely the engagement of the reasoning mind, it is awareness based on emotional discernment; it is seeing a reality with one’s heart and reacting to it completely and suitably. It is taking in what is there with some combination of compassion, love, sympathy, tenderness and empathy” (164). When one closes off one’s emotional response, one misses out on pieces of a puzzle that are necessary to see the entire situation as it actually exists. This corroborates Singer’s statement that when one chooses not to care, one closes oneself off from reality.32 However, when one perceives emotionally as well as intellectually, one can better connect with the world around one: “If we use our hearts as well as our minds we are able to see and represent more fully what is there before us, and importantly, we connect more fully to what our affective perceptions reveal” (Fox and McLean 167). Fox and McLean describe learned helplessness experiments on dogs where they receive electric shocks and in which “the dog runs frantically about, defecating, urinating, and howling”33 (166). They use the detailed descriptions of this experiment to differentiate between a trained intellectual reading and a reading that allows the reader to recognize the suffering of the dogs. However, instead of upholding the intellectual reading as “rational,” they establish how it limits our perception:

32 Chapter 1
To read scientific experiments intellectually is to take on board a demand to switch off certain kinds of emotions, like fear, disgust, loathing, but also those of sympathy, empathy and compassion... To bracket off or shut down our emotions is to close down our perceptual apparatus such that we no longer see, or refuse to acknowledge, the animals’ pain and suffering. We are asked to neutralize our moral sensibility, to become, in some sense, like moral psychopaths (Fox and McLean 165).

They assert here that all pain and suffering should provoke emotional response in a person. If one must neutralize natural moral sensibility, that indicates that this natural response exists to protect living beings from harm from other living beings. Reading intellectually ignores this harm. Even the moral theorist’s trained, intellectual reaction which recognizes the animal’s suffering ultimately also switches to analytical mode while distancing itself from the actual experience of the dog:

While well meaning, the theorist’s attention slips ever further away from the experience of the animals themselves and moves towards thinking abstractly and argumentatively about the ethical problems they pose. According to the model we are trying to develop of moral knowledge as perception, what has happened to these theorists (and the experimenters) is that they have lost sight of what is ethically important; their perceptions have become shallow and faint; they don’t see what is there to be seen because they ignore the emotional and imaginative responses and what these responses should reveal to them (Fox and McLean 167).

Instead of being more insightful, the intellectual reading is a superficial glossing over of the experiments that does not allow for an understanding of the experimental subjects. They then contrast this type of detached, trained response to a more complete response:

In reading the experiments in a desensitized way we are ironically (given that Seligman’s book is all about learned helplessness) being trained in a form of helplessness ourselves—a learned helplessness that teaches us that we are unable to do anything to prevent the experiments from happening because our emotional response, which is a richer way of seeing, is something to be overcome, suppressed, ignored or downplayed. Those who read these descriptions and understand moral knowledge as merely an intellectual exercise, lack the connection with reality before them to really see what is unjust or cruel about it. This connection is what attending to what is there provides, what our emotional attitudes when understood as modes of perception provide (Fox and McLean 168-69).
They ultimately show that the greater knowledge comes from empathetic reading practices that alone can lead to a proper ethical reading. The described experiment directly caused evident, immense suffering in the dogs. Ignoring direct effects equates to accepting only the consequences of actions that one wants to see while negating that that the other effects equally resulted from the same actions.

In *Taming Ourselves or Going Feral? Toward a Nonpatriarchal Metaethic of Animal Liberation*, Brian Luke also defends the proper basis of ethics as a combination of reason and emotion, rather than “reason” alone, which, he shows, often stems from faulty or incomplete arguments. Furthermore, the ability to claim the more rational argument gives one significant influence over society: “The terms ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ distinguish between positions worthy and unworthy of debate, and between people worthy and unworthy of being heard. Making and enforcing these distinctions is a substantial form of social control” (Luke 299). Only elite groups of leaders have the capacity to define the positions which “set the terms of debates, limit the range of acceptable positions, and determine the qualifications for participation in public discussions” (Luke 299). Luke shows that, due to hierarchal constraints, some arguments are eliminated in advance and consequently are excluded from public debate, which has slowed the course of animal welfare. He explains that naturally humans resist directly causing harm to animals:

> The awareness *I am causing harm to an animal* is normally accompanied by hesitation, uneasiness, guilt, even anguish. Potential opposition to animal exploitation arising from such inhibitions can be forestalled by blocking one or more of the three parts of this awareness: personal responsibility (*I am causing*), damage due to hurting or killing (*harm*), and the presence of another subject (*to an animal*) (Luke 303).

After elaborating on the various ways in which people attempt to deny these aspects such as shifting the argument to what most people do (and therefore one individual’s actions will not make a difference), concealing animal treatment, simply lying about inflicting harm, carefully choosing terminology,
teaching others that animals are objects rather than subjects, amongst other methods, Luke concludes that unconcealed harm to animals will always provoke a push-back:

The development of such a diversity of mechanisms for forestalling and overriding sympathetic opposition to harming animals shows that human resistance is always a potential threat to the continuation of animal exploitation industries... In fact, sympathies for animals are so dependable that every institution of animal exploitation develops some means of undercutting them. So rather than focusing exclusively on logic and considerations of formal consistency, we might better remember our feeling connections to animals, while challenging ourselves and others to overthrow the unnatural obstacles to the further development of these feelings (311-12).

He notes that all the societal pressure to undercut sympathies for animals makes submitting to the mechanisms a rational choice, but not the only rational choice. The natural bonds humans share with animals makes defending natural sympathies also a rational choice:

[T]o assert our feelings and oppose animal exploitation is also rational, given the pain involved in losing our natural bonds with animals. So our task is not to pass judgement on others’ rationality, but to speak honestly of the loneliness and isolation of anthropocentric society, and the damage done to every person expected to hurt animals (Luke 312).

Luke’s study shows that “rational” viewpoints do not necessarily reflect the natural view of the majority, but are instead, in the case of animals, conditioned responses handed down by a hierarchal system that tells people what they should consider rational.

An example of efforts made to disguise the reality of animal experiments may be found in Lori Gruen’s book, Ethics and Animals. She describes the guidelines of the Journal of Experimental Medicine in the early 1920s, which aimed to downplay the animal suffering and harm caused by the vivisection experiments of the day:

The journal required that specific language be used: ‘unanesthetized’ rather than ‘no anesthetic’; ‘fasting’ rather than ‘starving’; ‘hemorrhaging’ rather than ‘bleeding’; ‘intoxicant’ rather than ‘poison’... The journal wanted to avoid descriptions of suffering and encouraged the use of ‘impersonal medical terms.’ No details of animal distress or struggle during an experiment were to be described. Details of animal activity, distress, or vocalizations, before or during an experimental procedure, were to be eliminated...
The journal would only print photographs when there was no way to describe them in words and, even then, would avoid printing photographs of the whole animal... They never allowed animals to be referred to by name and insisted on substituting the word ‘it’ for ‘he’ or ‘she.’ (Gruen, *Ethics* 110).

Gruen also emphasizes the regular, intentional concealment of the number of animals used in experiments, citing Susan E. Lederer. Lederer’s article, “Political Animals: The Shaping of Biomedical Research Literature in Twentieth-Century America,” documents multiple times where articles were altered for this reason. Renumbering was one tactic used:

For research reports involving dogs, monkeys, and cats the guidelines recommended that animal numbers be kept low and suggested renumeration or the substitution of letters and hyphens. For example, dog number 897 would be referenced in the text as dog A8-97, obscuring the fact that large numbers of dogs had been used either in the experiment at hand or in previous researches (Lederer 74).

In other instances, authors changed animal numbers completely: “There were references to thirteen animals, ranging from dog 75 through dog 1090. Rous (the editor) proposed that decimals be inserted to refer to the animals. The pressure of a publication deadline led Campbell (Rous’ assistant) to relabel the animals consecutively from 1 to 13, a change that Rous subsequently approved” (Lederer 74-5). They also advised against any mention of the number of animals killed in the process of developing a procedure or technique (Lederer 75). Gruen herself, while researching early chimpanzee research was prevented from using the Emory archives:

While doing historical archival work on early chimpanzee research at the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library at Yale University and the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library at Emory University, I came across a number of photographs from the 1930s and 40s that I wanted to incorporate into my project. When the Yerkes Center’s public relations person found out about my work she closed the Emory archive to me and tried to get the Yale archivists to prohibit me from conducting further research. Ironically, in support of experimenters who want to be able to pursue knowledge without hindrance, this public relations person successfully hindered me from conducting my historical research. The photographs that interested me were of chimpanzees who have long been dead. Nonetheless, the Yerkes Center was worried that this historical information would lead to protests, and I have been denied further access and information (Gruen, *Ethics* 110-11).
Gruen illustrates first-hand knowledge of the hiding of information, that Luke mentioned as a way to avert resistance. She shows that even historical documents are still prevented from becoming public knowledge.

Even neuroscience has recognized emotions as a type of knowledge, as well as a direct relationship between emotion and reason. Martha Nussbaum, in her book, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, discusses neuroscientist Anthony Damasio’s work, *Descartes’ Error*, which finds emotions to be cognitive percepts that “supply the organism with essential aspects of practical reason” (Nussbaum, *Upheavals* 115-16—my emphasis). Damasio’s study asserts that “the emotion/reason distinction is inaccurate and misleading: emotions are forms of intelligent awareness” that “serve as ‘internal guides’ concerning the relationship between subject and circumstances” (Nussbaum, *Upheavals* 115-16, Damasio xv). Emotion cannot be separated from reason because “certain aspects of the process of emotion and feeling are indispensable for rationality” (Damasio xiii). In fact, much of what differentiates one life from the next comes from feelings. Damasio explains how feelings play a primordial role in life as we understand it: “Feelings let us catch a glimpse of the organism in full biological swing, a reflection of the mechanisms of life itself as they go about their business. Were it not for the possibility of sensing body states that are inherently ordained to be painful or pleasurable, there would be no suffering or bliss, no longing or mercy, no tragedy or glory in the human condition” (xv). Emotions not only regulate behavior, but they give meaning to it as well. Rather than being separate from reason, emotions factor into rationality and guide interactions with one’s environment.

Decision making constitutes one such type of interaction. Emotions contribute to one’s value system which applies morals to knowledge. Johanna Tito, in “On Animal Immortality: An Argument for the Possibility of Animal Immortality in Light of the History of Philosophy,” notes that knowledge itself
plays one part in a larger scheme. Once acquired, it still must be considered in terms of the world around us. Knowledge cannot be isolated because our values determine what we do with it:

Science may be able to treat or cure our disease, for example, but ultimately how we cope with a given disease or with the death that we all must ultimately face and from which no science can save us, is not a matter of science, but a matter of value. So too is how we use science. Whether or not we permit genetic engineering, cloning or the use of our nuclear science to create weapons of war is determined not by science but by our system of values (Tito 289-her emphasis).

The role of knowledge is limited. The question still remains, when one looks at the above list, of whether one should use the knowledge one has. Tito’s article explores phenomenological psychology which “relies heavily on empathy rather than measurement” (289). Phenomenology deals with intentional consciousness, adding seeing or witnessing to rationality (Tito 290). Just as Fox and McLean show that emotion added to facts alone broadens understanding, Tito explains that seeing and witnessing expand on rationality: “Seeing / witnessing is a much broader notion than rationality or rational thinking... because it literally thrusts us into a living context. Consciousness, after all, can present us with a world only via a living body—it always operates in and through a living body, which, in turn, presents us with, opens us to, the world we live in, the life-world” (Tito 290-her emphasis). One must not view bits of information in isolation, but examine them in light of a larger system. Tito explores the correlation between consciousness, feeling, and embodiment:

[A] living body is a feeling body, and so consciousness is also feeling, for when we see what we see we cannot help but feel, and, correlativey, when we feel, we are seeing something, though we may not initially know, that is, be able to articulate, what it is we are seeing in our feeling. In the words of the painter Paul Klee, ‘One eye sees, the other feels.’ Good thinking, then, may also be feeling and feeling may also be good thinking. Since all thinking is embodied, rational thought is essentially bound up with elements of the living body such as desire, instinct and the unconscious, elements that have irrational and opaque aspects to them (290-her emphasis).
One cannot separate consciousness and feeling. This applies not just to humans, but to nonhuman animals as well. Nonhuman animals share both consciousness and the limits and feelings of embodiment with humans, as well as the world we live in.

Because of consciousness and feeling, each being experiences life differently from every other being. Lived experience consists in more than concepts and includes singularities. Tito explains how this makes objectifications incomplete knowledge:

In refusing to turn experience into narrow knowledge—something animals are not in danger of doing—we remain aware of inner experience, which, although potentially opened up and enriched by concepts, is always something more and other than concepts. Whereas concepts (objectifications) are always generalities—abstractions from reality—experience puts us in touch with existents, with singularities rather than generalities or objectifications (Tito, 291-92-her emphasis).

One cannot define a life experience in terms of generalities alone, because singularities make all living beings and their experiences different. Jacques Maritain examines the role of singularities in art. Tito defines his use of the term “Poetic intuition” (the topic and title of his book) as “the way in which we encounter singularities” (292). Poetic intuition provides for the lack created when one thinks only in concepts: “Whereas concepts and universal ideas are disengaged from concrete, living flowing reality and are scrutinized by reason, says Maritain, ‘poetic intuition is directed toward some singular existent’” (Tito 293).

Maritain also presents emotion as a type of knowledge: “[P]oetic knowledge proceeds from the intellect in its most genuine and essential capacity as intellect, though through the indispensable instrumentality of feeling, feeling, feeling” (Maritain 87). Emotions become a tool for the artist to understand and consequently portray the lived experience of individual lives, something concepts and generalities alone can never accomplish.

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34 Even Descartes recognized this, hence his denial of animal consciousness.
35 Citing Maritain p. 3.
The abstract can never be personal as it eliminates what differentiates one living being from another. Tito concludes her article, noting that singularities are what makes each life special and ultimately what matter in life:

What we love is the singular existent, not some shadow of the existent, not some abstract, rational or otherwise, of the existent. I love this particular human being or this particular animal... It is the death of a single particularity I mourn, and it is the life of this actual single particularity that is celebrated and given tribute to in the eulogy... But this singularity will always be more and other than any description or eulogy can capture... We experience and love this singularity, whether human or animal, and they us (Tito 296-her emphasis).

Tito and Maritain’s analyses capture the importance of emotion for a more complete understanding of the world around us, as well as the importance of singularities in life. The singularities of each individual and of each individual experience are ultimately what provide meaning to life. One can then conclude that viewing animals in the abstract, rather than the personal, becomes an impediment for progress in animal welfare because it leaves a gap between their lived reality and what one allows oneself to see.

Derrida shows the knowledge-compassion relationship also works in the other direction. In L’Animal que donc je suis, he presents the suffering of animals as obvious, as Regan has done. As with the electrical shock experiments on dogs described in Fox and McLean’s article, the reactions of animals to the stimuli which provoke the suffering demonstrate this capacity. Derrida outlines how knowledge leads to compassion when one accepts animal reality:

Personne ne peut nier la souffrance, la peur ou la panique, la terreur ou l’effroi qui peut s’emparer de certains animaux, et dont nous, les hommes, nous pouvons témoigner. (Descartes lui-même... n’a pu alléguer l’insensibilité des animaux à la souffrance.) Certains chercheront encore... à contester le droit d’appeler cela souffrance ou angoisse, mots ou concepts qu’il faudrait encore réserver à l’homme et au Dasein dans la liberté de son être-pour-la-mort... à la question « Can they suffer ? », la réponse ne fait aucun doute. Elle n’a d’ailleurs jamais laissé place au doute ; c’est pourquoi l’expérience que nous en avons n’est pas même indubitable : elle précède l’indubitable, elle est plus vieille que lui. Point de doute, non plus, pour la possibilité, alors, en nous, d’un élan de compassion, même s’il est ensuite méconnu, refoulé ou dénié, tenu en respect. Devant l’indéniable de cette réponse (oui, ils souffrent, comme nous qui
souffrons pour eux et avec eux), devant cette réponse qui précède toute autre question, la problématique change de sol et socle. Peut-être perd-elle toute sécurité, mais en tout cas elle ne repose plus sur l’ancienne fondation supposée naturelle (un sol) ou artéfactuelle et historique (un socle). Les deux siècles auxquels je me réfère... ce sont les deux siècles d’une lutte inégale, d’une guerre en cours et dont l’inégalité pourrait un jour s’inverser, entre, d’une part, ceux qui violent non seulement la vie animale mais jusqu’à ce sentiment de compassion et, d’autre part, ceux qui en appellent au témoignage irrécusable de cette pitié (49-50-his emphasis).

Here, external forces override the knowledge of what one observes naturally, that animals suffer. This knowledge provokes an emotional response, that of compassion and of suffering with them. Derrida’s often-overlooked observation that animal suffering provokes human suffering agrees with Luke’s study that this suffering does not exist in a vacuum. In *Zoographies: the question of the animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, Matthew Calarco observes: “At the proto-ethical level, then, Derrida has insisted that there is a certain disruptive force in animal suffering, one that affects and challenges us prior to any reflection or debates we might have on the ethical status of animals” (120-my emphasis). That is to say, that this disruptive force, frequently taking the form of compassion, is intuitive, affirming an awareness that this suffering matters to the animal. Derrida’s observation that the sentiment of compassion itself can be violated implies that harming animals violates those who care about them as well.

These theorists establish that emotions, knowledge, and reason form a complex network. Knowledge and generalities that attempt to eliminate emotion always fall short of reality. They allow one to see only what one wants to see, while ignoring the complete picture, which must include emotions. As Anna Kingsford so strongly stated, emotions are what bring out the best in humanity.³⁶

**Negative effects of harming animals on humans**

The importance of emotion extends beyond knowledge; forcing individuals to suppress their emotions when maltreating animals, in particular when their livelihood depends on it, often results in

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³⁶ As previously cited in Maitland, p. 86.
deleterious emotional effects to these individuals. Both Derrida and Luke mention harm to humans as a consequence of legitimizing harm to animals. The secondary effects on humans have often been overlooked, even in much of animal studies. Sinclair’s *The Jungle* illustrates that sometimes those who object to animal maltreatment, still find work at places that cause animal harm and suffering. As Luke stated, expecting humans to hurt animals results in harm to humans. This applies to those whose work involves direct violence to animals, especially slaughterhouse workers. Grégory, a former industrial pig farm worker in France, relayed the emotional harm that he suffered due to his job, in the August 2021 *Paris Match* article, ““Maltraitance animale: L’horrifiant témoignage d’un ancien employé d’un élevage de cochons.”” The farm where he worked for two years in Annay-sur-Serein, had 1,800 sows. He described in the article the animal harm he witnessed at work: “Ce qui m’a choqué c’est voir le responsable mettre des coups de tournevis, s’acharner sur les truies, quand elles ne voulaient pas avancer ou alors mettre des coups de barre en ferraille sur la tête” (“Maltraitance”). Additionally, they did not do anything to alleviate the suffering of the incapacitated, but conscious, animals. They left dying pigs laying on the ground to suffer, not doing anything to help:

Il évoque aussi une tentative d’abattage d’une truie à la masse par ses collègues qui n’y sont pas parvenus, et qui ont laissé l’animal blessé agoniser des heures avant qu’ils ne se décident de l’achever à coup de fusil, ou encore le claquage sur le sol des porcelets chétifs pour les tuer. Cette méthode ne marche pas à tous les coups et parfois, les petits sont laissés agonisant sur le sol (“Maltraitance”).

This deeply affected Grégory in multiple ways. He described the trauma he suffered from his work in these conditions: “J’étais stressé, j’étais angoissé, je faisais des cauchemars la nuit, je ne mangeais plus le soir, ça n’allait vraiment plus” (“Maltraitance”). Furthermore, one finds these negative effects of harming animals in other slaughterhouse workers. Across the ocean, Virgil Butler, a Tyson chicken worker who had the job of a “killer” also described nightmares as one of multiple negative emotional effects of the job:
Out of desperation you send your mind elsewhere so that you don’t end up like those guys that lose it. Like the guy that fell on his knees praying to God for forgiveness. Or the guy they hauled off to the mental hospital that kept having nightmares that the chickens were after him. I’ve had those, too... Most people who work in this room and work in the hanging cage use some sort of stimulant to keep up the pace and some sort of mellowing substance to escape reality (Butler).

Butler’s job takes such an emotional toll that he feels the need to shut off all emotion. He realizes that his actions are brutal, but this brutality is the nature of the job:

The sheer amount of killing and blood can really get to you after awhile, especially if you can’t just shut down all emotion completely and turn into a robot zombie of death. You feel like part of a big death machine. Pretty much treated that way as well. Sometimes weird thoughts will enter your head. It’s just you and the dying chickens. The surreal feelings grow into such a horror of the barbaric nature of your behavior” (Butler).

Interestingly, he compares the ideal emotional state for his job as “a robot zombie of death,” showing the need to become mechanical himself due to treating the living birds as mechanical objects. His job has even made him more prone to violence outside of work: “You become more prone to violence. When you get angry you become much more likely to physically attack whatever or whoever you are mad at. You are a lot more likely to use a weapon than you were. Especially a knife” (Butler). He reveals here a noticeable change in behavior directly caused by his work. This violent tendency applies to others who do his job as well: “Many people who do this commit violent acts. They commit crimes. People who already are criminals tend to gravitate towards this job. You can’t have a strong conscience and kill living creatures night after night” (Butler). He essentially classifies his job as a weakening of the conscience, revealing that he feels that doing his job is unethical. This is highlighted when he also talks of the shame he feels of his job, to the point where he does not want anyone to know what he does for a living. Ultimately, Butler closes himself off emotionally: “You shut down all emotions eventually. You just can’t care about anything. Because if you care about something, it opens the gate to all those bad feelings that you can’t afford to feel and still do your job” (Butler-his emphasis). Treating animals as
mechanical, unfeeling beings ends up either turning those who must participate in these actions into mechanical, unfeeling beings themselves, or creating other emotional damage.\textsuperscript{37}

Fitzgerald, Kalof, and Dietz conducted sociological research linking slaughterhouses to violent crime, which they published in “Slaughterhouses and Increased Crime Rates: An Empirical Analysis of the Spillover From ‘The Jungle’ Into the Surrounding Community.” They examined crime in slaughterhouse communities and compared the crime statistics of those communities to other “manufacturing” communities with similar relevant variables, but where the job did not entail animal death or harm. (The official classification of slaughtering sentient animals as “manufacturing” is in and of itself meaningful, further demonstrating how industry employs carefully chosen language to describe itself, as well as the attitudes of society at large towards animals classified as edible.) Their study employed the term “Sinclair effect,” based on Sinclair's \textit{The Jungle}, to describe the rise in violence that corresponds to slaughterhouse employment. In \textit{The Jungle}, the slaughterhouse workers frequently get into late night physical fights:

Now the fat policeman wakens definitely, and feels of his club to see that it is ready for business. He has to be prompt—for these two-o’clock-in-the-morning fights, if they once get out of hand, are like a forest fire, and may mean the whole reserves at the station. The thing to do is to crack every fighting head that you see, before there are so many fighting heads that you cannot crack any of them. There is but scant account kept of cracked heads in back of the yards, for men who have to crack the heads of animals all day seem to get into the habit, and to practice on their friends, and even on their families, between times. This makes it a cause for congratulation that by modern methods a very few men can do the painfully necessary work of head-cracking for the whole of the cultured world (Sinclair Chapter I).

\textsuperscript{37} Butler, sadly, died at 41, after turning into an advocate for animal rights. His cause of death was not made public.
The violence done at work carries over into their personal lives, affecting those close to them. The study based on this observation found that this correlation exists in multiple slaughterhouse communities:

The findings indicate that slaughterhouse employment increases total arrest rates, arrests for violent crimes, arrests for rape, and arrests for other sex offenses in comparison with other industries. This suggests the existence of a ‘Sinclair effect’ unique to the violent workplace of the slaughterhouse, a factor that has not previously been examined in the sociology of violence (Fitzgerald et al. 158).

Finding this link affirmed the harm done to those expected to harm animals. They determined that continuing to ignore the relevance of animals in society will allow this problem to further evolve:

In particular, our results lend support to the argument, first articulated by Sinclair, and since elaborated by Beirne, that the industrial slaughterhouse is different in its effects from other industrial facilities. We believe that this is another of a growing list of social problems and phenomena that are undertheorized unless explicit attention is paid to the social role of nonhuman animals (Fitzgerald et al. 175).

By objectifying sentient beings, the workers must ignore all the evidence to the contrary (as Sinclair made obvious in his novel) that they face every day they go to work. This problem has evolved, despite Sinclair’s early warning, due to industry’s insistence on this objectification.

Piers Beirne’s study, published in his article “‘From Animal Abuse to Interhuman Violence? A Critical Review of the Progression Thesis,” links the “abrupt, unnatural, and sometimes painful death of billions of terrified animals,” and the “physical and psychic toll on slaughterhouse workers” with increased violence (Beirne 54). But he also finds that the power relations between humans and animals open the door to potential violence: “Whenever human-animal relationships are marked by authority and power, and thus by institutionalized social distance, there is an aggravated possibility of extra-institutional violence” (Beirne 54). He cites a study by Gail Eisnitz, *Slaughterhouse: The shocking story of greed, neglect, and inhumane treatment inside the U.S. meat industry*, on the effects of
slaughterhouses that shows a similar effect to that described by Butler. Eisnitz interviewed a hog sticker who noticed violent tendencies in himself and his co-workers:

I’ve had ideas of hanging my foreman upside down on the line and sticking him. I remember going into the office and telling the personnel man I have no problem pulling the trigger on a person—if you get in my face I’ll blow you away... Every sticker I know carries a gun, and every one of them would shoot you. Most stickers I know have been arrested for assault. A lot of them have problems with alcohol. They have to drink, they have no other way of killing live, kicking animals all day long (Eisnitz, p. 88-her emphasis).

Like Butler, he cites a correlation between those who have the job of killing and the use of weapons outside work. He also cites substance abuse as a problem amongst slaughterhouse workers:

So a lot of guys at Morrell just drink and drug their problems away. Some of them end up abusing their spouses because they can’t get rid of the feelings. They leave work with this attitude and they go down to the bar to forget. Only problem is, even if you try to drink those feelings away, they’re still there when you sober up (Eisnitz 88).

Their work causes them such distress that they cannot escape the negative feelings associated with their actions. They lose a sense of respect for life in general. Some of the animals they must kill even show them affection, which leads to their disregard for life that becomes necessary for them to continue to do their job:

If you work in the stick pit for any period of time, you develop an attitude that lets you kill things but doesn’t let you care. You may look a hog in the eye that’s walking around down in the blood pit with you and think, God, that really isn’t a bad-looking animal. You may want to pet it. Pigs down on the kill floor have come up and nuzzled me like a puppy. Two minutes later I had to kill them—beat them to death with a pipe. I can’t care (Eisnitz 87).

In the process of learning to kill for a living, sentience loses its meaning. When those who harm animals as part of their job must ignore their sentience, they then learn to ignore that of humans as well.

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38 Hog stickers are those who slit the hogs’ throats
These workers must override natural sentiments for animals, and against causing harm, in order to make a living. For them to function both in and outside of work, they must become mechanical and shut off all emotions. But at least some of them cannot get rid of the feelings that killing animals for a living naturally causes, causing emotional disturbances, and ultimately, in some of the workers, violence extended into their non-working lives. They are in a situation where they should respond emotionally, as Sinclair showed, but cannot, because their work depends on them shutting down. They have to develop a certain disregard for life to do their job, which leads to suppression of emotions, often chemically. These studies and worker experiences uphold the role of emotions as curbs on behavior – when one must suppress them, other negative behavior follows, affecting the entire life of the individual.

**Emotion into action**

A healthy society depends on its members not shutting down emotionally, and feeling empathy for others. If they close off their emotions and minds, they cannot correctly gauge effects of individual and societal actions. Open-mindedness requires responding emotionally to the lives of others in order to develop an understanding of their experience with all of its singularities. As Derrida explains, knowledge of animal pain and suffering, when one acknowledges it, should lead to compassion. But what then? How should one respond to this sentiment?

Martha Nussbaum links emotion and action, establishing that emotion should lead to positive change. She proposes that compassion represents a duty to prevent animal suffering:

But suppose we [say] that duties of compassion involve the thought that it is *wrong* to cause animals suffering. Where that suffering is caused by a wrongful act, a duty of compassion would involve acknowledgement of that wrongness. That is, a duty of compassion would not be just a duty to have compassion, but a duty, as a result of one’s compassion, to refrain from, inhibit, and punish acts of the sort that cause the suffering occasioning the compassion (Nussbaum, *FJ* 336-her emphasis).
Here, compassion is a driving force of justice for those who suffer. She later clarifies when this concept applies: “[A]nimals are subjects of justice to the extent that individual animals are suffering pain and deprivation” (Nussbaum *FJ* 357). Taken with the above statement, no more qualifications need to be added than a wrongful act causes unmerited suffering for an injustice to be present. Refuting this statement would be difficult, which is where the arguments that try to override natural sentiments come in to play, such as saying it is anthropomorphic to say that animals suffer, saying that animals simply cannot be the subjects of justice (usually based on contract theory), which curtails any further discussion, or that an act which can be said to have some benefit somewhere cannot be defined as wrongful. She takes Derrida’s and Luke’s assertions that harming animals has detrimental effects on humans further. When harm generates compassion, compassion generates a duty to stop harm, and the issue becomes not just an issue of animal welfare, but an issue of justice, which supports the idea of a genuine harm to the human. Céline also supports the idea the animal harm is a legitimate injustice, and bases arguments for better animal treatment on the idea of justice.

Lori Gruen, like Nussbaum, asserts that empathy should inspire action, in what she calls “engaged empathy.” Engaged empathy requires one to look beyond the peripheral issues:

> [Engaged empathy] involves not only the process of empathizing, but critical attention to the broader conditions that undermine the well-being or flourishing of the objects of empathy and this requires moral agents to attend to things they might not have otherwise. Engaged empathy requires gaining wisdom and perspective and, importantly, motivates the empathizer to act ethically (Gruen, “Attending” 30).

Empathy does not stop at the feeling stage, but goes beyond to produce an ethical response to another being’s situation. It allows one to perceive “what is unarticulated and inarticulatable” (Gruen,

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39 See Singer for just a few examples of the widespread abuse of this argument, such as unnecessary, repeated experiments that have already been done, as just one example. Or see Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights*, where he argues against animal testing for new products for which we have no genuine need.
“Attending” 25). To fully engage in this process the empathizer must first have some type of connection with the other. One must be open to the other as a subject-of-a-life and care about the other’s lived experience: “[I]t requires understanding the perspective and situation of the other from their point of view and doing that requires both knowledge of and an affective connection with the other. Engaged empathy requires that we develop skills that will ultimately make us more sensitive and attuned perceivers and more informed and effective moral actors” (Gruen, “Attending” 35). Thus, for engaged empathy to occur with animals, one must either have personal experience with animals or receive accurate and detailed information about them from someone who has made the effort to truly understand them as subjects. This understanding along with an openness to respond emotionally to their lives leads to the knowledge of how to respond ethically. Consequently, information about them from those who wish to keep them objectified will not lead to appropriate moral decisions because it will attempt to eliminate both the animals’ perspectives and an emotional connection with their lives.

One cannot create an appropriate moral base without an understanding of its complete effect on those to whom it applies. Elisa Aaltola explores the relationships between compassion, empathy, and morality and its application to animal welfare in “Empathy, Intersubjectivity, and Animal Philosophy.” Her study finds morality dependent on the capacity for empathy. She cites Arthur Schopenhauer, from his work, *On the Basis of Morality*, who goes so far as to exclude all actions not generated by compassion from the realm of morality: “Only insofar as an action has sprung from compassion does it have moral value, and every action resulting from any other motives has none” (Schopenhauer 144). Schopenhauer shows an inverse relationship between self-interest and the moral value of an action (139-40). But when one acts from compassion, one eliminates the absolute difference between oneself and the other (Schopenhauer 144). One may still have a difference in degree between one’s interest in one’s own “weal and woe” and one’s interest the other’s “weal and woe,” but both are
equally “near to one’s heart” (Schopenhauer 144). Furthermore, based on the work of Edith Stein, Aaltola notes that empathy displays that one finds moral value in the other (Aaltola, “Empathy” 78). In better comprehending others, one becomes better able to understand their value, consequently influencing morality. Her study also explores the psychological findings on the subject, which demonstrate the role of empathy in concern for others:

Renowned psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen has supported the correlation by exploring the effects that lack of empathy has. Discussing various familiar personality disorders (such as psychopathic tendencies and narcissism), which are characterized by the inability to empathize, Baron-Cohen concludes that lack of moral concern or awareness can often be reduced to empathy disability. The key ingredient is objectification of others, which walks hand in hand with lack of empathy (Aaltola, “Empathy” 78).

Baron-Cohen, like Stein, asserts a link between empathy and finding value in the other. It signifies that one views the other as a “you” rather than an “it”: “According to Baron-Cohen it is the latter mode that accompanies ‘empathy erosion,’ and enables one to treat others as objects instead of subjects, as points of manipulation instead of valuable beings” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 79). He takes this from Martin Buber’s well-known work Ich und Du, arguing in his book, The Science of Evil: On empathy and the origins of cruelty, that “[w]hen our empathy is switched off, we are solely in the ‘I’ mode” (Baron-Cohen 7). One finds empathy erosion most prominent in industry’s views on animals, who must always, in order to fulfill the goals of industry, be viewed as an “it.” This allows wide-spread animal suffering:

It would appear that most societies and far too many individual people suffer from empathy erosion, and even psychopathic and narcissistic tendencies, in their relations to non-human animals. In Buber’s terminology, they treat other animals as an ‘it’ to be rendered into an object of manipulation. One could say that modern animal industries are the extreme manifestation of manipulation, within which even the most tangible of sufferings gains little relevance. The non-human animal of the industrial farm has become the ultimate object, whose experiences count for little or nothing. Arguably, it is precisely the unwillingness to empathize with other animals that has led to the current climate of “mechanomorphia” (Crist 1999) or “anthropodenial” (de Waal 2006),
within which animals are wrongly depicted as machine-like creatures poor or wholly lacking in mental content and ability (Aaltola, “Empathy” 79).\textsuperscript{40}

Eileen Crist explains in her book, \textit{Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind}, how the technical language used by scientists wanting to express a pure cause and effect relationship portrays animals as mechanical even when that is not their intention:

[M]echanomorphic presentations need not involve a committed affiliation to a mechanistic philosophy, nor do they entail an explicit rejection of animal mentality. Instead, I argue that mechanomorphic portrayals—or rendering behavior in a language that likens animals to machines—are effected by the application of a technical language in combination with an interest in causal explanation. The logical corollary of a technical-causal language is the presentation of animals as puppetlike, guided by theoretically explained forces that are beyond their control and understanding. The consequence of technical-causal idioms of representation is that animals appear mindless; otherwise put, the conceptual space that might admit a vision of inner life drastically shrinks (85).

This language keeps the Cartesian concept of animals alive by eliminating anything that does not fit neatly within the stimulus-response parameters and portraying animal behavior as involuntary. This depicts them as an “it,” rather than a “you.” Seeing them as an “it” denies animals personal value and consequently, denies that their sufferings matter. Aaltola proposes empathy as the means of removing animals from the “it” category. Acknowledging the differences between humans and animals, in particular those further removed from humans, she proposes that even though a human cannot imagine the full experience of the animal other, one can draw obvious conclusions from their behavior. In line with Regan, she posits behavior as evidence of emotion: “A whale in the deep blue may experience fear or joy, despite the obvious physiological and environmental differences. The key here is to look at behavior and follow its lead: if the behavior of the whale paves the way for insights or perceptions of

\textsuperscript{40}De Waal defines anthropodenial as “the \textit{a priori} rejection of shared characteristics between humans and animals. Anthropodenial denotes willful blindness to the human-like characteristics of animals, or the animal-like characteristics of ourselves” (\textit{Primates} p. 65).
fear, no further reasons may be required” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 82). Drawing again from Stein’s work on empathy, Aaltola notes that behavior that exhibits emotion appropriate to the circumstances allows one to draw conclusions in the absence of common language (“Empathy” 82). This type of emotion-displaying behavior then opens the door to empathetic understanding: “[I]t is behavior that serves as the reference point and constructs empathetic insights: the sorry gait, the barren look, or the playful flicks of the tail” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 83). Primatologist and ethologist Frans de Waal, in his book, *Mama’s Last Hug: Animal Emotions and What They Tell Us about Ourselves*, also supports drawing conclusions from behavior: “The simplest, most parsimonious view is that if two related species act similarly under similar circumstances, they must be similarly motivated… Anyone who wants to make the case that a tickled ape, who almost chokes on his hoarse giggles, must be in a different state of mind from a tickled human child has his work cut out for him” (*Mama’s* 51). One does not need language to read behavioral signs, especially when they logically fit the situation. Instead, one depends on sight and sound. One must be able to trust what one sees in order to fully function in life:

> A point of reference used by the phenomenologists is sight: it may well be subjective and offer us partial readings, or even hallucinations, but we trust it nonetheless. This is because we have to trust it—to doubt sight would lead into a state of chaotic disbelief that paralyzed our everyday lives. Empathy can be viewed in a similar light (Aaltola, “Empathy” 84).

One trusts one’s own empathy in order to form connections with the world around oneself. Empathy can give access to others’ experiences and “what it is like to be the other creature” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 84). Whereas society accepts this for humans, it is less accepting of same approach for nonhuman animals: “This approach is commonly followed in relation to other human beings. We usually do not step back and doubt our empathetic responses toward them, but instead accept these responses as methods of knowledge. It appears unclear why the same should not apply to other animals” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 84). This divide reinforces the human/animal binary, which ignores both visible and
physiological evidence of similarities between the two, and has completely different standards for interpreting the internal experiences of the other. Although humans cannot precisely know the internal lives of any other creature, we can rely on our own logic, just as we do with other humans: “The crucial point here is that there need not be certain evidence, nor certainty—what suffices is that we have something that it makes little sense to doubt” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 85 – her emphasis). Regan has already shown that it would be illogical to deny animals’ emotions; Aaltola takes it one step further and emphasizes the importance of empathy in order not only to acknowledge their emotions, but also to understand their experience. By not attempting to comprehend their points of view, one limits one’s own knowledge: “[I]t could be argued that human epistemology has suffered a significant restriction in the shape of skepticism, as the innumerous different takes on this world—the odd, peculiar, and surprising viewpoints of other animals—have gone unnoted. As a result, human understanding of nonhuman animals, the world, and the self may remain limited and obscured” (Aaltola, “Empathy” 88). In order to truly understand animals, one must first accept animal mindedness and then attempt to enter into their world. Viewing animals only from the perspective of a human-centered world ignores part of the complete world and thus, limits knowledge. Animal behavior gives evidence of animal mindedness and emotion that would be illogical to doubt. Unacceptance of these qualities leads to objectification of animals, preventing empathetic response to them, and, as a result, prevents proper ethical decisions regarding nonhuman animals.

In *Primates and Philosophers: How morality evolved*, de Waal also asserts that morality has its roots in emotion, which can be traced back to other primates. He agrees with Damasio that emotions contribute to human reason. De Waal finds that without emotion, one will never arrive at moral conviction:
Emotions occupy a central role; it is well known that, rather than being the antithesis of rationality, emotions aid human reasoning. People can reason and deliberate as much as they want, but, as neuroscientists have found, if there are no emotions attached to the various options in front of them, they will never reach a decision or conviction (Damasio 1994). This is critical for moral choice, because if anything morality involves strong convictions. These convictions don’t—or rather can’t—come about through a cool rationality; they require caring about others and powerful ‘gut feelings’ about right and wrong” (Primates 18).

De Waal makes an important link here between caring and morality that indicates that morality will lead one to take action to prevent another from being wronged. Caring implies that one wants the other to not suffer, and has a genuine interest in the outcome. By referencing “‘gut feelings’ about right and wrong,” he echoes Rousseau’s previously cited idea of conscience: “Je n’ai qu’à me consulter sur ce que je veux faire ; tout ce que je sens être bien est bien, tout ce que je sens être mal est mal : le meilleur de tous les casuistes est la conscience” (Émile 166). Both emphasize an internal guide for actions, as well as an emotional basis for morality. Whereas de Waal states that moral convictions “require caring about others,” Rousseau elaborates how all virtue stems from pity:

En effet qu’est-ce que la générosité, la Clemence, l’Humanité, sinon la Pitié appliquée aux foibles, aux coupables, ou à l’espèce humaine en général ? La Bienveillance et l’amitié même sont, à le bien prendre, des productions d’une pitié constante, fixée sur un objet particulier : car désirer qu’il ne souffre point, qu’est-ce autre chose, que désirer que qu’il soit heureux ? (“Discours” 155).

For Rousseau, the various manifestations of moral choices are variations of pity for another, that is to say, “caring about others,” and desiring their happiness. By stating that moral convictions cannot “come about through cool rationality” de Waal also supports Rousseau’s Second Discourse which states that:

C’est la raison qui engendre l’amour propre, et c’est la réflexion qui le fortifie ; C’est elle qui replie l’homme sur lui-même... C’est la Philosophie qui l’isole ; c’est par elle qu’il dit en secret, à l’aspect d’un homme souffrant, persi si tu veux, je suis en sureté. Il n’y a plus que les dangers de la société entière qui troublent le sommeil tranquille du Philosophe, et qui l’arrachent de son lit. On peut impunément égorger son semblable sous sa fenêtre ; il n’a qu’à mettre ses mains sur ses oreilles et s’argumenter un peu,

41 The same work previously cited, Descartes’ Error
pour empêcher la Nature qui se revolte en lui, de l’identifier avec celui qu’on assassine (“Discours” 156).

Cool rationality allows self-centeredness to take over and stops the identification process that leads to empathy. By forestalling emotion then, cool rationality allows ignoring harm to others because one no longer concerns oneself with their suffering, consequently having no moral conviction about this suffering.

De Waal, again in a similarity with Rousseau, emphasizes the identification process with animals. For Rousseau, the importance of identification was empathy for others, brought about by knowledge of their suffering. For de Waal, identification leads to empathy which leads to scientific knowledge. Sharing emotions allows for a keener sense of observation of the emotions of other animals:

It would be terribly boring to observe animals for hours on end without identifying with them, without feeling any ups and downs associated with their ups and downs. The sudden death of a companion, the birth of a healthy infant, the joy of receiving a favorite food—all this rubs off on the human observer. Scientists often declare that objectivity is their goal, but I beg to differ: all that has given us is a cold, mechanistic view of animals. The science may be objective, but it completely misses out on animal emotions. Some of the greatest pioneers in the study of animal behavior rejected this approach by stressing the need to identify with and get close to our subjects. Kinji Imanishi, the founder of Japanese primatology, and Konrad Lorenz both proposed empathy as a gateway to the animal mind. Lorenz went so far as to say that anyone who has lived with a dog and is unconvinced that dogs have feelings like us is psychologically deranged, dangerous even” (de Waal Mama’s 107-his emphasis).

De Waal agrees with Rousseau that empathy leads to greater knowledge of others. Rousseau states, regarding the suffering of others: “[L]e voir sans le sentir n’est pas le savoir” (146 Émile). De Waal echoes this idea, expanding it to other emotions. Whereas Rousseau focused on pity, de Waal opens up this process of identification to both “ups and downs.” By emphasizing “the need to identify with and get close to our subjects,” he expresses a benefit for the observer, in the way of new knowledge. For Rousseau, this identification led to pity, which he had previously presented as the basis of all moral virtues. De Waal picks up the morality argument with Lorenz’s statement, expressing that someone
with life experience with dogs, who still denies them feelings, lacks characteristics necessary for appropriate moral judgement. He thus makes a link here between empathy, knowledge, and moral judgement, as appropriate moral judgement regarding other beings evolves through knowledge of what they experience themselves. When Crist states, “The consequence of technical-causal idioms of representation is that animals appear mindless; otherwise put, the conceptual space that might admit a vision of inner life drastically shrinks,” she establishes how attempts to remain objective can lead to a “cold, mechanistic view of animals” (85). De Waal shows how this attitude continues the trend as those unwilling to consider a “vision of inner life” fail to see that which those who try to identify with this inner life strive to learn. By eliminating this anthropocentric gap, animal behaviorists have been able to gain insights into animals that those who wish to retain it cannot.

Fiction writing has long been used to argue ethics in a less direct way. Science fiction, in particular, can avoid criticism by its more extreme removal from reality. As Jennifer Clements notes in “How Science Fiction Helps Us Reimagine Our Moral Relations With Animals”: “The guise of fiction has allowed science fiction’s writers and audiences to explore ethical possibilities that they would be reprimanded for discussing in a less fantastical setting” (181-82). She remarks that “science fiction as a genre has often been at the forefront of exploring the roles of the ‘subaltern,’” including nonhuman animals (Clements 181). American science fiction writer Philip K. Dick argues for the importance of empathy, including empathy for animals in his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968), on which the film *Bladerunner* was based. Due to this theme, the novel has become an important work in animal studies. In “Electric Sheep and the New Argument from Nature,” which focuses first on Dick’s writing in general, then specifically on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, Angus Taylor notes that Dick

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frequently blurs the line between humans and nonhumans. Taylor describes this fluidity as simultaneously having the possibility to open up potential and close off empathy:

> The universe becomes a chain of being, illuminated from the top down by spirit and the possibility of life-enhancing relatedness, so that every individual being can struggle up into the greater light to fulfill its potential. At the same time, he shows us the dark side of this erasure: the potential movement in the other direction, toward entropy and the loss of empathetic relatedness (185).

In the novel, the capacity for empathy has become the means of differentiating genuine humans from extremely human-like androids. It takes place after World War Terminus has ravaged the world, most humans have emigrated to Mars, and so few animals exist that owning one becomes the status symbol of the time. Those who cannot afford real animals purchase and care for lifelike mechanical replicas. Like the androids, they are indistinguishable from genuine living beings by sight. Dick’s protagonist Rick Deckard has the task of differentiating real humans from “dangerous, flesh-and-blood imitations, those who are sinking into a psychic state of mechanism and entropy” (Taylor 187). In order to detect the imitations, he uses the Voigt-Kampff Empathy test which can show whether the being has an emotional response to animal harm and exploitation, because they lack nothing in intelligence, even becoming more intelligent than some humans. Other than the official empathy test, however, other small signs indicate that a being is actually an android. Human characters first notice that the android demonstrates emotional coldness. In one instance, an android calls an owl “it” instead of “her” (Dick 475). Androids do not possess enough warmth to own and care for a real pet, because “Animals require an environment of warmth to flourish” (Dick 527). Androids do not care about animals, humans, or even other androids. In one instance an android cuts four legs off of a spider to see if it needs eight legs, while smiling, despite a human’s protest not to mutilate it. When the spider will not move, another android lights a match and puts it closer and closer to the spider “until at last it crept feebly away” (Dick...
Sherryl Vint gives two possible readings of this scene in “Speciesism and Species Being in ‘Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?’”: 

This is typically described as the moment when the androids’ truly inhuman nature comes to the surface and all sympathy for them is lost. Another way of reading this scene, however, is as disinterested experiment rather than torture, mirroring the technique of scientists who were (and often still are) able to perform painful experiments on living creatures without any concern (113).

Vint compares the androids to Cartesians who justify animal experiments based on their lack of a soul. She describes how the novel shows society’s influence on emotions and compares this to scientists’ attitudes toward animal experiments:

Failing to react with despair to depressing situations, she (Deckard’s wife) insists, ‘used to be considered a sign of mental illness; they called it absence of appropriate affect’...A degree of inappropriate affect is also the heritage of the Cartesian cogito; the rise of modern science was made possible by the ability to ignore the suffering of those upon whom one experimented. Although vivisection is now conducted with more care regarding the animals’ suffering, it is worth noting that most of Dick’s audience would fail the Voigt-Kampff test. Its questions—about topics such as boiling live lobster, eating meat, or using fur—denote things that are commonplace rather than shocking in our world (Vint 115).

Whichever reading one chooses, the actions toward the spider can still be characterized as lacking empathy, whether the actor in the situation recognizes them as such or not. The androids only care about pure knowledge, without concern for any effects of on others. Not only do they slowly mutilate the spider before approaching it with a flame, but they also ignore the human’s pleading for them to stop. Interestingly, the empathy scales that Baron-Cohen helped develop have a similar test on the adult scale: “When I was a child, I enjoyed cutting up worms to see what would happen,” and a statement that includes almost this exact act on the child scale: “My child enjoys cutting up worms, or pulling the legs off insects,” showing that it is a clinical sign of a lack of empathy (Baron-Cohen 21, 192). Two other statements on the child scale also relate to animals: “My child would enjoy looking after a pet,” and “My child gets very upset if they see an animal in pain” (Baron-Cohen 193). Both of these
factors were used in Dick’s novel to show empathy long before Baron-Cohen’s scales, validating his
accuracy in recognizing tests for empathy. Nussbaum states in her analysis of compassion: “Again and
again, the literature on violence indicates that the personality that is deficient in empathy is a danger to
others” (Upheavals 395). This reinforces Lorenz’s statement, noted by de Waal. Dick’s novel
emphasizes the importance of empathy for the survival and well-being of living beings, as well as the
danger of intellect without empathy. Between the two, empathy becomes the more important. Isidore,
the character who tried to save the spider, has been classified as a “chickenhead” because of his low IQ.
He cannot marry or emigrate, and many jobs are closed off to him. Yet, when he receives a restored
spider from the quasi-religious character Mercer, he sets it free in some weeds for its protection. When
Deckard sees him and notes the spider’s monetary value, Isidore explains, “If I took it back up there
she’d cut it apart again. Bit by bit, to see what it did” (Dick 590). In fact, Isidore, the character with the
lowest IQ, has the most compassion for other beings, including the artificial androids. Taylor concludes
from his study of the novel:

In Dick’s vision, the moral imperative calls on us to care for all sentient beings, human or
nonhuman, natural or artificial, regardless of their place in the order of things. And Dick
makes clear that this imperative is grounded in empathy, not reason, whatever
subsequent role reason may play. Throughout his fiction, the virtue of empathy is
contrasted with the dangers of untempered intellect. In the case of philosophers, or the
person on the street, it is apparent that without the empathetic intuition that animals
count, reason—even reasoning about the imperative to care—will not ensure that we
extend the boundaries of the moral community (188).

Vint also reads a criticism of humans who over-prioritize reason without allowing for emotion. She sees
a resemblance between the android and human characters: “[T]he risk faced by Deckard and the other
humans in the novel lies in realizing they are already android-like, so long as they define their
subjectivity based on the logical, rational, calculating part of the human being” (Vint 112). In Dick’s
work, when beings lose their capacity for empathy, and rely on reason alone, they become dangerous.

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The fact that his protagonist uses a test showing animal harm to test emotional response is telling, making a statement that those who have no emotional response to animal harm have lost their humanity, which reflects both Voltaire’s and Hume’s reflections that the sentiment of humanity should bring about kindness to animals. For Dick, it is not the presence or absence of intellect that separates dangerous beings from others, but of emotion, because emotion drives the concern for another’s well-being.

2.3 Observation and imagination

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world—Einstein

Although Einstein’s citation may at first seem to contrast knowledge and imagination, in its context, he shows how knowledge evolves from the imagination. In this Saturday Evening Post interview with George Sylvester Viereck, he credits “intuitions and inspirations” for his work, in particular, his theory of relativity. Observation subsequently proves him right (Viereck 117). New knowledge starts with imagining previously unforeseen possibilities. Rather than being opposed to knowledge, imagination furthers its development by seeing beyond existing boundaries. Amongst other important functions, imagination plays a key role in empathy.

In her recent book, Divining Nature: Aesthetics of Enchantment in Enlightenment France, Tili Boon Cuillé identifies a historical belief in intuition as a means of acquiring knowledge amongst Enlightenment philosophers. In her analysis of Locke’s An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, she writes:

The perception of relations between ideas – notably their agreement or disagreement – was for Locke the basis of all knowledge, which he subdivided into varying degrees of certainty from intuitive to demonstrative. Intuitive knowledge is the immediate perception of the relation between ideas, which if partial or limited takes the form of
probable conjecture yet when entire or absolute approaches divine revelation (Cuillé 11-12).

Einstein's experience supports this intuitive knowledge as a “perception of the relation between ideas.”

Before one can test new knowledge, one must perceive a hitherto unrecognized correlation. Likewise,

Einstein has intuitions that must then be confirmed:

I believe in intuitions and inspirations. I sometimes feel that I am right. I do not know that I am. When two expeditions of scientists, financed by the Royal Academy, went forth to test my theory of relativity, I was convinced that their conclusions would tally with my hypothesis. I was not surprised when the eclipse of May 29, 1919, confirmed my intuitions. I would have been surprised if I had been wrong (Viereck 117).

He demonstrates here a degree of “certainty produced by intuition” as knowledge, as he expected the results to confirm his hypothesis, which they did. Whereas, Locke described absolute intuitive knowledge as “divine revelation,” Einstein uses the related term inspiration.

Cuillé finds that Hume likewise credits an inner force, instinct, as leading to the inference of connections. He also believes that this type of knowledge finds its source outside of isolated reason:

Whereas we observe the conjunction of objects or events, Hume asserts, we infer their connection via analogy. Such inferences rely not on the development of reason but rather on the “sentiment of belief” that Hume characterizes as instinctive. Far from denigrating this propensity, which he attributes to animals, children, primitive societies, superstitious people, religious enthusiasts, and philosophers alike, he acknowledges sentiment rather than reason as the basis of human behavior and the subject of moral philosophy (Cuillé 13).

One first must observe, then rely on sentiment to discover new connections. Those who study empathy support this process of acquiring knowledge. One begins with observation, then uses imagination and insight to identify with the other. Léautaud, as I will show in chapter four, uses this method in animal behavior, then translates it into moral philosophy regarding human treatment of animals.

As Derrida remarked, no one can deny animal suffering. If one has never encountered an animal that is scared or in pain personally, descriptions such as the one from the Fox and McLean article make
this fact perfectly clear. Observation shows that animals suffer in very obvious ways. This is why, for example, the agricultural industry has influenced ag-gag laws in several states, to prevent the public from seeing the true conditions of animal agriculture. But, as will be shown in the following chapters, and as Rousseau remarked, sometimes observation alone does not lead to caring. In order to care, one must have an affective response to what one sees. With the power of imagination added to observation, one can then put oneself in the place of the animal to get a better understanding of their personal experience.

For caring to occur, one must break through the anthropocentric messages put in place by society. Frank B. Fay, the former Secretary of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, remarked that animals communicate quite effectively despite their lack of human language. He wrote in their magazine, *Our Dumb Animals*, in 1871:

> It is often said ‘that animals cannot speak for themselves,’ which is true if we add ‘in our language.’ They can and do understand our words directed to them, and their own language directed to each other. And there is their mute appeal to us, that ought to be more expressive than words, for it is only an appeal and cannot irritate. If we had a better appreciation of their messages and pleading looks directed to us, we should be more thoughtful and more merciful (Fay 87).

Fay notes that the simple power of observation reveals animals’ communicative abilities and capacity for understanding. It is humans’ incapacity to appreciate animal messages that leads to a lack of mercy for them. Thus, Fay turns the tables to show lack of mercy as a human fault; it is the human who lacks understanding and who cannot pick up on different modes of communication.

The lack of language argument went so far as to deny that human babies felt pain. De Waal explains how well into the twentieth century, scientists denied this ability to them:

> Infants were considered subhuman organisms that produced ‘random sounds,’ smiled simply as a result of ‘gas,’ and couldn’t feel pain. Serious scientists conducted torturous experiments on human infants with needle pricks, hot and cold water, and head restraints, to make the point that they feel nothing. The babies’ reactions were
considered emotion-free reflexes. As a result, doctors routinely hurt infants (such as during circumcision or invasive surgery) without the benefit of pain-killing anesthesia. They only gave them curare, a muscle relaxant, which conveniently kept the infants from resisting what was being done to them. Only in the 1980s did medical procedures change, when it was revealed that babies have a full-blown pain response with grimacing and crying (Mama’s 268-69).

He then summarizes the attachment of science to verbal language: “Scientific skepticism about pain applies not just to animals, therefore, but to any organism that fails to talk. It is as if science pays attention to feelings only if they come with an explicit verbal statement, such as ‘I felt a sharp pain when you did that!’” (de Waal Mama’s 269). He shows here how dependent humans have become on speech. Other signs of pain and distress have been ignored, simply because those afflicted lack language. Yet communication can take many different forms. Animals themselves recognize similar behaviors in other species. One finds certain common behavior in multiple species:

[R]ats make little frolicsome movements, known as ‘joy jumps,’ that are typical of all playing mammals, including goats, dogs, cats, horses, primates, and so on. Darwin’s frisky cows come to mind. Even though animals have all sorts of play signals, the one constant is abrupt random jumpiness... The joy jump is so recognizable that it is easily understood between species. In captivity, a rhino calf may play with a dog, or a dog with an otter, or a foal with a goat, and in the wild young chimpanzees have been observed wrestling with baboons, and ravens and wolves teasing each other (de Waal, Mama’s 74).

When different species play together, they must have confidence that the other species means them no harm. Thus, they must have some type of communication between them that signals friendliness and play, understandable to all participants. Furthermore, emotional calls have similarities in all vertebrates that permit recognition of their emotional state. De Waal proposes that:

[A]ll emotions are both biological and essential. None is more basic than the others, and none are uniquely human. To me, this is a logical position given how closely the emotions are tied to the body and how all mammalian bodies are fundamentally the same. Thus, when human subjects were asked to guess the state of emotional arousal of a variety of reptiles, mammals, amphibians, and other land animals, just from listening to their calls, they were remarkably good at doing so. There seem to exist
‘acoustic universals’ that allow all vertebrates to communicate emotions in similar ways (Mama’s 167).

He credits a study by Piera Filippi et al. in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, which tested individuals speaking different native languages on recognizing emotional information in nine different species, which also vary in “size, ecology, and social structure” (Filippi et al. 6). They infer that the similar vocalizations across species “suggest that fundamental mechanisms of vocal expression are shared among vertebrates and could represent a homologous signaling system” (Filippi et al. 1). Because of shared biology, emotional vocalizations have similar characteristics enabling interspecies understanding. This reinforces that similar output across species can be read to have similar meaning and that humans indeed have the capacity of interpretation for some of this output. Even in humans, non-verbal communication often supersedes verbal communication:

Chatting with a good friend over a cup of coffee on a sunny terrace, I will react within milliseconds to every facial or bodily move he makes without ever needing to search my mind for a word that goes with it. Humans constantly react to each other’s body language in a stream, or ‘dance,’ of coordinated movements. While my friend talks, I raise my eyebrows, roll my eyes, mumble *hmmm* or *tsch*, and indicate with subtle muscle pulls around my eyes and mouth whether I agree, disagree, sympathize, approve, am amused, am surprised, and so on. My pupils dilate in synchrony with my friend’s, and my body posture more often than not matches his. But if you asked me afterward what kind of faces my friend showed, I might not know or even care, because verbal labeling is not part of emotional communication. Language helps us discuss sentiments, but it doesn't play much of a role in how they are generated, expressed, or felt (de Waal, Mama’s 124-25).

De Waal illustrates how language plays a small role in both expressing and interpreting emotion. Instead, humans react more instinctively to non-verbal signs from their interlocutors. Both humans and animals can display and interpret emotion without language, showing that language is not a requirement for understanding another. One simply must be attentive to other modes of communication.
Understanding another more fully, however, goes beyond basic communication. It requires empathy, through the conduit of the imagination, as Rousseau expressed in the eighteenth century. Rousseau established that encounters with another’s suffering should provoke pity, when one uses the imagination to identify with their perspective.

Being open to other perspectives matters because every living being experiences the world differently. In “On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense,” Nietzsche points out that other species have their perspective as well. Furthermore, none of them is more “correct” than the others: “[A]n insect or bird perceives a world utterly different from man’s, and... it is senseless to ask which of the two perceptions of the world is correct, since that would have to be measured against a standard of correct perception, which is a nonexistent standard” (Nietzsche 36-his emphasis). An animal does not have an incorrect perception of the world simply because his perception differs from a human’s, whose perception furthermore will differ from that of another human’s. Perception comes from one’s personal and individual experience of the world (one’s singularities), whether one be human or nonhuman animal. Each being relates to the world through his own embodiment, along with the particular freedoms and restrictions brought about by this embodiment. Nietzsche emphasizes in this essay that man is not the measure of all things, even though he takes himself to be so. However, other beings also navigate the world with themselves at the center: “If we could communicate with a mosquito, we would learn that it, too, flies through the air with this same pathos, feeling itself to be the moving center of the entire world” (Nietzsche 18). Any living being strives to maintain its own life according to its needs and desires, within its own power. To move beyond knowledge that is limited by anthropocentricism (which according to Nietzsche in this essay would be all human knowledge), one must first accept the reality of animal perception, and secondly, try to imagine this perception of the world.
Martha Nussbaum takes imagination further. Her book *Love’s Knowledge* links imagination, novels, and moral philosophy. This study examens how novels help shape the moral imagination through the emphasis on particulars rather than generalities, much like Maritain focused on singularities. Nussbaum finds that attention to particulars can help clarify what it means to live responsibly: “We live amid bewildering complexities. Obtuseness and refusal of vision are our besetting vices. Responsible lucidity can be wrested from that darkness only by painful, vigilant effort, the intense scrutiny of particulars” (*LK* 148). Her mention of obtuseness and refusal of vision recalls the denial of meaningful animal communication noted by Fay, where humans simply do not make the effort to notice what is there. Nussbaum links the moral imagination with the creative imagination of the novelist and portrays the novel as a type of moral vision revealed to the reader by the author, demonstrating that “certain novels are, irreplaceably, works of moral philosophy” (*LK* 148). Because of this, they convey moral knowledge in a way other means do not: “Moral knowledge... is not simply intellectual grasp of propositions; it is not even simply intellectual grasp of particular facts; it is perception. It is seeing a complex, complete reality in a highly lucid and richly responsive way; it is taking in what is there, with imagination and feeling” (Nussbaum, *LK* 152). The author must convey emotion to the reader in order to move them beyond a shallow intake of the intellectual to a more encompassing knowledge. That is to say that without emotion, brought about by imagination, one lacks a necessary dimension of moral philosophy. Reading a novel opens the reader up to seeing what they would have previously missed. It takes the reader out of their own life and into others, and consequently “places us in a moral position that is favorable for perception” (Nussbaum, *LK* 162). She, like Rousseau, links imagination, emotion, and transference out of oneself into the perspective of another being.
Being able to put oneself in another’s shoes facilitates the responsiveness necessary for living in community with others. Erica Fudge explains in Pets that compassion follows the ability to imagine another’s experiences:

[I]magination offers us the opportunity of thinking about other lives (both human and non-human) and exploring the possibility of other modes of perception. Such engagement with others, as we all know, is vital for living with other people as well as with other animals and is central to compassion and care for others, both human and animal, in that it is by imagining “that could be me” that fellow-feeling emerges (Fudge 2).

As Singer also explains, one can only truly know one’s own experiences. Thus, all empathy and compassion must be generated by some use of the imagination. It would follow then that the arguments used to condone activities from which animals suffer must eliminate the “that could be me” feeling, which flows from the imagination. Hence, authors who wish to illustrate the lived experiences of others must describe them in a way that brings you into their life.

Authors and poets use their own imagination to give the reader a sense of animals’ experiences. J. M. Coetzee’s lectures published as The Lives of Animals differentiate between authors and scientists by the latter’s inability to enter into animals’ internal experiences. Speaking of psychologist Wolfgang Köhler, who worked with great apes, the fictional Elizabeth Costello contrasts the ape Sultan’s possible thoughts with those attributed to him by Köhler. Köhler, experimenting with the mental capacities of apes, feeds Sultan less regularly and makes his bananas harder and harder to reach. Costello lists his possible thoughts as “What have I done? Why has he stopped liking me?” (Coetzee 28). She then explains that these are the wrong thoughts:

Even a more complicated thought—for instance: What is wrong with him, what misconceptions does he have of me, that leads him to believe it is easier for me to reach a banana hanging from a wire than to pick up a banana from the floor?—is wrong. The right thought to think is: How does one use the crates to reach the bananas?... As long as Sultan continues to think wrong thoughts, he is starved. He is starved until the pangs of hunger are so intense, so overriding, that he is forced to think the right thought,
namely, how to go about getting the bananas... At every turn Sultan is driven to think the less interesting thought... and thus toward acceptance of himself as primarily an organism with an appetite that needs to be satisfied (Coetzee 28-29).

Thus, Köhler reduces Sultan to one biological function, unable to appreciate the intelligence of apes that would later be relayed by primatologists such as Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey. Costello contrasts the thoughts of Köhler with the perceptions of a poet:

Wolfgang Köhler was probably a good man. A good man but not a poet. A poet would have made something of the moment when the captive chimpanzees lope around the compound in a circle... some draped in cords or old strips of cloth that they have picked up, some carrying pieces of rubbish... Nothing in their previous lives has accustomed the apes to looking at themselves from the outside, as if through the eyes of a being who does not exist. So, as Köhler perceives, the ribbons and the junk are there not for the visual effect, because they look smart, but for the kinetic effect, because they make you feel different—anything to relieve the boredom. This is as far as Köhler, for all his sympathy and insight, is able to go; this is where a poet might have commenced, with a feel for the ape’s experience (Coetzee 29-30-his emphasis).

Coetzee uses a unique approach, combining non-fiction with fiction, to demonstrate the limits of science. In this instance, science gives both an incomplete picture and possibly an incorrect conclusion, due to these limitations. The poet, not the scientist, understands the suffering caused by depriving the ape of food. The scientist, however, does not feel empathy for this situation due to his pursuit of the knowledge of apes’ problem-solving abilities. He centers his perspective on his own very specific goals, whereas the poet centers her perspective on imagining the experience of the other. Only the poet’s perspective creates compassion for the apes. Nussbaum found in her research on emotions that “scientific accounts (on animal emotions) must begin with experiences of interaction between humans and animals, and are thus only as rich as are the capacities of the scientist for observation and empathy” (Upheavals 92). The fact that Jane Goodall, who has tremendous empathy for her research subjects, has added so much knowledge about great apes that she is known worldwide and well outside of the academic audience, supports this observation. Empathy opens the mind to new possibilities, precisely
because it considers the perspective of the other, thus it gives opportunities to increase knowledge in ways that an observer closed off to this perspective cannot see. Nussbaum further states:

“Psychological approaches to animal emotion have been handicapped until recently by various forms of physical reductionism that ignored, or even denied, the role of the creature’s own interpretation of the world” (Upheavals 93-my emphasis). Animals have a perspective and ignoring this does not make it non-existent, it only limits what one knows about them. In Coetzee’s account, Köhler attempts to reduce Sultan to mechanical functions; if he does X, Sultan will do Y. Costello understands that starvation provokes not only physical responses, but emotional responses as well, and she searches for a more profound understanding of Sultan than Köhler was able to give. Nussbaum outlines how researchers have learned that emotions cannot be ignored:

By now virtually all major investigators in the area grant that emotions can and should be studied by psychology, and that emotions are richly cognitive phenomena, closely connected with the animal’s ways of perceiving and interpreting the world... At one point during the rise of behaviorism, it was simply assumed that all ‘nonobservables’ would soon prove to be otiose in psychological explanation, and that belief-desire explanations would be replaced by stimulus-response explanations, in which the creature’s own thoughts and interpretations would be bypassed altogether, and emotion with these. Such simple models of behavior, however, kept proving to be inadequate as predictive and explanatory accounts; it came to be recognized that S-R models would have to be replaced by S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) models of a far more complicated sort. This recognition was prompted by experimental results in the area of learning, where it became clear that the animal’s own view of its situation, and of the stimuli to which it was subjected, were crucial explanatory factors (Upheavals 94-95-her emphasis).

Research has shown that the attempts to categorize living beings as merely mechanical organisms have failed. Each individual being has a unique perspective that influences their response to stimuli and emotions figure into this response. Whereas Köhler ignored emotion, Costello saw it as an element of primordial importance. Through her imagination, she sees more potential in the ape than the scientist. Köhler, of course, made his own contributions to understanding the apes from one important
perspective, but the poet pushes further by understanding that an internal experience accompanies a physical action. What Nussbaum’s large body of research also has shown is that eliminating emotion from studies was in fact a goal of many scientists in the first part of the twentieth century, including during the time that the authors to be studied were writing. The increasing mechanism of society was not imagined, but in fact a genuine trend that extended beyond industry into general perceptions of the world.

These authors reveal that responsiveness to others stems from the imagination. Open observation is a first step; however, one must also recognize the other as a feeling being. Only then can one begin to share the perspective of the other. When one succeeds at seeing the world through another’s eyes, one can no longer view that other as replaceable, but then instead can appreciate all their particularities. Salt had recognized, at the end of the nineteenth century, like Rousseau in the previous century, the link between imagination and compassion when he used the term “imaginative sympathy”: “Oppression and cruelty are invariably founded on a lack of imaginative sympathy; the tyrant or tormentor can have no true sense of kinship with the victim of his injustice” (21). Once one feels a connection with another being, one can no longer inflict suffering on them. Thus, the author who wishes to change animal ethics must provoke this feeling of connection with animals.

As Coetzee and Nussbaum illustrate, too narrow a focus on emotions and too great a focus on reason leads to incomplete conclusions. This also applies to too narrow a sense of observation, when one ignores the larger system within which the observation takes place. De Waal notes that understanding animal behavior requires looking beyond the main scene for background elements:

Looking beyond the central scene is key. If one male chimpanzee intimidates another by throwing rocks or charging closely past the other, you need to deliberately take your eyes off them to check the periphery, where new developments arise. I call it holistic observation: considering the wider context. That the threatened male’s best buddy is
asleep in a corner doesn’t mean we can ignore him. As soon as he wakes up and walks toward the scene, the whole colony knows things are about to change (*Mama’s* 2).

Just because something is not part of the primary focus does not mean that it does not or will not influence the behavior of the primary focus. De Waal’s familiarity with his chimpanzees enables him to recognize behavior patterns as evidenced over time: “What most people will see as a chaotic melee of twenty hairy beasts running about hollering and screaming is in fact a highly ordered society. We recognize every ape by face, even just by voice, and know what to expect. Without pattern recognition, observation remains unfocused and random” (de Waal, *Mama’s* 2). In order to recognize patterns, one must have sustained familiarity with the animals. This only becomes possible with holistic observation over long periods of time. De Waal notes that key to understanding animals is observation of behavior in their normal setting: “The best way to understand animal emotions is just to watch spontaneous behavior, either in the wild or captivity” (*Mama’s* 57—my emphasis). This statement shows that accurate knowledge of animal emotions is best acquired, not by setting up a programmed stimulus, but by simply observing what they do naturally, reinforcing that knowledge about animals comes from keen observations by those who see them in their everyday environment.

Observation and imagination work hand in hand to expand on knowledge. The most accurate observations come from those who understand those they observe, and know the surrounding circumstances accompanying any given focal point. Imagination follows observation to relate to the internal experiences of the other, at which point one can then empathize with their situation, having a greater comprehension of what brings them joy and sorrow, and on what motivates their actions.

### 2.4 Conclusion: Expanding knowledge

Knowledge comes from many sources, including observation, imagination, and emotion, as well as reason. However, reason in isolation can become dangerous if we do not set appropriate boundaries
that are informed by the others’ experience. Moral knowledge can only come about with empathy and compassion that engender genuine concern for those who suffer. Moral knowledge also allows one to appreciate the singularity of the other, rather than seeing that other only as a generic representative of a larger group.

Isolated reason becomes a means of ignoring factors one does not want to see, such as the suffering of Seligman’s dogs when one reads of his experiment on a strictly intellectual level. Bringing emotion into ethical argumentation allows one to understand individuals’ lived reality, whether humans or animals, by focusing on the specific rather than the general. The general, or abstract, ignores individual perspectives, and consequently, can never accurately nor completely describe any embodied experience.

The interest in moral and physiological sensibilité, also glossed as pity or empathy, of the eighteenth century served as a corrective to Descartes’ mechanistic understanding of the distinction between humans and animals. However, industrialization brought about a resurgence of the mechanistic view. This industrialization engendered depersonalization that focused on the abstract. Consequently, it led to an increasingly mechanical view of both animals and humans, particularly low-wage laborers, ignoring their emotions and lived experiences. My authors, like the eighteenth century writers, strive to overcome this mechanistic view of living beings.

The slaughterhouses exemplify the simultaneous depersonalization of humans and animals, as well as how treating living animals as mechanical objects renders the workers mechanical themselves, in order to preserve their sanity. This then spills over into the community when the workers no longer appreciate other humans as sentient beings. Furthermore, these workers exemplify the unnaturalness of shutting off emotions, in situations where having emotions is an appropriate affective response. Their situation shows a domino effect of how harming animals harms the community.
Expanding knowledge depends on acknowledging the role of emotions, for humans and animals alike, and allowing for their expression. Eliminating their role leads one down the wrong path, sometimes giving incorrect motivations to actions, and not acknowledging the full responses and consequences brought about by any given action. This lack of acknowledgement then leads one further down this path, such as in the case of slaughterhouses, where the initial ignoring of the problem, highlighted early on by Sinclair’s best-seller, led to increased mechanization of animal killing, which then affects other areas of life.

This enhanced knowledge can then lead to finding value in the other, and learning and appreciating new perspectives on this world. Understanding other ways of being-in-the-world can then be a steppingstone to further knowledge. Viewing animals as mechanical objects has led, not only to cruelty and suffering, but also to incorrect knowledge, which perpetuates the problem. Aiming for a deeper understanding of both animals’ perceptions, as well as the perceptions of those who work with animals, can lead to an expansion of both knowledge and compassion.
3. Animals as Victims and Role Models in the Work of Louis-Ferdinand Céline

Regarded as a rebel and defender of the oppressed, but also as a fierce anti-Semite, Céline is not widely thought of as an author who promotes a philosophy of compassion. Yet, not acknowledging his compassion for children, young soldiers, victims of the system, and animals ignores an important part of his work. A close reading of his most well-known texts indeed reveals a philosophy of compassion for all animals, based on centering attention on their subjective experiences, and consequently undoing mechanomorphic stereotypes. He challenges the traditional human/animal binary and, like many contemporary animal ethicists as well as certain authors who came before him, he presents a continuum in its place. Céline clearly gave others obvious reasons to criticize and dislike him, but I suggest this rejection is part of what led to his great compassion for animals in the latter part of his life. Those who stand up for victims of oppression frequently feel they have been oppressed themselves (with movements for human rights, they are often part of the group they represent). Although one might argue that Céline brought his exile, imprisonment, and public rejection on himself, that does not change the fact that those were harsh circumstances that had a long duration and very severe effects on his health. Like Léautaud, albeit in a significantly different manner, he was an imperfect man. Yet his imperfections led to his extraordinary circumstances that enabled him to better understand the animal condition and the condition of others who were vulnerable. Despite these imperfections, which this chapter does not dispute, Céline still makes a significant, but hitherto unrecognized, contribution to animal studies, illustrating that animals are, in fact, subjects of justice.
Previously, very little attention has been given to the role of animals in Céline’s work, and the only animal that has received any literary attention has been his cat, Bébert, who has his own biography. Although Bébert has become famous for traveling throughout the Second World War with Céline and his wife, Lucette, he still plays a very small role in the German Trilogy, which documents these experiences. The majority of the work describes the hardships Céline and Lucette (Lili) endure, and the activities of the other people with whom they interact, shedding light on the historic situation of the time. Nonetheless, his animal scenes play a key role in his writing. Bébert is only one of multiple animals described in his work; he also includes other cats, dogs, birds, and others. In these scenes, he frequently describes animal behavior and conditions in detail. He uses the animals to emphasize both the suffering they must endure, as well as the admirable qualities that they possess. His descriptions of abused animals document their treatment by society in the first half of the twentieth century. By highlighting animal abuse in different systems, he shows how animals have become victims of multiple types of abuse, under multiple administrations, just like humans. They become part of his criticism of modern society and its coldness, not just towards people, but towards all living beings.

As was necessary for someone who took up the defense of animals in the early twentieth century, Louis-Ferdinand Céline was most certainly a rebel. He critiqued the societal norms of his day, and he did not attempt to conform to them. As a physician, Céline did not seek to become rich and well-known, but instead became a doctor who did not always charge for his services. He wrote his medical thesis on Semmelweis, who, like Céline, suffered public persecution. As Renée Winegarten states in “Céline: The Problem,” “(In 1918) Céline had begun to study medicine, studies that culminated in his 1924 thesis on a fellow victim of persecution mania, Ignaz Philipp Semmelweiss, the father of antisepsis,

44 Lili is the name of Lucette’s character in the Trilogy.
who died insane” (288). Semmelweiss was ahead of his time in pioneering antisepsis just as Céline was ahead of his time with his pacifism and animal philosophy. By writing his thesis on Semmelweis, Céline highlights how a well-respected group, in this case physicians, can be mistaken in their established way of thinking, thereby demonstrating that firmly established concepts do not always stand the test of time. Philippe Shuwer points out, in his article “La Passion de la médecine,” that the fact alone that he wrote a biography of Semmelweiss constitutes a rebellion: “Dans le cadre d’un essai où le conformisme demeure la règle, Céline s’octroie déjà les libertés et l’audace” (12). He notes that in his very first work, even before *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, Céline already shows his rebellious spirit. As a writer, Céline created a style all his own. Winegarten characterizes his style as follows: “[H]e set out to break the classical, rational mode of the French literary language, freely manipulating it and creating new words of his own, transforming the vulgar tongue into a powerful instrument of mocking challenge to convention and hypocrisy” (287). The mocking is most evident in *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, which is often compared to Voltaire’s *Candide*, both using satire to critique the societies of their time. The travels of each of the main characters serve to criticize practices across the globe, and consequently multiple cultures, revealing the problems and abuses of various societies in a black and white, albeit satirical manner. The humoristic frankness of each author bypasses the rhetoric used by each society to “justify” its abuses, and thus blatantly opposes any notion of cultural relativity. Additionally, as a rebel, Céline refuses to submit to “what most people think.” As Regan has shown, “[T]hose who are content to appeal to ‘what most people think’ have no rational basis to assume that what most people think in any given case is not based on their shared ignorance, their shared prejudices, or their shared irrationality” (386). Regan asserts that appealing to what most people think should never be used in any moral context, because it offers no proof in and of itself of any moral basis (386). By not restricting himself to what most people think, Céline opens himself up to the role of reformer. He finds the courage to speak
out against the complacent majority and speak up for animals at a time when urbanization and industrialization were worsening their condition.

Towards the end of his life, Céline, like Léautaud, was often photographed in raggedy clothes with his animals, which surely contributed to his reputation as a misanthrope, a reputation shared with Léautaud. These images depict the authors surrounding themselves with animals instead of people, and rejecting the materialistic norms of how to dress, consequently sending the message that they make no attempt to impress society by conforming to their norms. Although they have very different personalities, many similarities exist between the two. Both defined themselves as chroniclers, despite the fact that they wrote in different ways. Céline wrote about his experiences from memory and Léautaud kept a journal where he recounted his life as it unfolded. Towards the beginning of *Nord*, Céline is asked “Vous vous dites en somme chroniqueur?,” to which he replies, “Ni plus ni moins!,” which accentuates that he envisions his role as portraying society as it was at the time (Céline, *Nord* 10). Also like Léautaud, Céline ended up with a small menagerie of animals at his home after his return from exile. In addition to Bébert, he cared for a parrot, wild birds, and hedgehogs, as well as dogs and other cats. Both Céline and Léautaud buried their animals in their yard at their passing. Yet, the many similarities were insufficient to endear Céline to Léautaud. Nonetheless, Léautaud, who worried about all animals who might find themselves in the streets, worried as well about Bébert, should Céline be killed. He wrote in a letter to Céline in 1944: “Vous allez sans doute être liquidé à la Libération, et vous l’aurez bien cherché, je ne verserai pas une larme, mais vous pourrez mourir en paix, sachez que je suis prêt à recueillir Bébert qui seul m’importe” (Vitoux 22). Despite this, although they both recognized the value of animals, criticized society’s vices, wrote about their own lives, and had a great appreciation of the

45 Vitoux states in a footnote in his biography of Bébert that this letter disappeared in the fire at Meudon on May 23, 1968 (Vitoux 22).
French language (although in extremely different ways), Léautaud, who could appreciate to some extent most other animal lovers, did not approve of Céline, due to his political writings (and on a different level, his writing style). Yet after Céline’s return from exile, he did appreciate his devotion to Bébert: “Céline, il est parti pour le Danemark avec son chat et il en est revenu avec lui. Je connais mal l’œuvre littéraire de Céline. J’ai reçu, un jour, au *Mercure*, son *Voyage au bout de la nuit*. J’ai été rebuté par les grossièretés et je l’ai refermé. Mais revenir avec son chat, du Danemark, ça c’est une preuve de conscience” (De La Croix, Robert 1). Perhaps he changed his mind about the author when he realized Céline’s devotion to his animals.

This devotion enabled Céline to understand animals and depict them in a way that brings the reader into their lives, showing the singularities of their embodied experiences. This chapter will show, through Céline’s works, that reading and perceiving these animal experiences with emotions and empathy produce knowledge unattainable by reason alone. Only empathy enables one to recognize suffering as suffering and injustice as injustice. Without this recognition, one cannot respond appropriately and ethically to the world around us. Céline accomplishes this by using his writing to demonstrate that emotions and empathy for animals, in fact, not only constitute genuine ways of understanding them, but also contribute to our development as ethical beings. He shows emotion, imagination, and personal observation to be valuable tools that enable us simultaneously to understand the animal experience and to see the errors in society’s views of animals. He portrays animals them with a sense of emotion and, although not told directly from the perspective of the animals, his narrative invites the reader to see their perception of their own lives, particularly in the cases of animal abuse. Céline challenges the anthropocentric concept of animals as machine-like beings without needs of their own by describing their loyalty, intelligence, and ability to form and participate in relationships, as well as showing their emotions, social needs, and similarities to humans. Through his animal
passages, he counters the various cultural messages that enable the continuation of animal abuse and mistreatment. His call to reimagine ethics to include animals, as well as his emphasis on their positive qualities, document the existence of another subject who has a singular perspective on life. These aspects, viewed together, ultimately establish animals as sentient beings worthy of moral consideration.

3.1 Recentering emotion

Céline’s writing revealed his compassion for the most marginalized of society, including not only animals, but also children, the sick and dying, and prisoners, those who had little voice in their own lives. This perhaps can be partially attributed to the fact that he suffered himself at the hands of others. Céline’s political writings, the infamous pamphlets Bagatelles pour un massacre (1937), L’École des cadavres (1938), and Les Beaux draps (1941), made him many enemies, principally due to their antisemitism. This led to his exile, in Germany and then Denmark, and ultimate imprisonment in Denmark after the war.

While in prison, he suffered both rejection from those he believed were his friends, and illness. Éliane Bonabel, a former patient of Céline who had visited him in prison, describes what happened when she approached those friends whose names Céline had given her for their help with his trial:

Sitôt en France, je vais voir ces quatre personnages. Tous me tiennent le même discours, j’aurais pu croire qu’il s’agissait de comédiens répétant un rôle appris par cœur : ‘Mais pourquoi vous mêlez-vous de ça ? Ce n’est pas votre affaire, tenez-vous loin de cette histoire.’ L’un d’entre eux, que j’avais rencontré dans sa galerie près de la Madeleine, me prend des mains le papier sur lequel j’avais noté son nom et le brûle dans un cendrier. Aucun n’a accepté d’intervenir, alors que Céline les considérait comme des amis sûrs, ils me dégoûtaient. Il faut rappeler, sans vouloir excuser, que nous sommes en 1946, l’épuration est encore toute proche, l’atmosphère est à la méfiance générale (Alliot, D’Un Céline 768).46

One sees here that his friends want to distance themselves from the situation, despite the fact that he was imprisoned in the section of the Danish prison for those condemned to death and could be executed. It would seem, since these were the four names Céline gave to Bonabel, that Céline considered these four to be some of his closest friends, according to Bonabel “des amis sûrs.” Yet, not one of the four of them, in whose friendship Céline trusted, would do anything to help his very dire cause.

In prison, his health suffered from the extremely strict diet (Alliot, Mme 128). Éliane Bonabel describes her encounter with Céline when she visited him there. He no longer resembled the person she had last seen:

L’homme qui avait quitté Paris était encore jeune, et j’ai devant moi un vieillard paraissant vingt ans de plus que son âge. Physiquement, il était très amaigri, faible, voûté, presque courbé en deux, le plus impressionnant est sa bouche, il a perdu ses dents alors qu’autrefois il avait une très belle dentition, un sourire éclatant. Psychologiquement, il est malheureux, anxieux, il ne comprend pas pourquoi il se retrouve enfermé, et surtout, ce qui m’a le plus frappée, il est très craintif vis-à-vis du gardien, rentrant la tête dans les épaules comme s’il craignait à tout instant d’être battu. L’impression générale est celle d’un animal pris au piège” (Alliot D’Un Céline 767-68).

The comparison of a trapped animal serves as an appropriate metaphor for the situation. Like a trapped animal, Céline has no power to escape his prison and he is entirely at the mercy of those who have imprisoned him.

A letter written to Théophile Briant from Denmark explains the multiple health conditions that he contracted while in the Danish prison. “J’en suis sorti juste avant de crever – avec une pellagre, des ulcères plein la peau, presque aveugle de manque de vitamines, une mycose (champignons) qui m’enlevait la peau des fesses et des jambes – des douleurs de membres à hurler” (Lettre 47-43 – his

emphasis). His physical decline bears witness to the prison conditions, which he has described in the same letter as cold and humid, in addition to inadequate nutrition. These severe health problems accentuate that the confinement itself pales in comparison to the actual living conditions of the prison.

Experiencing both rejection from close friends and severe physical deterioration due to prison treatment and conditions, Céline suffered a great deal at the hands of others. He experienced the negative side of humanity and saw animals as the counterpoint to human cruelty and indifference. Whereas animals provided warmth and protection, humans acted coldly and lacked loyalty. In his writing, he proposes creativity and imagination to combat the increasing coldness of society, such as he experienced in his own life.

Céline’s literature teaches an ethics towards animals by inviting the reader to understand the relevance of emotion. He establishes emotion as key to one’s humanity and as something to be valued, rather than overcome. Empathy, in particular, is necessary for relatedness to others because it leads to openness instead of coldness, which closes one off to the internal life of others, and thus, to their experiences, from their point of view. Additionally, a lack of empathy creates a mechanistic view of others because one fails to see them as feeling beings, which leads to objectification. Thinking only of the utility of a living being causes one to view them as an object of manipulation, as a means rather than an end, which, in the case of animals, perpetuates animal maltreatment.

Céline’s work, similarly to the American author Philip K. Dick’s _Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep_, prioritizes emotion and criticizes a society becoming increasingly calculating and dispassionate. Instead of an official empathy test, he illustrates scenes where people witness and cause animal abuse without any sign of sympathy or pity, the type of behavior that could be described during the Voigt-Kampff test. They reveal how those who cause and observe animal suffering have “absence of appropriate affect” by not displaying any emotion to the obvious pain and distress of the animals. These
scenes call on the reader to witness this suffering and have an appropriate emotional response of compassion. Through his nonmechanical descriptions, he creates an affective connection between the animals and the reader, restoring empathetic relatedness to animals for the reader who does not limit himself to a purely intellectual reading. Elsewhere in his work, he provides his philosophy on the primacy of emotion and the dangers of mechanicality that occur when one loses respect for sentiment and singularities.

Long before Dick illustrated the dangers of a mechanical society for both humans and animals, in his novel that has gained the attention of animal studies scholars, Céline opposed the increasingly mechanical nature of society in his own work. In Voyage, he portrays how the modern mechanical world rejects thinking on the part of factory workers in favor of turning them into machines. The entrance into the Ford factory, where Bardamu temporarily works, emphasizes this transformation:

Tout tremblait dans l’immense édifice et soi-même des pieds aux oreilles possédé par le tremblement, il en venait des vitres et du plancher et de la ferraille, des secousses, vibré de haut en bas. On en devenait machine aussi soi-même à force de toute sa viande encore tremblotante dans ce bruit de rage énorme qui vous prenait le dedans et le tour de la tête et plus bas vous agitant les tripes et remontait aux yeux par petits coups précipités infinis, inlassables (Céline, Voyage 225-my emphasis).

In this passage, the line blurs between worker and machine, affecting the entire body of the worker. When the workers go to their post, they not only vibrate, but also move in time with the machines:

“(N)ous on tourne dedans et avec les machines et avec la terre. Tous ensemble !” (Céline, Voyage 225).

The men become simply another mechanical part of the car assembly, non-thinking, vibrating, and moving at a pace controlled by the machinery. Instead of man controlling the machines, the machines control the men. All individuality becomes lost, as humans turn into mechanical tools and do not have control over the vibrations of their bodies. The men become simply machinery necessary to produce the automobiles.
Dick illustrated that increasing mechanization ultimately led to the indistinguishability of humans from machines. On the outside, they look the same and move in the same manner, but the inside has changed. Céline illustrates the beginning of this process. As man and machine vibrate simultaneously, they merge to become a single compound entity. The vibrations create a pathway through the body, ultimately taking over, until the men lose their identity as individuals. Céline’s emphasis on the course taken by these vibrations, from the head down and then back up, illustrates a takeover process. One enters the factory in a human state, but the machines then transform the men into beings resembling themselves. One becomes “possédé.” As in Dick’s novel, machines begin to possess human bodies. As humans allow machines into their lives, they give up an element of personal control and agency.

Due to the uniformity created by mechanicalism, and desired by those who promote it, emotions become minimized and discouraged. Céline resists this process by emphasizing the importance of emotion in his writing. His unique style conveys both emotion and spontaneity. When asked in *Entretiens avec le professeur Y* what he has invented, Céline insists that he restored lost emotion to the written language. “L’émotion dans le langage écrit !... le langage écrit était à sec, c’est moi qu’ai redonné l’émotion au langage écrit” (*Céline, Entretiens* 498). Unlike some of his contemporaries, he believes that emotion plays a relevant role in life, which writing should reflect.

In a letter to Milton Hindus, Céline contrasts his own writing to emotionless, academized writing, contrasting creativity with mechanicality. He explains his unique style of creativity, that he calls “le style émotif” in *Entretiens*:

En vérité mon apport aux lettres françaises a été je crois ceci : on le reconnaîtra plus tard – = rendre le langage français écrit plus sensible plus émotif, le désacadémiser, et ceci par le truc qui consiste (moins facile qu’il y paraît) en un monologue d’intimité parlé mais TRANSPOSÉ – Cette transposition immédiate spontanée voilà le hic. En réalité c’est le retour à la poésie spontanée du sauvage. Le sauvage ne s’exprime pas sans poésie, il

In characterizing his style as revolutionary, Céline identifies himself as a rebel here – a rebel against a prescribed way of writing. By rebelling, he hopes to inspire emotion and portray life as it should be lived, spontaneously. Both Céline and Manet, by rebelling against prescribed formulas, created new styles of art that would have never been known if they had conformed to the ideas of their time. Yet, it is these unique styles, and not conformity, that constitute the creativity that breaks through the coldness of a mechanical life. As Dick aptly illustrates, mechanicality breeds coldness that can only be combatted with compassion and individuality. When one becomes mechanical, one loses genuine connections with other living beings. Taylor notes the relationship between alienation and mechanical behavior: “For Dick, the android represents the human who is alienated from others and is mechanical in thought and behaviour, while the humanoid robot—the complex system with powers of self-maintenance and self-direction that is constituted originally from simple, inanimate parts—represents the potentiality inherent in all beings to attain authentic existence through relatedness” (Taylor 187). Feeling for and relating to others enables one to reach one’s highest potential, while the opposite leads to isolation. Einstein, who also lived during the early part of the twentieth century, noticed himself the danger of mechanization: “I believe that the abominable deterioration of ethical standards stems primarily from the mechanization and depersonalization of our lives—a disastrous by-product of science and technology” (Calaprice 397). Céline’s writing, both on animals and in general, strongly associates ethics and personalization, which reflects Johanna Tito’s and Jacques Maritain’s focus on singularities. Generalities always greatly reduce or negate individual experiences, ignoring that a particular living being, with a particular life, is more than any concept:
Whereas concepts (objectifications) are always generalities—abstractions from reality—experience puts us in touch with existents, with singularities rather than generalities or objectifications... That is, underlying objectification and conceptualization is the experience of that which we objectify or conceptualize, the singularity, this “x.” In other words, we are confronted by something (an x) that is subsequently objectified as blue or noisy or frightening” (Tito 292).

By generalizing, one stops seeing a singularity as such, eliminates her particularities, and then sees this singularity as an abstract group member, which subsequently becomes easy to objectify. This depersonalization, a process undertaken to arrive at generalities, became amplified with industrialization and mechanization. When Céline writes about animals, however, he focuses on their singularity. He advocates for animal ethics by establishing each animal as an individual with his own consciousness and related feelings, not as an abstraction. Céline portrays these animals with emotion, describing their behavior in a way that provides a greater understanding of their circumstances. In so doing, he guides his reader to grow as an ethical actor.

In his work, Céline illustrates both the ongoing elimination of sentiment from public life, as well as the necessity for empathy. Emotion is necessary to have an appropriate reaction to others’ circumstances, because only emotion can lead one to genuinely care about their fate and fully understand their situation. He uses his spontaneous “style émotif” to invoke empathy by portraying scenes as the characters live them, without any unnecessary words or descriptions to break the flow of the action or the emotion.

Imagination as the gateway to empathy

In Voyage, Céline associates the suppression of imagination, and the free thinking necessary for the imagination, with dehumanization. The description of the Ford plant depicts how mechanization opposes individuality, and consequently the recognition of the individual. During the medical intake assessment, when Bardamu states that he is educated, the medical examiner rebukes him:
Ça ne vous servira à rien vos études, mon garçon ! Vous n’êtes pas venu ici pour penser, mais pour faire les gestes qu’on vous commandera d’exécuter... Nous n’avons pas besoin d’imaginatifs dans notre usine. C’est de chimpanzés dont nous avons besoin... Un conseil encore. Ne nous parlez plus jamais de votre intelligence ! On pensera pour vous mon ami ! (Céline, *Voyage* 224-25-my emphasis).

This response directly contrasts mechanicality with creativity. Because the factory wants their employees to execute mechanical actions, they oppose imagination. The renaming of their workers as chimpanzees, when in more modern terms they mean robots, illustrates simultaneously the lack of acceptance of any type of mental activity in chimpanzees, who have since been proven to be quite intelligent, and the desire to have no independent ideas, and therefore nothing obstructing their economic goals, in their factory. When management states that they will think for Bardamu, they ensure that they will not appreciate his singularity, and therefore, can view him simply as a means of automobile production. As Céline showed with the physical mechanization of the workers, the mental mechanization also denies the value of the individual. Taken together, the mechanization process consumes the entire individual; the managers want control of both the bodies and the minds of the workers. Eric S. Rabkin, in his analysis of Dick’s work, finds: “The crucial fact is that just as rational industrialism mass-produces its products, so it forces those working within that system to rationalize their labor—and even their thoughts—into replicable, typically identical units” (163). Céline illustrates this aspect of industrialism with the Ford factory. They want workers that they can program in both body and mind for the maximum output of identical cars. The managers view them as replaceable objects, means necessary for their end goals. While Bardamu waits in line for a job at the factory, a Russian recounts their attitude towards the factory workers: “[S]i tu crânes on te foutra à la porte en moins de deux et tu seras remplacé en moins de deux aussi par une des machines mécaniques qu’il a toujours prêt et t’auras le bonsoir alors pour y retourner !” (Céline *Voyage* 224). When Bardamu stops going to the factory, they do in fact replace him with a machine, thus illustrating their view that
man and machine are interchangeable. The managers mechanize the workers in this scene by shutting down worker communication and creativity and ignoring their particularities. Consequently, they close off any of the “that could be me” feeling, described by Fudge, which would stand in the way of objectifying the workers:

Imagination offers us the opportunity of thinking about other lives (both human and non-human) and exploring the possibility of other modes of perception. Such engagement with others, as we all know, is vital for living with other people as well as with other animals and is central to compassion and care for others, both human and animal, in that it is by imagining “that could be me” that fellow-feeling emerges (Fudge 2).

Besides not allowing imagination in the workers, they shut down their own imagination as well, wanting only “replicable identical units” of labor, and focusing only on the end goal. When the manager says, “Ne nous parlez plus jamais de votre intelligence ! On pensera pour vous mon ami,” he shuts down any possible future engagement with Bardamu that might give insight into his perception of the world, effectively declaring it irrelevant to him. In linking “Nous n’avons pas besoin d’imaginatifs,” together with “on pensera pour vous,” Céline shows the relationship between the imagination and thinking for oneself. When one allows others to do their thinking for them, they let them stifle their imagination. By showing the process of the mechanization of living beings, Céline illustrates the importance of imagination, which one needs to oppose this process, and to identify with other living beings.

**Overcoming mechanicality with creativity**

Céline frequently lamented the mechanicalness of society that he encountered during his lifetime. His writing demonstrates that one should encourage the above-mentioned characteristics that separate us from machines, instead of discouraging them. By discouraging emotion, open-minded observation, and imagination, a society suppresses innovation and art. As Jacques Maritain and J.M. Coetzee helped illustrate, it is the poet, that is to say, the artist, who adds feeling to life.
Céline associated mechanicalism with a lack of ethics and concern for the marginalized, including animals. He criticizes the lack of creativity of the time, which he sees as resulting in aggressivity and mechanicality: “Sans création continuelle, artistique, et de tous, aucune société possible, durable, surtout aux jours d’aujourd’hui, ou tout n’est que mécanique, autour de nous, agressif, abominable” (Céline, *BD* 523). This observation foreshadows Dick’s work establishing the aggression that accompanies mechanicalism, where those with no empathy will turn against all others, even those who most closely resemble themselves. As both creativity and empathy come about through the use of the imagination, this example reinforces the link between imagination and empathy. Without the imagination, the world becomes mechanical, resulting in aggressiveness that signals the objectification of others, due to lack of empathy. Céline implies an inverse relationship here; as creativity increases, mechanicalism and its accompanying aggressiveness will decrease. Those who are aggressive lack Henry Stephens Salt’s “imaginative sympathy” and its accompanying “sense of kinship” that would keep them from objectifying others (Salt 21). When one becomes aggressive, one remains in the “I” mode, thinking of others as obstacles, or as means to be manipulated for their own goals, both inhibiting seeing others as a “you.”

Céline portrays animals, however, as remaining artistic while this trait disappears in society at large. Instead of becoming mechanical, animals retain their spontaneity. With his description, he counters mechanomorphic presentations of animals. Rather than limiting “a vision of inner life,” as mechanomorphic descriptions do, he depicts actions resulting from having an inner life (Crist 85):

Tous les animaux sont artistes, ils ont leurs heures d’agrément, leurs phases de lubies, leurs périodes de rigodon, faridon, les pires bestioles bizarres, les moins engageantes du règne, les plus mal embouchés vaillants, les tarentules si répugnantes, tout ça danse ! s’agite ! rigole ! le moment venu ! Les lézards aveugles, les morpions, les crotale furieux de venin, ils ont leurs moments spontanés, d’improvisation, d’enchantement, pourquoi on serait nous les pires sacs, les plus emmerdés de l’univers ? (Céline, *BD* 524).
He highlights here that humans, certainly more developed beings than insects, tarantulas, and snakes, should be more spontaneous and more artistic, but instead, his contemporaries have lost these characteristics. Céline attributes this loss to the school system of the time, influenced by mechanization: “Il faut un long et terrible effort de la part des maîtres armés du Programme pour tuer l’artiste chez l’enfant. Cela ne va pas tout seul. Les écoles fonctionnent dans ce but, ce sont les lieux de torture pour la parfaite innocence, la joie spontanée, l’étranglement des oiseaux” (Céline, BD 524). Showing nonmechanical characteristics of animals, in contrast to humans, in whom these characteristics are suppressed, reverses the vision of inner life. Animals remain true to their inner lives, while humans are losing theirs due to mechanization.

In addition to learning from the least of the animals, one should show kindness to them. By restoring artistic creativity, kindness will replace aggression:

Il faut réapprendre à créer, à deviner humblement, passionnément, aux sources du corps, aux accords plastiques, aux arts éléments, les secrets de danse et musique, la catalyse de toute grâce, de toute joie et la tendresse aux animaux, aux tout petits, aux insectes, à tout ce qui trébuche, vacille, s’affaire, échoue, dégringole, trimbale, rebondit, recommence de touffes en brin d’herbe et de brin d’herbe en azur, tout autour de notre aventure, si précaire, si mal disposée... (Céline, BD 526).

He outlines his philosophy here that relearning to create and to be artistic will lead to sensitivity for all that moves, even those that society does not value, emphasizing that humans should have compassion for even the smallest and weakest creatures who share our world. The idea that one must “relearn” creativity in order to become tender implies that the decline of creativity has led to its loss. Having previously shown animals as agents with an inner life, and not as objects, he has qualified them as beings worthy of the compassion of others, and a return to creativity will give back to them this compassion that they never should have lost. He asserts here what Dick illustrated in depicting an inverse relationship between mechanicality and compassion. Isidore, the least mechanical character,
puts the spider in the weeds to save it from mutilation. Deckard, a human who appreciates art, but has become more mechanical than Isidore, thinks of the monetary value of the spider, and the androids, the most mechanical beings, think only of mutilating the spider to increase their knowledge. Of all the androids, the opera singer Luba Luft becomes the most human-like and the only one shown to appreciate art. Luft becomes an opera singer in order to escape detection, simultaneously starting to appreciate and more closely resemble humans. She makes her final appearance in the novel at an Edvard Munch museum exhibit looking at paintings, and requests that Deckard buy her a copy of Munch’s *Puberty*, a painting symbolizing a young girl in a transformative period. As Deckard and another bounty hunter lead her out of the art exhibit, she explains how she has learned to admire humans and dislike androids, explaining her own transformation: “I really don’t like androids. Ever since I got here from Mars my life has consisted of imitating the human, doing what she would do, acting as if I had the thoughts and impulses a human would have. Imitating, as far as I’m concerned, a superior life form” (Dick 530). Working as an opera singer, Luft must appear to create, a non-mechanical task, which pushes her out of her android self. Creativity drives one past repetitive actions, such as those done by the Ford workers, and into new territory. In this way, one expands their perspective, and can appreciate other life-forms, humans for Luft and the small and the weak according to Céline.

Céline sees the education system as partly responsible for the increasing mechanicality of society. He critiques its suppression of imagination and individuality, replaced by dependence on formulas and mathematics, as well as its radiating effects on the rest of society. As the individual is suppressed, he loses his concern for other living beings.

Mechanicalism results in a focus on the material, rather than personal growth and an appreciation of singularities. Instead of encouraging the arts, the schools train children for a mechanized world, focused on the accumulation of capital:
C’est vraiment le plus grand crime d’enfermer les enfants comme ça pendant des cinq ou dix années pour leur apprendre que des choses viles, des règles pour mieux s’ahurir, se trivialiser à toutes forces, s’utiliser l’enthousiasme aux choses qui s’achètent, se vendent, se mangent, se combinent, s’installent, dilatent, jubilent Capital, qu’on roule avec, qu’on trafique, qu’on goupille, chignolle, lamine, brase, en cent enfers mécanisés (Céline BD 519-my emphasis).

Céline notes how this refocusing glorifies the mechanical, reinforcing the priorities of mechanization and commerce. He critiques the totality of the system here, rather than individual subjects or lessons: “pour leur apprendre que des choses viles…” Instead of appreciating the imagination of children, the school system refocuses the children’s energy on formulas and generalities. Céline considers this particular system, not school in general, a crime due to the suppression of natural traits of childhood, changing the character of the children in the process:

On apprend rien à l’école que des sottises raisonnantes, anémiantes, médiocrisantes, l’air de tourner con râbacheur. Regardez les petits enfants, les premières années… ils sont tout charmé, tout poésie, tout espiègle guilleretterie... À partir de dix, douze ans, finie la magie de primesaut !... petits drôles plus approchables, assommants, pervers grimaciers, garçons et filles, ragoteux, crispés, stupides, comme papa maman… Presque déjà parfait vieillard à l’âge de douze ans ! (Céline BD 518).

Taking away their spontaneity and replacing it with repetition impoverishes the children, aging them in the process. But not only does it impoverish the children, it makes them less enjoyable to be around, replacing the magic of childhood with the negative characteristics one finds in the adults, molding them in their image. However, the adults have already been affected by this unimaginative and formulaic way of life. Thus, producing smaller versions of them perpetuates an undesirable system. Céline shows how even before becoming adults, children resemble them, because one teaches only “des sottises raisonnantes, anémiantes, médiocrisantes.” In so doing, it reduces the chance that the children will become more compassionate adults than their parents.

Not only does this system overemphasize calculations, but it eliminates the role of imagination and art, which Céline states as necessary to bring back human tenderness towards animals. It stifles the
individual's own taste and preferences for the sake of factories: “[C’est de la vaste escroquerie pour
bluffer le bonhomme, l’appauvrir, le dégoûter de son âme, de sa petite chanson, qu’il aye honte, lui
couper son Plaisir de rêve... le conditionner trépied de machine, qu’il renonce à son cœur, à ses goûts,
muet d’usine” (BD 522). Because of mechanization, individual imagination, tastes, and dreams become
shameful. Céline’s “muet d’usine” reinforces the notion that the factory worker must remain silent
about anything reflecting his own singularities. However, in this process, he becomes impoverished,
needing to have shame of anything that distinguishes him from the crowd. As a result, he must suppress
his creativity and personal inclinations.

Céline sees the solution as the school itself, but a reformed school, where children learn to use
their imagination rather than suppressing it. Instead of making life and the children cold, art adds
warmth and enthusiasm to their life:

Il faut retourner à l’école, ne plus la quitter de vingt ans. Je voudrais que tous les
maîtres fussent avant tout des artistes, non artistes-cuistres à formules, abrutisseurs
d’un genre nouveau, mais gens au cours du merveilleux, de l’art d’échauffer la vie, non
la refroidir, de choyer les enthousiasmes, non les raplatir, l’enthousiasme, le ‘Dieu en
nous,’ aux désirs de la Beauté devancer couleurs et harpes, hommes à recueillir les
féeries qui prennent source à l’enfance (Céline, BD 178).

School can add fullness to life, if instructors move beyond mechanical teaching and encourage creativity
and enthusiasm. By recognizing the need for beauty and imagination, rather than suppressing them,
and appreciating the wonder of childhood, one can reverse the coldness resulting from mechanization.

By becoming warmer human beings, one becomes warmer to all animate life. Céline proposes
that schooling consisting only of memorization and formulas leads to a general coldness, whereas
fostering imagination leads to warmth, happiness, and moral character. He saw art as leading to “la
tendresse aux animaux, aux tout petits, aux insectes,” as one relearns creativity (Céline BD 526). The
warmth generated by allowing one to use their imagination brings about compassion for what otherwise
many exclude from their circle of concern. He traces the problem of coldness from an exclusive focus on formulas and measurements brought about by mechanization and industrialization, then taught to children through the exclusion of imagination, which simultaneously reproduces the system, and produces unhappy adults. As this chapter will establish, unhappy adults living in a mechanized world do not then in turn treat others with warmth, because they fail to appreciate the individual. Céline presents the continuing spiral of empathy erosion, and how systems that focus on abstractions allow this to continue. Regan established how the use of animals in biology labs sends the message that animals are objects, and this view accompanies the students into their wider interactions with the world. Céline promotes the same idea on a larger scale; the priorities one learns in school, or in the factory, carry over into other areas of life. When these ideas promote a focus on weights and numbers over individual experiences, one learns to place no value on individual experiences, either human or animal. One loses tenderness for living beings and becomes ashamed of singularities. Systems that negate individual experiences necessarily lack the tenderness that Céline hopes to restore to all animals by reencouraging the use of the imagination and the appreciation of art.

Artistic creation depends on the particularities. A painter paints a particular subject or subjects. An opera singer or actor interprets a particular role. Novelists and poets create particular characters with particular traits. These particularities move one past generalities and obscurities into an area where one can feel a connection based on these particularities. Mechanicality, on the other hand, embraces generalities and rejects particularities, thereby eliminating a sense of connection with an individual other. This then prevents one from empathizing with them.

Art, on the other hand, fosters empathy, by way of invoking an emotional response. In “The Education of the Imagination: Understanding Human Equality Through Art,” Joan Pecover analyzes the connection between art and emotion:
When we experience a work of art, we react emotionally, because of its symbolism. It seems reasonable that we do this by connecting feelings we have experienced in life with feelings symbolized in the work of art. We form an image from various remembered experiences, an image that is visual, auditory, and emotional, and this image we superimpose on the information we receive from the work of art: this is what it means to feel in imagination (9).  

Pecover notes that this applies to all types of art, which use various methods to convey their message, such as line in painting and tone color in music (9). Even when one must interpret other modes of communication, one still undergoes the same process of using the imagination to transfer one’s personal experience to another situation. This becomes especially important in overcoming societal prejudices. Pecover believes that only the arts can fully bring about the understanding of others: “Once the role of emotion and imagination in knowledge is admitted, it seems quite possible to conclude that man cannot fully understand his fellows (as equals) without recourse to the arts, which provide us with a range of empathetic knowledge not otherwise accessible” (Pecover 3). Thus, when the imagination and empathy are stifled, it closes the pathway to relatedness with others. Losing relatedness leads to objectification, and consequently loss of tenderness. But through art, such as Céline’s work, one can see the similarities that exist between human and nonhuman animals, and then begin to understand that animals can experience the negative aspects of life such as fear and pain, and also the positive aspects, such as contentment. After one reaches this understanding, one can then understand that human actions do make a difference in the lives of animals.

Mechanization transforms society in a way that extends beyond the use of machines in factories and the world of industry. As machines and generalities infiltrate life, people become more mechanical, losing their appreciation for art, imagination, and spontaneity. In this transformation, emotion and

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48 This process of recalling one’s own experiences to identify with something outside of oneself recalls Rousseau’s passage in Émile (pp. 146-47), where he explains recalling one’s own suffering and pain to identify with the suffering animal.
creativity become suppressed. Aggression becomes more common, resulting in a lack of tenderness. Society becomes colder, depersonalized, and demoralized. However, art can return warmth and fullness of life to society by stimulating imagination, and consequently empathy, bringing one out of the “I” mode, and restoring a sense of kinship with, and therefore kindness to, others, that will extend to even the small and clumsy creatures who share our world.

3.2 Animals in the work of Céline

Although animals, with the exception of Bébert, have not previously been considered to represent primary characters in Céline’s oeuvre, they appear frequently throughout his writing. He portrays them with sympathy and the recurrence of animal abuse represents a call for reform. Unlike people, they remain innocent, and like himself, they are frequently victims. Vitoux reveals that part of what motivates Céline to write, is his concern for his animals: “Et s’il écrit, s’il prend tant de peine à écrire, c’est non seulement pour vivre mais d’abord pour pouvoir le nourrir, lui Bébert et ses compagnons” (Vitoux 91). Although it takes extra effort to care for them, which should be all the more appreciated due to Céline’s physical deterioration, Céline views animals as worth the difficulty. He models through his own life that one should take extra steps outside of oneself to improve the lives of animals. Additionally, Vitoux explains, Céline feels that animals help him, but humans victimize him: “Céline se considère comme peu redevable à autrui, sinon d’un surcroît de malheur. Il ne s’attribue qu’un rôle de victime. Mais il témoigne alors d’autant plus volontiers de gratitude envers ses animaux – les seuls êtres qui lui rendent un peu service (Lili exceptée, naturellement). A Meudon, ses chiens par exemple le protègent des intrus. Agar en particulier” (Vitoux 91-his parentheses). Moreover, an examination of Céline’s work reveals not only gratitude, but also an appreciation of the qualities that animals possess. Through his chronicling of observable animal behaviors, he draws the reader’s
attention to different ways of being-in-the-world, demonstrating that animals have their own needs and perspectives.

Céline portrays animals in real-world settings, showing how they react to the various experiences they face. His chronicling of animals acting in their own environment, while describing the relevant aspects of that environment, uses what Frans de Waal terms as holistic observation—taking the larger context into consideration (de Waal, *Mama’s 2*). In doing this, Céline practices another of the scientific strategies that de Waal has found to be productive in acquiring knowledge about animal emotions: “The best way to understand animal emotions is just to watch spontaneous behavior” (de Waal, *Mama’s 57*). Céline’s extensive experience with multiple types of animals qualifies him as someone who understands animals and can faithfully relay their perspectives. Martha Nussbaum explained that “scientific accounts (on animal emotions) must begin with experiences of interaction between humans and animals, and are thus only as rich as are the capacities of the scientist for observation and empathy” (*Upheavals* 92). Although Céline (who as a physician, was, in fact, a scientist as well) does not write scientific accounts of animals, his passages show a great capacity for observation and empathy, consequently providing rich accounts of animal characteristics and emotions. By illustrating multiple aspects of animals, he creates Gruen’s “affective connection” with the animals in his work, thereby asserting that animal experience should be acknowledged, and one should respond appropriately and ethically. In placing his animal scenes amongst other daily scenes, he both shows animals as part of the community, and shows animal mistreatment and misconceptions about animals as a symptom of the larger problem of the loss of empathy and creativity that has accompanied the mechanization of society.

By reading a description of Bébert, written by Céline, one comprehends not only his attachment to Bébert in particular, but also the characteristics that endear animals to him in general. In a letter
written to René Héron de Villefosse, Céline describes what he admires in Bébert: “Il nous a été fidèle loyal et si mignon et si profondément intuitif et intelligent, une admirable bête. Mieux, une âme – une poésie – notre seule douceur pour 3 années de supplice” (Lettre 47-28). The qualities displayed by Bébert represent much of what Céline observes in many animals, as will be seen in this section – loyalty, intuition, and intelligence. Calling him “une poésie” reinforces the creative nature of animals already described. Unlike humans, Bébert remains consistent and faithful, even in difficult times. Because Bébert remained with Céline and Lucette throughout their exile, Céline is able to use him to present remarkable, but unrecognized characteristics of animals. His extraordinary capacities demonstrate that having higher expectations of animals, and discarding a mechanomorphic view of them, can bring about surprising results.

**Animal abuse and mistreatment**

**A Perspective of compassion**

A close reading of Céline’s texts involving animals shows that he takes a stand against animal abuse, and he documents the types of animal maltreatment that he has encountered in his own life. Bébert himself was an animal he took pity on because his initial owners, Le Vigan and Tinou, had abandoned him, in fact multiple times, leaving him to fend for himself (Vitoux). He describes abuse of dogs, horses, a fox, and other animals, but dogs are the most common. Their loyalty makes them especially susceptible to abuse by humans. By describing these scenes in detail, not allowing the reader to overlook the unpleasant aspects, he fights the complacency that allows such events to occur. Through his self-proclaimed “style émotif,” his passages illustrate the embodied experience of animals,

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49 Céline, as with much of his vocabulary, does not often use traditional words to denote animals in his writing. For cat, he uses the word “greffe” or “greffier,” for dog, he uses “clebs” or “clébards,” and for birds “piafs.” Vitoux notes this vocabulary in a footnote on pages 56-57.
inducing the senses of empathy and imagination in the reader, which are needed to gain a holistic understanding of their situations.

Céline’s emphasis on injustice, as well as his overall concern for justice, oblige his readers to rethink their ideas of justice towards animals. Nussbaum writes in *Frontiers of Justice*: “When I say that the mistreatment of animals is unjust, I mean to say not only that it is wrong of us to treat them in that way, but also that they have a right, a moral entitlement, not to be treated in that way. It is unfair to *them*” (337-her emphasis). Céline, by describing animal suffering, as evidenced by their own behavior, and the specific human actions that cause the suffering, illustrates the direct harm of the animal abuse he describes. His emphasis on the animals' perspectives leads the reader to connect with their reality, and see their situation in a new light. Michael Allen Fox and Lesley McLean stated, regarding descriptions of animal experiments: “Those who read these descriptions and understand moral knowledge as merely an intellectual exercise, lack the connection with reality before them to really see what is unjust or cruel about it. This connection is what attending to what is there provides, what our emotional attitudes when understood as modes of perception provide” (Fox and McLean 168-69). This applies, however, to any instance where animal suffering caused by humans occurs. The connection with reality must come from the complete picture, which includes the perspective of the animal. By bringing the reader into this perspective, Céline leads the reader to perceive the situation emotionally, and therefore to recognize the occurrence of injustice. Unlike the scientific accounts, in which any terminology such as the pronouns he or she, signs of suffering, or similarities to humans that might invoke emotion was systematically eliminated in order to forestall an empathetic response in the reader, Céline provides this context and perspective that allows the reader to respond empathetically.

Céline emphasizes the horrendous conditions of the horses during the First World War in *Voyage*, through Bardamu’s description. Bardamu mentions that he would gladly feed one of the
commanders to the circling sharks that one sees in Havana and then adds that he would also give them his horse, but for a different reason, so he (the horse) would no longer have to suffer. He then continues to describe the specific suffering his horse must endure:

[I]l n’en avait plus de dos ce grand malheureux, tellement qu’il avait mal, rien que deux plaques de chair qui lui restaiet à la place, sous la selle, larges comme mes deux mains et suintantes, à vif, avec des grandes traînées de pus qui lui coulaient par les bords de la couverture jusqu’aux jarrets. Il fallait cependant trotter là-dessus, un, deux... Il s’en tortillait de trotter. Mais les chevaux c’est encore bien plus patient que des hommes. Il ondulait en trottant. On ne pouvait plus le laisser qu’au grand air. Dans les granges, à cause de l’odeur qui lui sortait des blessures, ça sentait si fort, qu’on en restait suffoqué. En montant dessus son dos, ça lui faisait si mal qu’il se courbait, comme gentiment, et le ventre lui en arrivait alors aux genoux. Ainsi on aurait dit qu’on grimpait sur un âne. C’était plus commode ainsi, faut l’avouer. On était bien fatigués nous-mêmes, avec tout ce qu’on supportait en aciers sur la tête et sur les épaules (Céline, Voyage 25).

This overworked and injured horse must carry not just the weight of a soldier, but a soldier who himself was fatigued by the weight of all the metal that he had to bear. By listing the multiple inflictions of the horse all in one description, as well as the physical signs that the horse indeed suffers, Céline makes it quite clear that the horses were very much victims of the war, like the soldiers, whom he also portrays as victims in this work. Both have become objectified for the interests of others. These horses, who cannot complain or refuse to work due to their pain, receive no consideration at all as sentient beings, yet the obvious signs of pain and physical injuries show indisputable harm done. Céline’s description forces the reader to see beyond a “practical” description of horses as tools for fighting a war. Instead, the reader encounters the undernourishment, infections, overwork, and pain the horse must endure. Céline suggests as well, by writing that Bardamu would go so far as to feed the horse to the sharks, that riding the horses in this condition emotionally affected the soldiers as well, who had no choice (“il fallait”) but to participate in creating more suffering, treating them as if they were simply transport machines. His “style émotif” in this passage uses an informal vocabulary and syntax resembling the spoken, rather than the written, language. This style bridges the gap between narrator and reader, and
draws the reader more deeply into the story, creating empathy by not allowing the reader to lose sight of the horse’s experience.

Tito advocated phenomenological views of animals, adding seeing or witnessing to rationality, in order to better understand animals’ lives. Phenomenology “thrusts us into a living context” that focuses on consciousness, which is dependent on embodied experiences (Tito 290). Céline’s description of Bardamu’s horse makes the reader a witness to his embodied experience, focusing on his suffering, using both visual and olfactory information. His illustration of what remains of the horse’s deteriorated back, giving the specific size and placement of all the flesh that remains, along with the exact measurement of the trails of pus, the strength of the odor from his infections, and the specifics of how low his stomach sagged with a rider on his back, does not allow for an abstract reading of the horse’s condition. In this way, Céline uses his writing, based on his own experience with the war, to make others a witness of what they could not otherwise see. Bardamu’s desire that his horse not suffer, placed before this description, asks of the reader to share this desire, and to feel compassion for the horse. The details then reflect the particular suffering of his particular horse, a singular existent, narrowing the focus in a way that makes the reader a witness of the suffering of a particular individual. Yet, this story is representative of countless other warhorses who had similar stories, and through the understanding gained on an individual level, one can then recognize the mass suffering of the horses, who were each a singular existent, during the war. But instead of viewing this simply as generic mass suffering, one can understand that each horse represented a suffering individual, shifting the perspective away from a generalized view to a recognition of a collection of distinct individuals, each of whom became a victim of the war in his own way.

Later in the novel, Céline shows how the war has affected people’s treatment of animals, based on their breed. When he stops by a jeweler where he used to work, in an attempt to get some spending
money, he discovers that the owners had their dogs killed solely due to the affiliation of their breed with Germany. When asked about them, the jeweler responds: “Je les ai fait abattre ! Ils me faisait du tort ! Ça ne faisait pas bien au magasin !... Des bergers allemands !” (Céline, *Voyage* 106). He blames the dogs for their breed and cares more about the image of his store than about living beings who had done him no actual wrong. Furthermore, he exacerbates irrational prejudices by killing his innocent dogs because of people’s biases. His wife’s comments leave no doubt that the dogs were in fact killed because of their breed, but she, unlike her husband, expresses some regret about it, thereby acknowledging that harm to the animals occurred: “C’est malheureux ! regretta sa femme. Mais les nouveaux chiens qu’on a maintenant sont bien gentils, c’est des écossais... Ils sententent un peu... Tandis que nos bergers allemands (...) Ils ne sentaient jamais pour ainsi dire. On pouvait les garder dans le magasin enfermés, même après la pluie” (Céline, *Voyage* 106). Pointing out that the new dogs are Scottish, not German, shows the reader the reason behind the change. Moreover, the German shepherds had an advantage over the new dogs in that they never gave off an odor. Yet, their choice shows the precedence of an unjustified public opinion over both more practical factors and compassion. By having them killed despite the fact that they had done nothing to merit it and replacing them with other dogs, they treat them as disposable, expendable objects. Furthermore, they both refer to the dogs simply by their breed, rather than their names, depersonalizing the act of having them killed. Instead of seeing them as individuals, they speak of them as if they were abstract members of a group.

The jeweler uses his sense of reason to forestall any emotional response to having his dogs killed. After announcing that he did, the first thing he says is, “Ils me faisaient du tort! Ça ne faisait pas bien au magasin!,” switching the blame from himself to the dogs, who did not commit any wrongful actions. In this way, he shifts the attention away from the experience of the dogs, to what is good for business. This mimics the transfer that Fox and McLean described which occurs when only considering
animal harm intellectually: “[A]ttention slips ever further away from the animals themselves and moves
towards thinking abstractly and argumentatively” (167). The jeweler does not enter into any discussion
of the dogs that would acknowledge them as feeling individuals, but instead switches to argumentation,
focusing only on reasoning. Furthermore, this reasoning does not take the dogs lives into consideration;
it remains one-sided. Rather than weighing two options, he simply “justifies” what he wanted to do for
his business. His wife, however, who recognizes a positive quality of the German Shepherds, allows
herself to recognize the sadness of the act. The jeweler, on the other hand, by not acknowledging any
arguments against having them killed, presents his decision as completely justified. His response
illustrates how presenting only a one-sided argument, that does not take into consideration the
perspective of the animal, perpetuates animal harm. Fox and McLean stated: “The recognition of an act
as cruel is not merely the engagement of the reasoning mind, it is awareness based on emotional
discernment; it is seeing a reality with one’s heart and reacting to it completely and suitably. It is taking
in what is there with some combination of compassion, love, sympathy, tenderness and empathy” (Fox
and McLean 164). The jeweler cannot recognize his act as cruel, because he lacks empathy and
compassion for the dogs. Thinking only of his business, he refuses to think of the damage done by his
actions. In so doing, he also tacitly supports the public opinion that led to his having them killed.

The war years, however, are not the only time that people lack compassion or act irrationally.
Across the rear courtyard of his home in La Garenne-Rancy, Bardamu observes the way in which the
poor treat the defenseless – their children and animals. By showing that adults abuse both children and
animals due to the same stimuli, Céline illustrates Montaigne’s argument: “Et si nous voulons prendre
quelque advantage de cela mesme, qu’il est en nous de les (les bêtes) saisir, de nous en servir et d’en
user à nostre volonté, ce n’est que ce mesme advantage que nous avons les uns sur les autres” (461).
That is to say that our ability to objectify animals does not demonstrate an inferiority of the animal, but
is rather an instance of might makes right, historically used by the strong against the weak. These working-class adults have no superior status in society, but at home they have power over children and pets. On Saturday afternoons, when the adults have been drinking, they become especially prone to violence:

Les torgnoles aplatissent au mur tout ce qui ne peut pas se défendre et riposter : enfants, chiens ou chats. Dès le troisième verre de vin, le noir, le plus mauvais, c’est le chien qui commence à souffrir, on lui écrase la patte d’un grand coup de talon. Ça lui apprendra à avoir faim en même temps que les hommes. On rigole bien à le voir disparaître en piaulant sous le lit comme un éventré” (Céline, Voyage 266).

The repetition of the behavior demonstrates the lack of remorse felt by the inflictors of the violence. Yet, not only do they not feel remorse, but they laugh at the suffering of the dog, as if its suffering was a type of “entertainment.” The man abuses the dog simply for showing signs of a natural need – the need for food – and this basic need becomes his “excuse” for violence towards it. The dog, however, proves his intelligence. He does not simply run away, but also hides where he cannot be further abused. Furthermore, this dog’s behavior displays his efforts to avoid pain, consequently reinforcing, along with his crying, that he does, in fact, feel pain. Denying this would contradict the physical evidence to the contrary.

In this instance as well, Céline’s “style émotif” uses the vocabulary of the spoken language, such as “Ça lui apprendra à avoir faim en même temps que les hommes,” which Céline portrays as the motive of the dog’s abuser, according to the abuser’s reasoning. By giving such an insignificant reason for the abuse, presented in a vindictive manner, Céline emphasizes the injustice to the dog. This self-reasoning reflects Benjamin Franklin’s description of reasoning found in the previous chapter, noting that being a “reasonable creature... enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do” (Franklin 33). Whereas the abuser creates a reason enabling him to abuse the dog, Céline notes the influence of the wine and the tendency to abuse power as the underlying causes. His spontaneous style
in this instance, void of excess words and formal syntax, enables him to efficiently present all these causes in a way that does not lose the emotional focus of the reader.

Unlike the cases ignoring or discounting animal suffering, this passage shows a different side of animal abuse—abuse of power, for the sake of power. Instead of ignoring the dog’s suffering, the suffering seems to be the desired goal. Pierre Gascar attributes the horse abuse of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the growing industrialization, through the establishment of power structures. Although this dog is not a work animal and differs in species, the characteristics of the situation resemble Gascar’s analysis of horse abuse generated by hierarchization:

Des rapports de subordination s’établissent, au sein de la communauté de la misère, et multiplient à différents niveaux l’image de l’inégalité, de l’injustice. Vraie cascade d’abus de pouvoir. Les ouvriers, rudoyés par des contremaîtres tremblants devant leurs supérieurs, se montent souvent durs envers les apprentis. Le très conservateur Moniteur du Commerce affirme que, dans certaines manufactures de Normandie, on emploie couramment le nerf de bœuf pour les châtier. Les chevaux sont traités de la même manière, et quelquefois par ceux-là mêmes dont l’échine est encore cuisante des coups reçus. Les théoriciens révolutionnaires ont signalé cette reconstitution, dans la classe des opprimés, des structures de la société et vu là une preuve de son pouvoir de contamination morale. En fait, jamais l’homme et l’animal n’ont été plus proches l’un de l’autre que dans la scène odieuse, thème de gravures à deux sous, où le charretier ivre (ou supposé tel) frappe son cheval à terre. La même servitude les unit (192).

Abuse of power was another effect of industrialized society. Those with low social status frequently suffered from abuse by those above them and take it out on those beneath them-human or animal. This especially affected those on the lowest rungs of society, which, in the novel, would include those in La Garenne-Rancy. Hierarchal societal structures carry over into personal life and into the home as inequality solidifies in society. This brings about moral decline, especially affecting those least able to defend themselves, as those treated unjustly themselves treat others unjustly in turn.

At another moment in the novel, animal suffering again serves as an “entertainment” for its spectators. A crowd had gathered outside of a butcher shop to watch people torture a pig before its
death. Once again, the people laugh at the animal’s suffering, and no one shows any compassion despite the multiple signs he displays of fear and pain:

Not just a few people, but an entire crowd came to watch the torture of the pig as a type of spectacle and public “entertainment.” The spectators show a type of crowd mentality which gives group approval to animal abuse, and the butcher encourages this behavior for his own benefit. Not only does it give him publicity, but it also sends a very anthropocentric message – the pig is only an object, a message which obviously benefits one who kills animals for a living. Yet, the pig himself gives the opposite message. It groans, cries, twists, turns it hooves in unnatural positions, tries to flee, and urinates on itself (as the dogs did in the Fox and McLean article). When the torture becomes worse, so do its cries. Yet despite all the obvious physical evidence, the crowd does not view the pig as a sentient being. With this scene, Céline criticizes the voyeurism of those who turn scenes of violence or death into exhibitions, similar to the crowds at public executions, or those who flocked to the Paris Morgue in the nineteenth
century. By turning the misfortune of another into a spectacle, they treat it, as well as the pig himself, as a product of consumption.

Bardamu directly states, “il le comprenait,” showing that the pig understood to some extent his predicament. While many of the people of his own day would have been likely to dismiss this as impossible, recent scientific scholarship has shown pigs to be quite intelligent animals with some capacity for complex learning. A recent study by Candace C. Croney and Sarah T. Boysen, “Acquisition of a Joystick-Operated Video Task by Pigs,” has shown pigs to be capable of learning to use a joystick to manipulate a cursor on a computer screen for a reward. According to the study authors, “The video task acquisition required conceptual understanding of the task, as well as skilled motor performance” (Croney and Boysen). They further clarify that having conceptual understanding requires fairly advanced cognitive ability, which highlights that the intelligence of pigs goes far beyond what the general public of Céline’s day would have believed: “First the animal must have sufficient motor skills to be able to manipulate a joystick. Secondly, the animal must have the cognitive ability to learn that joystick movements control cursor movement, and that the collision of cursor and target is followed by a reward” (Croney and Boysen). By stating that the pig understood his condition, Céline ultimately shows that because he is an intelligent being, he should be treated as such, which was in fact the motive behind the Croney, Boysen study. They explain in their article that studies on pig intelligence are necessary because of “their implications for ethical obligations toward them, as well as for decisions relating to their production, care, and management” (Croney and Boysen). The authors noted that results from previous studies “provide evidence that pigs have the capacity to learn fairly complex novel tasks,” which underscores that multiple studies, not only theirs, have demonstrated pigs’ high level of

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intelligence, reinforcing the scientific proof of this intelligence (Croney and Boysen). The study additionally showed that pigs form relationships with their caregivers:

Their high level of social motivation to perform the task was also noteworthy. Although food rewards associated with the task were likely a motivating factor, the social contact the pigs experienced with their trainer also appeared to be very important. Occasionally, during some sessions, equipment failure resulted in non-reward following correct responses. On these occasions, the pigs continued to make correct responses when rewarded only with verbal and tactile reinforcement from the experimenter, who was also their primary caretaker. Additionally, during times when the task demands seemed most challenging for the pigs, and resulted in reluctance to perform, only verbal encouragement by the experimenter was effective in resuming training (Croney and Boysen).

That is to say, how people treat the animals has a direct result on the pigs, who are not only social animals, but also sensitive to touch. “Tactile reinforcement” encouraged them to do difficult tasks. Logically, if positive touch encouraged them, painful sensations would also affect them, not just physically but psychologically. The study ended up reinforcing that pigs have an emotional life in addition to their intelligence, which makes the treatment of this tortured pig even more cruel and unjust. Thus, when Céline writes, “il le comprenait,” he demonstrates his advancement beyond that of the general public in the understanding of animal intelligence, which people still dismiss to this day (hence the need for this 2021 study), in addition to the presence of another subject, who possesses his own agency on which he no longer has the ability to act.

The mass acceptance of cruelty towards the pig demonstrates the wide-spread lack of sympathy towards animals destined to be eaten, labeled as carnism in critical animal theory. Weitzenfeld and Joy define carnism as “the unrecognized ideology that legitimates the killability and edibility of animal others” (3-4). They explain how this ideology is propagated in society:

Carnistic cognitive processes include objectification, de-individualization / abstraction, and dichotomization (creating a perceived binary and enabling a speciesist-carnist hierarchy). Farmed animals are objectified in unique and powerful ways; they are ‘livestock’ and ‘broilers’ (before they are even killed). They are seen as abstract
members of a group about which humans have made generalized assumptions (‘a pig is a pig and all pigs are the same’). And they are placed in rigid cognitive categories, classified as ‘edible’ and thus less worthy, or unworthy of moral concern (Weitzenfeld and Joy 24).  

Because many in the crowd participate directly in the torture of this pig, the reader understands that they have deemed him completely unworthy of moral concern. The charcutier solidifies the pig’s status as “edible” when he gestures with his knife, reinforcing the idea that a pig’s purpose is to be eaten, and consequently that his suffering does not matter. Both the behavior of the crowd and the theatrics of the charcutier illustrate the generalized assumptions described by Weitzenfeld and Joy; this pig cannot be regarded as possessing an individual personality because his destination is the dinner table, at which point he will have been literally turned into an object.

Yet, not all animal maltreatment takes place in view of others. When Bardamu visits a medical institute, hoping to find a treatment for Bébert’s typhoid, he notes the animal experiments as part of the objects that he sees laying around the laboratory before most people have arrived for the day. His listing of the animals alongside the other objects demonstrates the objectification of animals by the scientists:

Il ne s’y trouvait encore personne dans ces laboratoires, pas plus de savants que de public, rien que des objets bousculés en grand désordre, des petits cadavres d’animaux éventrés, des bouts de mégots, des becs de gaz ébréchés, des cages et des bocaux avec des souris dedans en train d’étouffer, des cornues, des vessies à la traîne, des tabourets défoncés, des livres et de la poussière” (Céline, Voyage 279 – my emphasis).

The animals, dead or alive, seem to receive no priority or distinction from the other objects; they are scattered about like the other laboratory “equipment,” and even characterized as objects by Bardamu.

The mention of the “animaux éventrés” emphasizes the reality of what the scientists do at the institute.

– they kill and dissect animals. Adding “des cages et des bocaux avec des souris dedans en train d’étouffer” accentuates that the animals suffer and are not treated well even before their death at the hands of the scientists. The researchers at this lab leave the mice to suffocate overnight when they are not even present, doing nothing to lessen their suffering. Being living beings does not entitle them here to a treatment that is any different from that of the burners or the books, demonstrating an aspect of speciesism displayed by some researchers and described by Singer: “Speciesism allows researchers to regard the animals they experiment on as items of equipment, laboratory tools rather than living, suffering creatures” (AL 69). Furthermore, this outlook does not end when they walk out the laboratory door. Speciesism is a way of thinking that is not limited to only one aspect of life. As Regan highlighted in *The Case for Animal Rights*: “What transpires in, say, a biology lab doesn’t occur in a vacuum. It is both an effect and a contributing cause of prevailing cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions about nonhumans. The acquisition of these beliefs and attitudes and the introduction into these traditions are part of our acculturation” that leads to a “throw-away attitude towards animals” (367, 368). The lab scientists have been trained in this tradition – animals are equipment. They will not only pass down these beliefs to the next generation if no one steps in to oppose or question them, but they will also take these beliefs outside of the laboratory to the other animals they interact with in broader society. Furthermore, all the dead animals did nothing to save Bébert, who ultimately died from his typhoid.

This phrase, by focusing on the experience of the mice, reflects the “homme sensible,” that Céline presented as the opposite of “[l]e civilisé, académisé,” while describing his style to Milton Hindus. In contrast with the scientific style, designed to forestall empathy, his carefully created description reflects that the mice were currently suffocating, even as no one was there to notice or care. Moreover, mentioning the suffocating, when it was not an important plot detail, and could have been easily
emitted, reveals Céline’s effort to draw attention to their suffering. His unique “style émotif” in this passage allows him to almost imperceptibly add a detail that invokes empathy for animals.

Dogs are particularly vulnerable to abuse, both because they wander the streets and cannot hide as easily as cats, and also because of their loyalty and obedience to humans. In Mort à Crédit, Ferdinand, Céline’s autobiographical character, highlights the plight of a lost, abused dog that limps.

The little dog begins to follow him as he is leaving a consultation:

Sur le trottoir voilà un petit chien qui boite. Il me suit d’autorité… C’est un petit fox ce chien-là, un noir et blanc. Il est perdu ça me paraît… Mais le petit chien boite beaucoup. Il me dévisage. Ça me dégoûte de le voir traînasser… j’ai dit à Madame Hortense : "on va nourrir le petit clebs. Il faut que quelqu’un cherche de la viande... demain à la première heure on téléphonerà... ils viendront de la " protectrice " le chercher avec une auto. Ce soir il faudrait l’enfermer." Alors je suis reparti tranquille. Mais c’était un chien trop craintif. Il avait reçu des coups trop durs. La rue c’est méchant. Le lendemain en ouvrant la fenêtre, il a même pas voulu attendre, il a bondi à l’extérieur, il avait peur de nous aussi. Il a cru qu’on l’avait puni. Il comprenait plus rien aux choses. Il avait plus confiance du tout. C’est terrible dans ces cas-là (Céline, MC 15-16).

In this small section, describing a lost dog that he never mentions again, Ferdinand emphasizes the recurring animal abuse of the time. The dog has obviously been injured because he limps noticeably and fears people, to the point where he has no confidence in them. When he states, “La rue c’est méchant,” he highlights the cruelty of modern society towards dogs. These dogs, with no home in which to shelter and no owner to protect them, have no defense against cruelty, which has become commonplace, as evidenced by the matter-of-fact way in which Ferdinand makes this statement, using the verb “être.”

When he emphasizes the dog’s fear, Céline, as the author, reveals that the dog has an emotional life. This fear is learned from experience. The abuse he has suffered has taught him that humans are cruel and will harm him if he lets them get too close. Furthermore, it leads to long-term consequences for the dog. Had he not been fearful, he would have been taken in and cared for by a rescue group. Instead, he flees back to the situation where he will remain subject to abuse.
Céline conveys the perspective of the dog in this excerpt, creating compassion for his repeated abuse. By attempting to rescue him from the streets, Ferdinand demonstrates engaged empathy. Gruen stated that engaged empathy requires “understanding the perspective and situation of the other from their point of view and doing that requires both knowledge of and an affective connection with the other” (Attending 35). When he first presents the dog following Ferdinand, Céline illustrates the dog’s fleeting desire for human help, most likely due to extreme hunger. But going into the following day, he switches to the dog’s general perspective of humans and his own fear. In stating, “Il a cru qu’on l’avait puni,” he shows the belief system of the dog, based on his own (the dog’s) past experience. Gruen also states that engaged empathy involves “critical attention to the broader conditions that undermine the well-being or flourishing of the objects of empathy” (Attending 30). Repeated abuse (the broader conditions) creates a self-defense belief system in the dog that does not allow for him to change his conditions, and thus, undermines his well-being. By explaining the situation, the cause, and the effect, Céline creates knowledge of the conditions for dogs on the streets, as well as explaining their continued presence there. The fear induced by abuse creates an affective connection with the dog that allows the reader to identify with his situation. Céline does not stop at describing the behavior of the dog; he establishes how one must use one’s imagination in order to understand the reasons behind his behavior, which itself illustrates that these reasons exist. Not all dogs behave in the same manner; some trust humans and others do not. In showing how fear comes from past experience, Céline simultaneously shows the presence of an inner life and the way in which human actions affect animal subjects. The human abuse of this dog has made his life go unnecessarily worse for him.

In Féerie pour une autre fois II, Céline demonstrates that it is not just strangers or people who have had too much to drink who harm dogs; sometimes the abuse comes from their owners, who do not abuse alcohol (in this case, she is too young for this vice). During the bombing, he describes the violence
towards his neighbors’ dog, Piram. The reader first meets Piram when he returns home with his young mistress to the apartment building where the majority of the novel takes place. When they enter, his tail is burning. Toinon, his mistress who is around eleven years old, does nothing to extinguish his tail; instead, Lili does it for her when she notices the situation. Toinon immediately seeks safety for herself without worrying about her dog who continues to attempt to join her under the table, despite the kicks he receives in doing so. His loyalty is met with indifference. But Toinon, buried under the others, calls on Céline to rescue her. When he pulls her out, she cries, and Piram, happy to see her, shows his joy by barking, jumping on her, and licking her nose, which knocks her over. She responds to his loyalty with violence and insults: “Sale Piram ! Sale Piram ! et pflam pflam ! en plein museau ! ça y apprendra !... à coups de pied ! sur sa truffe !” (Céline, Féerie II 260). Instead of being happy to be reunited with her pet, or even sympathetic that he is happy to see her, she abuses him. Despite this, Piram remains loyal and still tries to remain with her when she attempts to reenter under the table, only to be rejected. Despite his cries and flying from one side of the room to the other, due to the vibrations, Toinon continues to ignore him.

Céline emphasizes the effect on Piram of being separated from Toinon when he notes in the same scene, “[I]l tremble de chagrin” after having called him “la fidélité tendre même” (Céline, Féerie 265). Through this contrast, he establishes the injustice of Piram’s suffering. Toinon does not attend to the entire situation before her. She fails to grasp Piram’s perception of his situation and therefore does not respond with empathy. When he later says about Piram, “y a que lui qu’a du cœur,” he again contrasts the affection of Piram with the coldness of Toinon and the other residents who participated in kicking him, illustrating that they also lack compassion (Céline, Féerie 271). Ignoring what Céline repeatedly illustrates as Piram’s distress enables them to not see the harm done by both the physical violence and the alienation caused by ignoring his social needs. Creating a barrier between themselves
and Piram, the only animal present, reinforces a human /animal binary. Yet, the perceptions of humans as beings with emotions, and animals as beings without become reversed. While Piram constantly demonstrates his affection, the humans display coldness and behave only according to a self-preservation instinct, frequently attributed to being the driving force of nonhuman animal actions. So, in addition to establishing human characteristics of Piram, Céline reveals animal characteristics of the people.

Piram also suffers routine abuse from Toinon, which makes his loyalty to her even more unmerited, and furthermore, indicates that her unjust treatment of him extends beyond this occasion. She has hit him so frequently with the metal hook on the end of his leash that he has wounds on his nose. The emphasis on the hard metal on a sensitive spot focuses on the particulars in a way that draws the reader’s attention to Piram’s experience:

[J]e l’ai toujours vue méchante avec, Toinon !... toujours !... de ces coups de mousqueton sur la truffe!... pflaf! pflaf!... du bout de sa laisse... d’un oui d’un non... je les rencontrais au coin de chaque rue depuis quelque temps... elle le promenait... elle faisait exprès de le frapper devant moi... ‘Tape pas comme ça ! laisse-le tranquille ! ton mousqueton, ton bout de métal !…” [...] il avait le bout du nez blessé Piram, crevassé, fissuré, l’endroit sensible (Céline, Féerie II 272-his emphasis).

Céline explains that Toinon hits Piram when she encounters him on the street, in order to get a reaction from him (Céline), and thus, solely to irritate him. Consequently, she again treats Piram with injustice, harming him as a means to upset Céline. Having previously demonstrated Piram’s unwavering loyalty, he depicts the unjust relationship between the two in this passage. Toinon takes advantage of his much-demonstrated loyalty by beating Piram with no resistance from him. Anca Gheaus explains how this type of abuse reflects betrayal:

Animals who can conceivably meet our emotional needs have special moral value. If actual relationships of affection and companionship exist, it makes sense to talk of moral requirements in the treatment of those animals that go well beyond a ban on cruelty or
violating their rights. For example, being cruel to animals who trust and rely on you is not only because it is cruel, but also because it is disloyal (592). Due to the fact that Piram depends on Toinon, her cruelty goes beyond the physical harm; she also inflicts emotional harm by way of violating his trust. So Piram additionally suffers from having no trustworthy source to attend to his needs. In this way, Toinon provokes emotional insecurity because Piram must depend on her for his necessities, and she takes advantage of the situation by inflicting abuse, which Piram does not resist or attempt to avoid. Because of his loyalty and her disloyalty, this type of abuse can continue indefinitely. With the repeated scenes between Toinon and Piram, Céline establishes a regular pattern of disloyal behavior on the part of Toinon. The contrast between their behavior illustrates the reasons that one should respond emotionally to his abuse. Yet the behavior of the other tenants demonstrates the contrary. Instead of responding empathetically to Piram, they ignore the reality of his situation and focus on their own perspectives. Neither Toinon nor the other tenants fulfill the moral requirement demanded by Piram’s excessive loyalty and affection.

The dog Iago, in Nord, also suffers from abuse, in the way of undernourishment and overwork, much like the horses of the previous century. Iago, like many of the work animals who came before him, must go long distances without a sufficient amount of food, which ultimately leads to his death while working. Céline’s first description of Iago emphasizes his emaciation:

Un énorme chien bien maigre… sur le flanc à même le carrelage, on devait pas le nourrir beaucoup, sous tous les régimes y a des êtres pour l’austérité, la vertu… les faibles et les animaux… […] en plus qu’il le faisait jeûner, question démonstration de vertu, le vieux Schertz, commandant de uhlans, le sortait tous les jours, l’emmenait faire le tour du domaine, lui en bécane, le dogue à la laisse… que tout le hameau se rende compte que l’énorme Iago crevait de faim, qu’on plaisantait pas au manoir (Céline, Nord 132).

His description provokes pity for Iago who is not only malnourished, but also must sleep on the hard tile floor; consequently, he is not given any respite from a difficult life. Unlike the people of the manor, who eat in secret in their rooms, he is forced to lead a life of austerity, despite the fact that there is an
abundance of food hidden in an armoire in the manor. Iago is starved not by any necessity, but for show; Schertz uses him to falsely demonstrate that they live an austere life at the manor house. For comparison, Céline adds: “[L]es demoiselles étaient pas maigres, même assez dodues, sûr elles engraissaient pas de la soupe !... elles devaient se rattraper chez elles, huis clos, à coups de choucroute et de fortes saucisses” (Céline, Nord 132). Céline and others who stayed at the manor are only fed a transparent soup, but in the hallways, he smells food coming from closed rooms where those who eat nothing but the soup in public, eat in private.

Céline later reemphasizes the abuse of Iago, depicting how Schertz treats him as an object of manipulation. He also again refers to austerity as a virtue, accentuating the fact that Iago continues his difficult daily work despite the privations forced on him:

[L]a Vertu c’est nous et Iago leur grand chien danois... lui en plus il promène le dab, il le tire, le ‘Rittmeister,’ le fouettard à vélo, le tour du village, chaque matin, que les femmes et les prisonniers voient bien que Iago est juste squelette et que pourtant il en fout un coup, le tour de Kräntzlin, deux fois chaque matin... preuve qu’on s’amuse pas au manoir, qu’on observe les grandes Ordonnances ‘Privez-vous de tout’ ! Iago tout le monde peut se rendre compte est bien privé ! un os un bout de pain par semaine, pas davantage !... l’effort qu’il donne, tire le vieux tout le tour du hameau, deux fois, au ras des fossés, les fondrières, à la cravache !... yop ! (Céline, Nord, 174-his emphasis).

Despite receiving only a very minimal amount of food, Iago’s owner demands an extreme effort from him; he forces Iago to pull him, not once, but twice around the grounds, all to demonstrate deprivation that the people of the manor do not themselves observe. In so doing, he manifests empathy erosion in both his treatment of Iago, and also, in his manipulation of the workers. Aaltola writes that empathy erosion “enables one to treat others as objects instead of subjects, as points of manipulation instead of valuable beings” (“Empathy” 79). Schertz’s starving, overworking, and whipping of Iago demonstrate ways that he treats Iago as simply an object of manipulation, seeing him as an “it” rather than a “you.” The overwork and starvation eventually lead to his death while pulling Schertz. Instead of having
sympathy for the animal, the people are scared of an infectious disease that will attack their own
animals. Because they have no veterinarian, Céline must go examine the dog to determine the cause of
death:

[S]ur le flanc, il est... pas de bave... pas de vomissements... les quatre pattes raides... le
corps encore tiède... je demande, il est mort il y a deux heures environ... en trainant le
vieux... subit !... des gens étaient là, ont vu... c'était en faisant le tour du soir... pas eu de
convulsions, rien du tout !... bien !... je peux conclure : le cœur... le cœur a cédé, l’âge et
le surmenage... rien de contagieux !... aucun danger ! et puis de pas manger assez de
viande... un chien comme Iago, son poids, devait manger au moins cinq cents grammes
de viande crue par jour... donc, ni maladie, ni empoisonnement... je suis affirmatif...
privations ! (Céline, Nord 309).

By detailing how much Iago should eat, Céline proves how inadequate his previously mentioned food
intake actually was. Because of this, Iago died needlessly. He did more physical work than many people
at the château, yet received hardly any food, which was not in short supply for those who lived there.
Iago suffered simultaneously harm from infliction and harm from deprivation. By repeatedly whipping
and overworking Iago, Schertz causes him harm by infliction, described by Regan as: “Acute or chronic
physical or psychological suffering” (94). Regan broadly describes prima facie deprivation harms as
occurring “when benefits they have are taken from them or when circumstances, including the acts of
others, preclude their having some benefit that is necessary if they are to have a realistic opportunity to
live well relative to their abilities” (97). Iago could not live well due to his lack of nutrition and a
comfortable place to rest. Regan also describes the relevance of animal suffering in relation to how one
views animals: “[I]f we can cause animals to suffer, then what we do to them not only can hurt them, it
can harm them; and if it can harm them, than it can detract from the experiential quality of their life,
considered over time; and if it can do that, then we must view these animals as having a good or ill of
their own” (96). The possibility to suffer harm renders a being a subject of ethics to be included in the
moral community, consequently including Iago in this community. Because he can suffer, in his case
chronic, physical and psychological suffering, he has been wronged. Céline makes both types of harms evident in this novel, demonstrating his skill at portraying the animal perspective. Whereas Regan deemed it necessary in his work to describe these types of harms philosophically, Céline shows the same ideas (on a smaller scale) through narration, illustrating Fox’s and McLean’s claim that storytelling serves an effective method to argue ethics (147). Instead of simply stating that Iago was abused and overworked, he depicts him being whipped and forced to go long distances, pulling a man, and ultimately collapsing during his work, making the infliction of harm unquestionable. Instead of simply stating that he did not receive enough food, Céline describes exactly how minimal his food intake was, in addition to calling him a skeleton. His focusing on the particulars forces the reader to see the details of animal abuse that they might otherwise overlook. In fact, Iago’s death and conditions echo Éric Baratay’s description of both horses and dogs used for transportation in the previous century:

Dans les textes viennent en premier lieu les violences faites aux équidés tirant des voitures, des fiacres, des chariots, et aux chiens de trait, attelés à de petites carrioles : trop gros efforts demandés, trop lourdes charges à tracter, très longs parcours à effectuer, multiples coups reçus pour faire avancer des bêtes très sollicitées, souvent peu nourries, mal soignées... [L]es chevaux travaillent jusqu’à l’épuisement, malgré la douleur et la fatigue, et... leur surmenage peut prendre une forme aiguë extrême, l’animal s’écroulant foudroyé d’une attaque au cœur (“Promotion” 139).

Because Iago’s treatment resembles, to the letter, abuse from years before, it shows that many people do turn a blind eye to this type of abuse, seeing animals as tools for labor, rather than sentient beings. Like the animals that came before him, Iago is treated as a disposable object that exists solely to fulfill the personal goals of his owner. Not fed enough for even a dog who does not have to work, he is forced to do difficult, unnecessary labor on a daily basis, while whipped into submission. With his story, Céline opposes the speciesism that allows such occurrences, illustrating a point made by Singer: “What we

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52 Although Céline does not describe any psychological effects, chronic whipping can be understood to produce negative psychological consequences (reinforced by Céline’s other examples of physical abuse to dogs).
must do is bring nonhuman animals within our sphere of moral concern and cease to treat their lives as expendable for whatever trivial purposes we may have” (AL 20). Just like the charcutier and the crowd with the pig, Count Schertz had no moral concern for Iago. He worked him to death, thus treating his life as expendable for his propaganda goals.

By telling Iago’s story, which was a similar story for multiple horses and dogs, Céline forces his reader to see that what many accept publicly constitutes harm and animal abuse, highlighting the problem of this public acceptance of injustice to animals. This scene, in particular, should have touched Parisian readers of the time, as Paris had been called: “L’enfer des chevaux.” By adding all the harsh details of Iago’s life, portrayed empathetically, Céline focuses in on what many Parisians not only accepted, but contributed to themselves by riding in carriages pulled by horses treated in this same way.

Céline also illustrates in this novel the relationship between cruelty to animals and cruelty to people, as noted by Montaigne, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and others: “Les naturels sanguinaires à l’endroit des bestes tesmoignent une propension naturelle à la cruauté” (Montaigne 433). Montaigne’s statement describes empathy erosion, as noted by Simon Baron-Cohen, where one remains solely in the “I” mode, allowing one to repeatedly objectify others. In this mode, one overlooks all feelings, except one’s own. A group of diseased prostitutes, who escape the Nazis to avoid getting treatment, abuse Schertz’s horse, Schertz, and the Revizor in their rebellion. After the prostitutes had captured the men and the horse, they kicked and beat the men with pickaxes, stole their clothing and dressed them in their own clothes, leaving them with multiple fractures and injuries. Additionally, they beat the horse with their pickaxes, killing her slowly over a three-day period: “[E]lles l’avaient tuée à coups de pioches !... pas vite... lentement... par grosses blessures, en trois jours... et puis elles l’avaient découpée” (Céline, Nord 356). By describing the prolonged torturing of the horse, Céline emphasizes the violent nature of those who abuse animals, in particular those who are “sanguinaires.” These women
repeatedly inflicted suffering on both the men and the horse, not in one solitary instance, but over a period of time, thus showing both the calculated nature of the abuse and a complete lack of pity and remorse for the suffering they caused to three individual beings. Because they would have witnessed this suffering continuously over an extended period, this example illustrates that they have become hardened to the suffering of others. However, like the workers in La Garenne-Rancy, they have also been subjected to hierarchization. They were fleeing unwanted medical treatment that had been forced on them. As the novel progresses, these women become more and more aggressive, showing a build-up over time, culminating in this attack. In this instance, animal suffering appears to motivate at least the torturous style of the attack; the prostitutes participate in cruelty for the sake of cruelty, that is to say, that it constitutes pure malice. Yet, this malice take place when the perpetrators themselves have been victims of the system in which they live. They then turn on those who they have the capacity to victimize, continuing a power hierarchy with animals at the very bottom.

In addition to highlighting direct animal abuse, Céline shows, in a scene of Rigodon, the impact of the war on zoo animals. They, like humans, suffered from bombings and evacuations. Céline draws attention to this effect in a description of zoo birds roaming freely in Denmark:

[L]à-bas dans les herbes, un oiseau... mais pas un oiseau habituel... un oiseau je dirais ‘de collection’ de Jardin des Plantes... un oiseau grosseur d’un canard, mais mi-rose, mi-noir... et ébouriffé ! je dirais les plumes en bataille... je regarde plus loin... un autre ! celui-là je le connais !... c’est moi qui l’ai vu le premier !... un ibis... drôle de piaf ici... et une ‘aigrette’ !... celle-là sûrement pas du Danemark !... un paon maintenant... ils viennent exprès !... et un ‘oiseau-lyre’... c’est à manger qu’ils voudraient... l’endroit est pas bien nourrissant, ruines, ronces, cailloux... encore un autre !... cette fois un toucan... on les a presque à trois... quatre mètres... ils seraient familiers si on avait à leur donner, mais vraiment vraiment on n’a rien (Céline, Rigodon 216).

Céline emphasizes here the fact that these birds are rather tame, which eliminates any doubt that they come from some type of zoo or menagerie. This is reinforced by the variety of birds and the fact that there seems to be only one of each type. Their behavior, approaching humans, which wild birds
generally either do not do at all or do only for food, gives evidence of their hunger, and he solicits the compassion of the reader, by pointing out that there is nothing for them to eat in their immediate environment, only “ruines, ronces, (et) cailloux.” These lost birds have no one to care for them and must seek help from strangers if they wish to survive, with no certainty that the strangers will help them. Finding themselves far from their native environment, they have no hope of resorting to their natural sources of food.

Mark Payne addresses this scene, describing the birds as having formed a small society despite their differences. “Like Céline, Lili, and Bébert, and like the ‘little cretins,’ the birds are a band of fugitives. They are a strange assortment from every corner of the globe, and...they are doing their best to maintain a form of sociality in the face of multiple experiences of human aggression—first the zoo, and now the war” (Payne 107). Payne emphasizes that human aggression is responsible for their current situation. Even before the war, they had already been uprooted from their native habitat to be confined to a zoo. The gathering of the different types of birds emphasizes their social needs. Deprived of other members of their own species, they gather together with others in the same situation, similar to Bardamu’s chicken following him when it had no other chickens with which to socialize, which I will discuss in a subsequent section.

With these examples, Céline depicts how people avoid accepting personal responsibility for animal harm, or in the case of the soldiers, how responsibility is transferred. The soldiers that have to mount injured, undernourished horses must obey orders given by superiors – they are forced to cause further suffering to the horses due to their low position in the hierarchy. The jeweler transfers blame to the dogs themselves – their presence was bad for business. Bardamu’s neighbors also transfer

53 A group of disabled children that he cares for and takes to find food in Rigodon
responsibility to the dogs – they shouldn’t be hungry at the same time as the men. In the situations of
the pig and the neighbors joining together to kick Piram, crowd mentality takes over. Each individual
does what everyone else is doing. In each of these cases, personal responsibility can be deflected by a
sense of “reason,” but the holistic view that Céline gives the reader establishes that the only case where
personal responsibility is truly deflected is the case of the low-ranking soldiers, who like the animals, are
victims themselves with no choice in the matter. Moreover, this is the only case where the person who
must harm the animal displays a desire not to do so, instead wanting to end his suffering, thereby
illustrating that the responsibility belongs elsewhere.

By presenting multiple types of animal abuse, Céline reveals widespread lack of empathy
towards animals in the first half of the twentieth century. He depicts the various reasons people abuse
animals – for war, for work, for their amusement, out of drunkenness, for food, and simply out of
cruelty; multiple types of people abuse animals in multiple ways. Consequently, animal abuse is not
made up of a few isolated instances, nor is it confined to a single group of people. His examples also
reveal the speciesism behind the abuse, which discounts this suffering. Weitzenfeld and Joy define
speciesism as “the symptom of oppression that lies in hierarchal material relationships whereby power
and capital – fiscal, social, cultural, and spiritual – are accumulated through the exploitation of animals”
(20). Although speciesism reveals itself differently today than in Céline’s day (with the exception of the
lab animals), these abused animals are indeed victims of human desire for power. The war horses
become victims of desire for military power, the pig for the social and economic power of a business
owner, Piram becomes a victim of Toinon’s desire to offend Céline and consequently assert that she had
more power than he in that situation, and Iago becomes a victim of Schertz’s need for power over those
not given enough to eat; thereby fending off a possible rebellion and securing the food that they
actually did have at the manor house. Yet, despite differing in the type of power desired, they all remain
similar in their goal of either making a display of actual power or attempting to accumulate more power. When one uses other living beings as a means of upholding or establishing one’s own power, one remains in the “I” mode; “I” only see how this situation affects me, disregarding its effect on others, and consequently lacking any empathy towards them. However, the “I” perspective is not a holistic perspective; it ignores the perspectives of others affected by one’s actions.

Nussbaum states that reading a novel “places us in a moral position that is favorable for perception” (Nussbaum, LK 162). By focusing on animal behavior that results from specific human actions, Céline guides the reader towards a holistic perception of the situations where animals are harmed. Céline exposes the reader to the animals’ perspectives, leaving no doubt that the animals suffer unjustly, and consequently encourages the reader to have compassion for these animals and see their situation with a better understanding of the reality of the animals’ lives. His writing combats a mechanical view of the world, which objectifies living beings, and replaces it with animals’ individual stories, allowing the reader to imagine that particular type of suffering. In this way, Céline establishes that empathy is necessary to increase knowledge. Without seeing the perspective of the horse, the lost dog, the pig, or the other animals, one is left with generalities and incomplete knowledge of their situations. Incomplete knowledge, that lacks emotion, leads to the perpetuation and worsening of suffering and injustice, because it does not acknowledge that suffering and injustice have taken place.

A duty of compassion and engaged empathy

Attention to broader circumstances

As a doctor of the poor, Céline spent much of his life taking care of those who needed care. He admits in his writing that he always had difficulty asking for payment, and unlike other doctors, he did not even own a car, which illustrates that he did not care for his patients for material gain, or even prestige. When asked if he practiced medicine at Meudon, Lucette responded: “Il n’était pas installé,
mais il aimait tellement la médecine qu’il était toujours disposé à donner un conseil. Toujours gratuitement d’ailleurs. Il était médecin et non commerçant” (Caloni). Her precision here that he was not a shopkeeper in addition to the fact that he gave free medical advice indicates that he did in fact practice medicine in order to help others. In an interview, when asked why he wanted to become a doctor, Céline responds that he is a “soigneur par tempérament,” and emphasizes that it gives him pleasure to cure people (“Céline 2”). His work provides evidence of caring for children, the sick, and the dying – those who cannot care for themselves. Amongst those he cares for are also animals in need. It is interesting that at his final burial (he was first buried in a provisional tomb) a cat came and placed himself near the casket and a young child was watering the flowers of a neighboring tomb, giving a fitting final send-off to Céline (Alliot, Mme 218). As Pascal Pia stated, “Un regard d’enfant, les miaulements d’un chat égaré l’attendrissaient : il passait pour féroce” (9). These examples of his caregiving illustrate the compassionate side of Céline and combat the image of him as ferocious. In depicting animals as beings in need of care, he again calls on the compassion of the reader. Having increased the reader’s understanding of animal subjectivity, he demonstrates engaged empathy as an appropriate response to this knowledge.

When Céline addresses responsibility, he frequently lists his animals along with the humans of his family, including them in his concept of family members. He also includes other weak members of society in his concept of responsibility, showing a general concern for the downtrodden, which one finds throughout his work. His dedication of Féerie pour une autre fois I reads, “Aux animaux, Aux malades, Aux prisonniers,” showing that animals belong to a larger group of beings deserving compassion, those

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54 Found in Alliot, D’Un Céline l’autre, p. 1097 (reproduction of interview).
often unable to completely care for themselves. In his article, “L’humanisme paradoxal de Céline,”
author Antoine Jaquier calls attention to the fact that Céline cared about the general victims of society:

L’humanité crasse et la beauté du style. Louis-Ferdinand Céline, c’est une œuvre à
fragmentation. Et cette affection appuyée de l’auteur pour les enfants – pour les plus
faibles, les broyés du système en général. Son paradoxal humanisme. Son amour pour
les animaux. Son chat Bébert (Jaquier). 55

Jacquier notes that he had affection for the weakest – those who struggled in life, and those who were
victims of the various hierarchies. Like many others who have advocated animal welfare, he advocates
responsibility and concern for those he views as the most defenseless. Céline demonstrates, both in his
own life and his writing, different needs that exist in a community as well as ways of responding to those
needs.

After their installation at Meudon, Céline and Lucette took in animals that would otherwise have
been sent to animal control, which David Alliot describes as a mutually beneficial relationship in his
book, Madame Céline. He notes their reliability for caring for destitute animals:

Seule constante au 25ter, l’attachement du couple envers les animaux qui trouvent
toujours à Meudon un accueil et du réconfort. Céline, qui ne croit plus guère en l’être
humain, recueille et soigne les bêtes, dont il apprécie l’affection et la fidélité. Dès qu’un
chien ou un chat est menacé de la fourrière, la demeure du docteur Destouches est son
ultime recours. À Meudon, l’iconostase célinienne est inséparable de celle de ces chiens
et chats qui l’entourent et le protègent (Alliot Mme 187). 56

Animals threatened with the animal version of death row could find a home with Céline. Perhaps in this
instance, Céline relates to these animals, that, without human intervention, would be caged like a
prisoner and, having been categorized as unvaluable, most would ultimately be put to death, a position
he himself was in while in prison in Denmark. Because of his own experience, he could empathize with
their situation. Rousseau explained that one learns pity by transferring one’s own experiences onto

55 Unpaginated article
56 Destouches was Céline’s given surname.
others suffering in similar ways: “Pour devenir sensible et pitoyable, il faut que l’enfant sache qu’il y a des êtres semblables à lui qui souffrent ce qu’il a souffert, qui sentent les douleurs qu’il a senties, et d’autres dont il doit avoir l’idée comme pouvant les sentir aussi” (Émile 146-47). Having experienced similar circumstances, Céline can feel a kinship with these animals that allows him to respond with compassion and not only save these animals from death, but also give them a home environment where they can flourish. Alliot also notes above the benefits that that the couple receives from their animals which highlights that animals should not be regarded as objects – objects cannot give affection or be loyal – illustrating that animals have value to their owners that can only come from animate beings. The relationship between Céline and Lucette, and the animals they save becomes a mutually beneficial relationship. They care for the animals who in turn give their own unique gifts to the couple, showing that they do have a value of their own. However, if they had not empathized with these animals and had let them be taken to the pound, they would not have had occasion to benefit from their relationships. In this way empathy not only makes them caring moral actors, but they receive back from their empathy investment.

Céline affirms that even if one does not have anything to gain, one should still have pity on animals in need of help. In the second Féerie pour une autre fois, he presents responsibility as caring for those that life puts in one’s path: “[J]amais j’ai trahi les confiances, jamais j’ai rien abandonné !... ni un malade, ni un soldat, ni un animal ! [...] que je chasse un chat à la rue, même pelé, galeux, et miaouleur, le plus pire des chieries terribles ! j’aime mieux qu’il couche avec moi qu’il souffre de ma faute” (Céline, Féerie II 230). By including an animal alongside the people he lists, Céline highlights their equal importance, affirming their status as fellow living beings. His concern for animals goes so far that he would prefer to sleep with an infected animal than to let him suffer when he could have helped. In listing this cat, which would disgust many people, as an animal that he would help, he emphasizes that
people have a responsibility towards sick animals. They should make sure that they receive care, instead of turning their back on them and going on their way. When he adds “qu’il souffre de ma faute,” he suggests that ignoring these suffering animals is in fact, a fault. In ignoring them, one neglects a responsibility that one has towards them, because they cannot help themselves. By expressing this duty towards a sick cat, Céline revives a point made by Montaigne in his essay, “De la Cruauté”: “Nous devons la justice aux hommes, et la grace et la benignité aux autres creatures qui en peuvent estre capables” (435). Montaigne, like Céline, presents kindness towards the higher animals as a moral responsibility by using the verb “devoir,” which eliminates any obscurity in their moral status. He continues by listing historical societies for whom caring for animals was a responsibility, including the Turks who had animal hospitals and practiced charity towards them (Montaigne 435). In this way, he, like Céline, gives examples of how to put this responsibility into action. Both Céline and the Turks advocate caring responsiveness towards community animals, following one of Gruen’s criteria for engaged empathy. Engaged empathy includes “critical attention to the broader conditions that undermine the well-being or flourishing of the objects of empathy and this requires moral agents to attend to things they might not have otherwise (Gruen, Attending 30). By advocating bringing the sick cat into a warm home, Céline demonstrates “attention to the broader conditions that undermine” his well-being, just as the animal hospitals built by the Turks also show attention to and responsibility for local animals’ illnesses and injuries. Because the cat is a community cat, Céline’s example depicts how to “attend to things (one) might not have otherwise.” As community cats do not belong to specific people, one can simply pass them by, as many do, without attending to their needs. Yet, if everyone does this, the cat will continue to suffer.

Sometimes this idea of community includes accepting risk to oneself. In this same work, Céline advocates for animals by leaving himself in harm’s way to keep them safe. Due to the bombing, he
suggests to Lili that they leave the building, but she worries about Piram and Bébert, who may not be allowed on the metro. Céline describes the distress of Piram, who would have nowhere to go if they did not stay to protect him: “Il est là Piram, il me pleure dans la main... sa grosse tête en plein dans ma main... il pleure... il tremble pas mais il se rend compte... si on part nous deux Lili, Mme Toiselle le chassera ! elle aime pas Piram... à cause d’un coup, une fois jeune, il y a pissé sur son tapis... où qu’il ira, chassé, Piram ?... brûler ? brûler dehors ?” (Céline, Féerie II 287). He realizes here that he cannot leave without risking harm to Piram, even though Piram does not belong to him, so he and Lili do not yet try to escape to save themselves. In this instance also he shows an obligation to help weaker beings who need help. His and Lili’s understanding of the situation, their attention to the broader circumstances, obliges them to protect Piram from the harm that the other residents would otherwise inflict on him, thereby undermining his well-being and flourishing. Rather than remaining in the “I” mode, they view the situation holistically, understanding the others’ attitude towards Piram, and preventing future harm.

Céline also cares for animals by helping the stray and hungry animals of the community. He has taken in a hedgehog as a pet and considers feeding not only his domestic animals, but also the wild ones to be his responsibility:

Sans jouer les Saint Vincent-de-Paul ou les Münthe, il m’est souvent reproché de faire trop de place aux animaux... c’est un fait... oui ! oui !... biscottes, lard, chènesvis, mourons, ‘baché’, tout y passe !... chiens, chats, mésanges, piafs, rouges-gorges, hérissons, nous mènent la vie dure ! et les mouettes des toits Renault !... l’hiver... de l’usine en bas... de l’île... nous nous rendons ridicules, soit !... surtout que les uns amènent les autres... hérissons, rouges-gorges, mésanges... surtout l’hiver !... du haut-Meudon... sans nous ça irait plutôt mal, l’hiver... [...] nos bêtes coûtent trop cher... j’admets... le moment de faire gafe ! nous faisons gafe dix fois par semaine ! dix autres oiseaux nous arrivent ! (Céline, Château 31).

Céline and Lucette (Lili in this work) do not care for these animals out of an abundance of resources or for their own pleasure or entertainment, but out of concern and compassion, even though this means that they have less for themselves. Because many of these birds come from the Renault factory, their
lack of natural sources of food likely stems from habitat loss due to urbanization. Showing that the birds come from the factory when food is lacking in winter, emphasizes that factory building has negatively affected wildlife, thereby providing an additional criticism of industrialization. Therefore, by showing their dependence on human intervention, again showing the broader conditions which affect the animals in question, Céline demonstrates that engaged empathy for those living in urban areas ensures that animals affected by urbanization have their needs met as their living area and food sources shrink. Since humans have reduced their ability to care for themselves, and since they still remain in the area populated by humans, engaged empathy requires that they help reduce the effects of habitat loss. The exotic birds in Rigodon provide an example of the consequences of eliminating animals’ ability for self-care and then abandoning them to their own devices. Their change of habitat and subsequent loss of human help on which they had become dependent, leave them with little chance of survival.

Céline affirms through these excerpts that animals participate in communities. Even an infected cat and wild animals, those who frequently become ignored and rejected, form part of one’s community. He illustrates that humans, as the most powerful species, should use their superior capacities to care for all living beings who need care, when it is within their power to do so. That is to say that they should live up to Albert Schweitzer’s previously cited definition of ethics: “A man is really ethical only when he obeys the constraint laid on him to help all life which he is able to succor” (254). Céline establishes that one should go out of one’s way to help animals, precisely because of their helplessness. When one sees an individual need, one should recognize the broader conditions and respond to that need, seeing the complete reality of the being in need by attending to things one might not have otherwise made the effort to notice. Through these passages he calls for a new system of ethics towards those who cannot reciprocate in traditional ways. They bridge the gap of detachment

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towards those considered less or incapable of reciprocation and convey reasons to react empathetically towards them, improving in their lives, and allowing for their well-being and flourishing.

The Positive characteristics of Céline’s animals

Animals as agents

Qu’il me face entendre par l’effort de son discours, sur quels fondemens il a basty ces grands avantages qu’il pense avoir sur les autres creatures– Montaigne 450-51

To have compassion for another being, one must view them as meriting this compassion. That is to say that elements such as guilt (where the potential recipient of compassion could be seen as somehow deserving their fate) or dissimilarity to oneself affect one’s ability and willingness to feel compassion for another. Thus, when Descartes characterized animals as being like clocks, the experimenters could proceed with their painful experiments without compassion. The anthropocentric human/animal binary creates a gulf that accentuates dissimilarities and allows people to proceed with varying degrees of mistreatment of animals without questioning their actions. Céline’s work bridges this gulf by illustrating multiple positive characteristics found in other creatures. He depicts animals as showing faithfulness, innocence, and intelligence. His passages not only emphasize the goodness found in the animal community, but also demonstrate continuities with humans found in the nonhuman animal world. Consequently, they pose counterexamples to those who portray animals as abstract, replaceable objects, and show them as subjects. He uses observation of animal behavior in their natural circumstances to present evidence of these positive qualities. De Waal’s experience has taught him that, “The best way to understand animal emotions is just to watch spontaneous behavior, either in the wild or captivity” (Mama’s 57-my emphasis). Only observation in uncontrolled circumstances can provide examples of real-world behavior, and consequently, understanding of living beings in their daily
life. Additionally, Céline shows the benefits one receives from animals, accentuating reciprocal relationships. The portrayal of his animal characters calls into question, as Montaigne did in his *Apologie de Raymond Sebond*, the overarching sense of superiority of most people with regard to animals. Salt wrote in 1892 that it will never “be possible to obtain full justice for the lower races so long as we continue to regard them as beings of a wholly different order, and to ignore the significance of their numberless points of kinship with mankind” (9). Céline shows animal traits that one finds in both human and nonhuman animals, which illustrate this kinship. His use of real-world situations forces the reader to see the error in mechanomorphic views of animals and anthropodenial. De Waal defines anthropodenial as “the *a priori* rejection of shared characteristics between humans and animals. Anthropodenial denotes willful blindness to the human-like characteristics of animals, or the animal-like characteristics of ourselves” (*Primates* p. 65). Céline focuses on human-like characteristics of animals, thereby refuting anthropodenial and negating it as a valid reason to lack empathy for animals.

**Loyalty and faithfulness**

Quant à la fidelité, il n’est animal au monde traistre au pris de l’homme—Montaigne 476

Montaigne follows this statement with examples of the extraordinary faithfulness of dogs, thereby asserting that their faithfulness greatly surpasses that of people. Céline often praises the loyalty of not just dogs, but of animals in general, whereas he rarely sees this characteristic in humans, thus demonstrating in his work the often greater fidelity of nonhuman animals. In direct human-animal relationships, dogs, such as Piram and Iago, are loyal to humans who are not. Bébert frequently demonstrates his loyalty to Lili and Céline in the trilogy by traveling obediently in the bottom of his sack and following them or returning to them when he is allowed to roam outdoors. Conversely, Céline’s human characters generally first look out for their own interests above those of others, illustrating
Montaigne’s comparison. Because Céline himself often felt betrayed, but felt that he himself was loyal, he has a keener awareness of this trait than others, enabling him both to relate to and empathize with animals who demonstrate faithfulness.

In *Mort à crédit*, Céline demonstrates the loyalty of animals that one would generally not associate with this trait, domesticated birds. The pigeons Ferdinand cares for show their recognition of him as soon as he starts to come into the attic: “[C]’était des braves petites bêtes *loyales et fidèles*... absolument familiales... ils m’attendaient dans la soupente... dès qu’ils m’entendaient remuer l’échelle... ils roucoulaient double!” (Céline, *MC* 503-my emphasis). The birds demonstrate their fidelity by oral expression and a physical response – waiting for him when they hear him approaching. Ferdinand’s phrase “C’était des braves petites bêtes loyales et fidèles,” associates the pigeons’ fidelity with the affectionate description, “braves petites bêtes,” thereby illustrating that their loyalty has made them worthy of affection. He also shows here how birds communicate with humans in the absence of common language; they simply communicate with their own language, demonstrating both their understanding and excitement that Ferdinand is coming into the attic. Céline, by listing the ways they communicate, illustrates to his reader how to be open to other means of communication. In this way, they can better understand animals and see their positive qualities that they would miss if they limited themselves to human language.

Bardamu, in *Voyage*, also experiences the loyalty of a bird, but he is less appreciative of this than Ferdinand, as he ultimately ends up eating it. In Africa, he inherits a chicken from Robinson. At the time of day when the sun becomes unbearable and he returns to his hut, it always follows him back: “Mon poulet, mon seul, la redoutait aussi cette heure-là, il rentrait avec moi, lui, l’unique, légué par Robinson. Il a vécu comme ça avec moi pendant trois semaines, le poulet, promenant, me suivant comme un chien” (Céline, *Voyage* 171-72). Even though he had belonged to Robinson, the chicken had quickly
become attached to Bardamu. The comparison to a dog, along with his implied reliability, portray him as a loyal pet, who chooses to be in Bardamu’s company. The pattern over time illustrates that this chicken has social needs of his own. Regan, who primarily focuses on mammals, mentions chickens when discussing harm by deprivation: “Even so ‘lowly’ a creature as the chicken has a discernible social structure and behaves in ways that suggest social needs and attendant desires” (98). When Bardamu’s chicken follows him daily, he shows signs of both social structure (with Bardamu being the head of their two-person social structure) and the need for socialization. The group of non-related birds in Denmark also reinforce evidence of this need in birds. In the absence of conspecifics, they stuck together as a multi-species community.

Although Céline portrays the loyalty of multiple animals, the animal whose loyalty appears the most in Céline’s oeuvre is of course Bébert, despite the fact that he is a cat, an animal much less known for its loyalty than dogs. In Nord, Bébert would follow Céline and Lili faithfully. After a comment made by another resident about birds, Céline writes: “Je voulais pas lui faire remarquer que si les oiseaux pépiaient tant et loin devant nous c’était à cause de Bébert qui ne nous quittait pas, fidèle greffe !... il nous suivait dans les talons” (Nord 22). Once again, he uses the word “fidèle” to emphasize this quality in animals, just as he does with the pigeons. Bébert demonstrates the capacity of a cat to form emotional bonds by refusing to separate from Céline and Lili, even when he could have roamed free.

Perhaps the incident that best demonstrates Bébert’s loyalty is from the night he caught on fire in Denmark, subsequent to Céline’s last work. After Céline’s release from prison, when he and Lucette were staying in an apartment loaned to them in Copenhagen, a heated blanket set fire to Bébert:

“[S]uite d’un court-circuit dans la couverture chauffante, une nuit Bébert prend feu. Naturellement, il

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n’appelle ni ne fuit. Si Lucette ne se réveillait pas, il carboniserait en silence” (Alméras 323). Bébert, who had learned to not move or speak when commanded, silently remained by his owners while on fire. Despite being in a deadly situation, to his own detriment he does not abandon them, or even cry for help.

In addition to catching fire, Bébert also freezes his paws in the snow in Denmark in order to stay close to Céline and Lucette. Lucette recounts how he would follow them despite the effect of the snow on his paws: “Comme un chien, il nous suivait dans la neige, ses pattes, petit bonhomme, toutes brûlées. Je lui ai fabriqué des bottines” (Maroushka 73). Once again, Bébert endures physical pain to avoid separation from his owners. Although these two examples are not found in works written by Céline, they emphasize Bébert’s devotion to Céline and Lucette, which no doubt influenced the descriptions of him included in Céline’s work.

Céline’s passages highlight that multiple types of animals demonstrate loyalty, including those typically overlooked when discussing this characteristic, such as birds and cats. In this way, he shows that animals are virtuous, in that they possess a desirable trait for which they should be appreciated. The examples of Bébert illustrate his unwavering loyalty, part of what Céline admired most in his personality. They also illustrate his exceptional nature, as his loyalty surpasses what one might expect from a cat. The fidelity of these animals contrasts with the deception and self-interest that Céline finds in society. Thus, the faithfulness of the animals serves as both a model for people and a reason that they should be valued. Beyond that, it also demonstrates a social need in the animals, who themselves benefit from the company of those with whom they have a relationship. Regan showed that animals, like humans, have emotional and social needs. These animals, by demonstrating their loyalty,

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57 Also found in Alliot Madame Céline p. 144
simultaneously demonstrate these needs. They give affection to and hope to receive affection and
security from their caretakers due to their need to live in relationship with other living beings. Barbara
Smuts, who has extensively studied animal behavior, notes that when a human and animal interact on
an individual level, they have a personal relationship, with each party constituting a subject:

[R]elating to other beings as persons has nothing to do with whether or not we attribute
human characteristics to them. It has to do instead with recognizing that they are social
subjects, like us, whose idiosyncratic, subjective experience of us plays the same role in
their relations with us that our subjective experience of them plays in our relations with
them. If they relate to us as individuals, and we relate to them as individuals, it is
possible for us to have a personal relationship (Reflections 118–her emphasis).

By relating to humans as individuals, animals contradict Descartes’ animal-machine theory and prove
their complexity as well as their individualism. That is to say that one animal is not a direct substitute
for another of the same species. Each has its own personality which it demonstrates when it forms
personal relationships.

Innocence

In addition to loyalty, one of the principal characteristics that Céline admires in other beings,
which he finds primarily in children and animals, is innocence. He repeatedly expresses that as children
become adults and interact with society, they lose this virtue. Animals become further victims of those
who have already replaced innocence with negative characteristics. Innocence represents a lack of
corruption and wrongdoing, and for that reason, an innocent being should not have to suffer
unnecessarily.

Céline emphasizes the innocence of both Lucette and Bébert in Féerie pour une autre fois I.
After calling Lucette, whom he names “Arlette” in this work, “absolument innocente,” he describes the
innocence and intelligence of Bébert:

Et puis Bébert, autre innocent, mon chat... Vous direz un chat c’est une peau ! Pas du
tout ! Un chat c’est l’ensorcellement même, le tact en ondes... c’est tout en ‘brt,’ ‘brt’
de paroles... Bébert en ‘brrt’ il causait, positivement. Il vous répondait aux questions... Maintenant il ‘brrt’ ‘brrt’ pour lui seul... il répond plus aux questions... il monologue sur lui-même... comme moi-même... il est abruti comme moi-même... (Céline Féerie I, 19).

In this passage, Céline anticipates the anthropocentric argument “un chat c’est une peau,” that is to say that a cat does not possess any mental ability. After anticipating this argument, he proceeds to refute it.

For Céline, a cat is capable of his own type of conversation, demonstrated by the fact that his cat, Bébert, responds to questions. Frank B. Fay wrote in Our Dumb Animals, the former monthly publication of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: “It is often said ‘that animals cannot speak for themselves,’ which is true if we add ‘in our language.’ They can and do understand our words directed to them, and their own language directed to each other” (Fay 87). By responding to questions, Bébert shows his understanding that Céline is addressing him, and he speaks back in his own language. Céline continues this demonstration against anthropocentrism by describing the similar effects of age and their exile on himself and Bébert. Both now talk to themselves; they have become “abruti[s].” By describing this similarity, he draws a comparison between cats and humans; they can both be affected by the same conditions in similar ways. Starting this passage with “Et puis Bébert, autre innocent” demonstrates that the changes in Bébert are the result of the suffering of an innocent being. Giving the example of his intelligence adds to his innocence by showing him as a being with mental processes. He is capable of suffering, but has done nothing to deserve it.

In his portrayal of the death of Bessy, a dog he brought back with him from Denmark, Céline contrasts the innocence of animals with unnecessary death, emphasizing the injustice: “[L]es animaux sont innocents, même les fugueurs comme Bessy... on les abat dans les meutes” (Céline, Château 128). By stating, “mêmes les fugueurs comme Bessy,” Céline shows that despite their imperfections, animals remain pure. Unlike people, they do not become corrupted by society. Even when one treats animals badly, like Toinon with Piram, they retain their innocence. Bessy suffered in Denmark, but still became a
faithful companion for Céline. In the same section, he describes her conditions before she became his:

“[O]n l’avait eue très malheureuse, là-haut... vraiment la vie très atroce... des froids -25˚... et sans
niche !... pas pendant des jours... des mois !... des années !” (Céline Château 128). He again contrasts
innocence and suffering to emphasize not only her lack of culpability, but also that she deserved to be
treated well, again expanding his description to include the broader conditions that prevented her
flourishing.

When he describes Bébert’s death, in Nord, after having already established his identity as an
innocent being in Féerie pour une autre fois I, Céline emphasizes all that Bébert endured during his
voyage across Europe, all while not having the benefit of youth: “[I]l pousse des soupirs... déjà il était
plus tout jeune... il a encore vécu sept ans, Bébert, je l’ai ramené ici, à Meudon... il est mort ici, après
bien d’autres incidents, cachots, bivouacs, cendres, toute l’Europe... il est mort agile et gracieux,
impeccable” (Céline, Nord 422). Already in Germany, Céline notices that the voyage was taking its toll
on Bébert as well. Yet he persevered and made it back to France with Céline and Lucette, and despite all
the difficulties, including bombings and Céline’s imprisonment, he died “gracieux” and “impeccable.”
Society did not corrupt Bébert, who suffered through much of his life.

Céline often juxtaposes suffering and innocence to highlight that, in the complete absence of
wrongdoing, the being who suffers has been wronged. According to Nussbaum: “[A]nimals are subjects
of justice to the extent that individual animals are suffering pain and deprivation” (Nussbaum FJ 357).
Céline shows Bessie and Bébert as subjects of justice through Bessie’s treatment in Denmark and
Bébert’s suffering in exile. Both endured excessively harsh conditions and deprivation without having
done anything to merit them. He illustrates Nussbaum’s philosophical argument with concrete
examples, showing that ideas of justice should be expanded to include animals. Through the emphasis
on their personal experiences, the reader can understand that life can go better or worse for nonhuman
animals, and that, as subjects of justice, it is not simply an abstract dog and cat who have been harmed, but Bébert, un chat gracieux et impeccable, and Bessie, une fugueuse innocente.

Camaraderie

Quant à l’amitié, elles (les bêtes) l’ont, sans comparaison, plus vive et plus constante que n’ont pas les hommes—Montaigne 471

Céline, like Montaigne, views animal friendship as more reliable than that of humans. In a society that Céline views as cold and mechanical, animals retain their warmth and emotion. They remain attached to their owners or other animals, and do not aim to harm others. In “L’Apocalypse à Crédit,” Michael André Bernstein notes that the love from Lucette and his animals is the only love that Céline believes he can count on: “Love, except for his wife Lili’s and that of their animals, will always be too shifting” (153). Unlike animals, people stop having affection for others. The people that Céline thought he could count on while in prison had turned against him, but his animals never had.

Céline illustrates that animals, unlike many humans, form and participate in communities with people and other animals without concern for political beliefs. The warhorses in Voyage do not take a side in the war, as the people do. They have no resentment of the horses on the other side, nor do they even know whose “side” they belong to. Bardamu describes how the German horses come to see the French horses when the two sides encounter each other after the Germans have dismounted:

Et leurs chevaux libérés, étriers fous et clinquants, galopaien à vide et dévalaient vers nous de très loin avec leurs selles à troussequins bizarres, et leurs cuirs frais comme ceux des portefeuilles du jour de l’an. C’est nos chevaux qu’ils venaient rejointre, amis tout de suite. Bien de la chance ! C’est pas nous qu’on aurait pu en faire autant ! (Céline, Voyage 31).

He wishes that the soldiers could act more like the horses, who merely want the companionship of like beings. Simply by finding others of the same species, unlike humans, they become immediate friends.

As Bernardin de Saint-Pierre stated in his Éloge historique et philosophique de mon ami, animals do not
know or care about their nationality: “L’homme seul a divisé la terre en royaumes ; elle est pour le reste
de ses habitants une patrie commune, qui n’a ni frontières, ni barrières, et où chaque espèce parle
toujours le même langage, et conserve les mêmes mœurs” (49). Nationality serves to divide, but these
horses show a counterexample of unification, starkly contrasting with not only those who view people’s
nationality as divisive, but also with those like the shopkeeper who had his dogs killed because of their
breed. Zola made a similar observation in “L’Amour des bêtes”: “Les bêtes n’ont pas encore de patrie”
(96). He calls the idea of “patrie” “guerroyante et fratricide,” and eliminating this idea is part of “le rêve
d’un acheminement vers la cité du bonheur futur” with peace for humans and animals (96-97). Animals,
who do not observe borders or nationalities, live more peacefully because of this. This consequently
reinforces the injustice of the previously discussed treatment of the French warhorses, as it illustrates
the fact that the horses were victims, not willing participants in the war; they themselves have nothing
to gain.

Mutual affection seemed an obvious trait of horses to Darwin, who remarked in the fourth
chapter of *The Descent of Man*: “Every one must have noticed how miserable horses, dogs, sheep, etc.,
are when separated from their companions, and what strong mutual affection the two former kinds, at
least, show on their reunion” (Darwin 54 [204]). These horses not only clearly have a “strong mutual
affection” for each other, but also present a contrast to the humans who instead of becoming “amis tout
de suite,” violently destroy each other in a quite literal sense. Céline’s opposition of the two makes the
point that human society would benefit from becoming more like the horses. Singer summarizes part of
this same chapter of *The Descent of Man*: [T]he human moral sense can also be traced back to social
instincts in animals that lead them to take pleasure in each other’s company, feel sympathy for each
other, and perform services of mutual assistance” (AL 206). When the horses “dévalaient vers nous de
très loin,” they demonstrate taking pleasure in each other’s company, showing a strong desire to join
their conspecifics. Furthermore, the fact alone that the horses recognize each other as horses already proves a type of animal intelligence. As Derrida remarked in *L’Animal que donc je suis*: “Ne peut-on parler d’expérience déjà spectaculaire dès qu’un chat reconnaît un chat et commence à savoir, sinon à se dire, en somme, qu’‘un chat est un chat’ ?” (88). He points out with this example that proof of animal intelligence has always been right under people’s noses. Céline illustrates this same point, emphasizing that the horses galloped towards them from “très loin,” thus already realizing the presence of the other horses from a great distance. Their effort in doing so presents evidence that they have their own desires, reinforcing that “they have a good or ill of their own,” making them subject to harm and consequently subjects of justice.

**Obedience and intelligence**

Bébert’s obedience facilitates Céline’s life in difficult circumstances. Throughout their exile, he obeyed Lucette and Céline. Because of this, the three made it safely across Germany and into Denmark while staying together. Lucette and Céline did not need to worry about unpredictable behavior from their cat or leave him behind because he might hinder their journey. His obedience also gives proof of his ability to learn, and consequently, of his intelligence. Just as Voltaire wrote in the eighteenth century, although in reference to dogs, the capacity to learn shows a similarity to humans that firstly, cannot be discounted, and secondly proves a certain level of intelligence. Of course the refusal to obey, such as in mules and horses, also demonstrates intelligence, and is sometimes considered a higher level of intelligence. However, the ability to first learn what others expect them to do already demonstrates the ability to memorize and process information. Barbara Smuts, after describing extraordinary sentences her own dog understands, continues her previously-mentioned argument on the personhood of animals, revealing that perhaps our limited expectations of animals keep them from their potential: “I do firmly believe—and my experience with other animals supports this belief—that treating members of
other species as persons, as beings with potential far beyond our normal expectations, will bring out the best in them, and that each animal’s best includes unforeseeable gifts” (Reflections 120). Céline’s exile placed Bébert in extraordinary circumstances and his adaptation to them proved him a cat that greatly exceeded normal expectations, showing that low expectations, regarding at least some animals, may very well be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Had their circumstances not been what they were, they would never have known Bébert’s truly extraordinary capacities, relative to other cats, that perhaps are not so extraordinary after all.

The tight quarters in which they stayed, along with Bébert’s fear of losing Céline and Lucette, which made him stay constantly close to them, gave Céline a unique perspective on cat intelligence. In Nussbaum’s study of emotional intelligence, she remarks that some psychologists’ studies of animal intelligence fall short of a true understanding of this quality:

Many experimentalists are themselves highly empathetic observers of particular animals, and come to know their subjects well as individuals. But we have also seen that cognitive psychology has been prone to reductive and inadequate accounts of animal intelligence, accounts that were readily repudiated by people who knew and interacted with animals (Upheavals 119).

In this observation, she associates better knowledge of animal intelligence with better knowledge of animals in general. Those who have no familiarity with animals cannot sufficiently account for their intelligence. In order to achieve this understanding, one must have empathy for the animals, know them as individuals, and have experience interacting with them on a regular basis. Céline’s obvious empathy for Bébert and their travels together, interacting in multiple types of conditions, gives him insight into cat capabilities, unavailable to others who do not have these exceptional experiences.

During their exile, Bébert made no attempt to escape from his sack at times when it would have hindered Céline or Lucette. Pierre Courtet, a senior official in the Vichy regime, went to Céline for treatment at Sigmaringen. During his consultation, Bébert watched from his sack, which Courtet
describes in his unpublished *Souvenirs*: “Ses visites médicales : pendant l’auscultation, il pendait au-dessus d’une chaise ou à la fenêtre, la musette renfermant Bébert dont la tête émergeait seule et qui contemplait, calme et solennel – on eût dit qu’il allait rédiger l’ordonnance – les mouvements de son patron” (Alliot, *D’un château* 232). Bébert demonstrates not just obedience here, but resignation as well. Not only does he remain in his sack, but he does so calmly, content to simply observe the events.

All through their exile, Bébert senses what is necessary for their survival. Shortly after their arrival in Denmark, he decides on his own to get out of his sack, but they have confidence in his obedience and know that he will not roam: “Bébert sort, s’étire... je le connais, il se sauvera pas... il restera là tout près, dans l’herbe” (Céline, *Rigodon* 216). He also knows when to get back in his sack: “[Q]ue Bébert s’y retrouve... il comprend tout de suite, il saute, s’installe, et ronron... c’est pas un greffe n’importe quoi, il comprend nos conditions, je suis sûr qu’il en sait plus qu’il dit et même sur ce qui va se passer... le silence animal c’est quelqu’un” (Céline, *Rigodon* 216). In this passage, Céline gives a new interpretation of animal silence; instead of demonstrating a lack of intelligence, as those who oppose animal welfare would have one think, it masks their intelligence. He emphasizes here the impossibility of knowing exactly how much Bébert understands, just as Montaigne did with his own cat four centuries earlier in his famous statement: “Quand je me jouë à ma chatte, qui sçait si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fay d’elle” (452). Montaigne explains that men deny animal intelligence due to their vanity and seeing themselves equal to God. The qualities they attribute or do not attribute to animals do not come from any logical processes: “[I]l se trie soy mesme et separe de la presses des autres creatures, taille les parts aux animaux ses confrères et compaignons, et leur distribue telle portion de facultez et de forces que bon luy semble. Comment cognoit il, par l’effort de son intelligence, les

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58 Courtêt’s granddaughter, Françoise Boissy, authorized Alliot to publish the chapter on Céline in his own work.
branch internes et secrets des animaux ? par quelle comparaison d’eux à nous conclut il la bestise qu’il leur attribue ?” (Montaigne 452). He shows here that men rationalize their supposed status of being the only intelligent beings through the lens of their vanity rather than through any defensible arguments. His questions emphasize that they have not justified their beliefs. Céline, on the other hand, gives observed evidence of animal intelligence, showing that Bébert “comprend tout de suite,” by backing up this statement with Bébert’s behavior. Both Céline and Montaigne recognize their own limitations on their knowledge of their cats’ intelligence, yet both understand that the cats’ silence does not represent a lack of intelligence.

As Fay and de Waal, amongst others, have noted, the inability to speak “human” has greatly contributed to anthropocentrism. In particular, this has served as a recurring argument to deny animal intelligence. Yet, studies with apes have shown the ability to use sign language. Gruen notes that their inability to speak in human language does not come from lack of intelligence, but from different physiology, citing a cross-fostering study:

[T]he systematic study of animal language did not begin until the 1950’s when Keith and Kathy Hayes took in an infant chimpanzee, Viki, and raised her in their home for a little over six years as a human child, a method of rearing that came to known as cross-fostering. One of the skills they hoped to teach Viki was to speak. By manipulating her lips and blocking her nose, they were able to get her to say ‘mama,’ ‘papa,’ ‘up,’ and ‘cup,’ but none of these words was ever uttered very clearly. Viki came to understand many spoken words even though she herself was never able to speak any. Viki died of pneumonia when she was only six and a half years old and that particular cross-fostering study ended. Only later did it become apparent that chimpanzee vocal anatomy is quite different from that of humans, making it impossible for chimpanzees to ‘speak’ as humans do” (Ethics 10).

The fact that chimpanzees can communicate with sign language, but not verbally, because of vocal anatomy, highlights the error in interpreting this inability as a sign of their lack of intelligence. Moreover, as chimpanzees give more and more proof of their intelligence, those who want to maintain a human/animal binary keep raising the bar. Chimpanzees have not only learned sign language, but
taught it to other chimpanzees without humans communicating to the learning group in sign language at all (Gruen, *Ethics* 10). They have combined words for new ideas without having been taught, such as ‘candy fruit’ for watermelon and ‘water bird’ for swan (Gruen, *Ethics* 10). In response to a criticism of lacking grammar, a new ape study proved grammatical ability by using magnetic symbols on a magnetic board:

If Sarah (the chimpanzee) wanted an apple (or any other item not immediately present), she would place the symbol for apple on the magnetic board in addition to symbols indicating that she wanted her interlocutor to give the apple to her. The human interlocutor could rearrange the order of the symbols—for example, telling Sarah to give the apple to Peony, another chimpanzee. When that happened, Sarah would often refuse, or reorder the symbols to indicate that the apple should be given to her not Peony, suggesting that she understood that symbols placed in a different order had different meanings. It looked as though Sarah understood grammar. As Sarah’s comprehension developed, she was able to respond to more complicated sentences such as ‘Sarah banana blue pail insert.’ When presented with both bananas and apples, red and blue pails, and red and blue dishes, Sarah would accurately place the correct fruit in the correct colored pail or dish the majority of the time” (Gruen, *Ethics* 10-11).

Yet even this was met by criticism of not being able to construct sentences. For each new skill a chimpanzee learned, it was pointed out that a higher level skill had not been accomplished. Gruen highlights how these tactics serve as attempts to maintain the idea of human exceptionalism:

Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, who works with bonobos, has been critical of the bar-raising dialectic of these debates, suggesting, as I do, that they are misguided attempts by those who cling to the idea of an insurmountable divide between humans and other animals to establish human exceptionalism – even in the face of clear evidence establishing continuities between human skills and the skills used by some non-humans. Every time an ape is able to do something characteristic of human language usage, skeptics either deny it actually happened or minimize the significance of that activity (Gruen, *Ethics* 12).

She shows here that Montaigne’s observation still holds today. The need to believe in a binary, rather than a continuum comes down to human vanity. As animals meet the bar, the bar changes, so that it can never be met, because nonhuman animals will always be nonhuman. Yet, the species-specific communication applies to all species; cats cannot bark, birds cannot meow, and horses cannot chirp.
However, as Fay points out, animals communicate perfectly well amongst themselves. We do not create a cat/non-cat animal binary because no other species meows. Gruen points out that human language can always serve as a dividing point between humans and other animals, but that one should use caution in attributing any secondary aspects to any specifically human characteristics:

Defining humans as unique in their capacity to use human language is akin to saying only humans have human intelligence. But we don’t want to define away the possibility that the capacities or skills that make up human intelligence might be shared by others. If we approach other animals as if they are so different from us that we cannot imagine them behaving in fascinatingly familiar ways, we may overlook what they are doing and fail to ask the right questions about the cognitive bases for their behaviors. If we expect that they don’t have the requisite capacities, then we might miss certain complex behaviors or interpret those behaviors in deflationary ways. Our commitment to human uniqueness may bias our observations and even the way that empirical research is conducted” (Ethics 13).

She, like Smuts and Montaigne, sees a relationship between expectations and what we know about animals. Whereas Smuts saw higher expectations as leading to more advanced behavior, Gruen emphasizes that one interprets what animals already do through the lens of expectations, and adherence to bias can limit what one learns in the future. Attributing a lack of a specific type of communication (human language), to a specific cause (lack of intelligence), when it can also be attributed to physiology, shows how observation has been biased in the past. This attribution of lack of intelligence has contributed to mechanomorphic beliefs of animals, which has further contributed to their suffering and abuse. Wrong beliefs have real-world consequences. When Céline states that Bébert knows more than he says, he simultaneously tells the reader not to attribute any secondary beliefs to animal silence. As Montaigne showed in his essay, the complete mind of an animal cannot be known.

Céline also values Bébert’s ability to know when he must remain perfectly still. In Féerie I, he describes his visits with Lucette to the Danish prison: “[E]lle vient me voir avec Bébert... sept minutes... Bébert dans son sac... Ah faut pas qu’il remue !... l’immobilité complète... le garde mate” (Céline, Féerie I
With the guard watching, Bébert remains undetectable because of this ability. Once again, his extraordinary obedience helps them stay together as much as the circumstances allow. Éliane Bonabel also noticed this ability in Bébert. She aids Céline when he is imprisoned, by obtaining permission for Lucette to have more frequent visits with her husband (Alliot, Mme 129). While discussing Céline’s desire to have Lucette bring Bébert along on her prison visits, she gives a unique description of Bébert:

Louis lui demandait de venir avec le chat Bébert, auquel il était très attaché, caché dans son sac. C’était un animal anormalement gros et grand, anormalement réceptif, je pourrais dire intelligent s’il ne s’agissait d’une bête. Il comprenait et faisait tout ce que lui disait Lucette, ne pas bouger, entrer sa tête dans le sac, ne pas miauler. C’était vraiment un chat prodigieux, réellement très subtil, tout à fait différent des autres chats que j’ai pu connaître (Alliot, D’Un Céline 767).59

This description accentuates the various ways in which Bébert demonstrates his intelligence. He obeys very specific commands which would normally fall outside of one’s expectations of a cat, such as retracting his head back in his enclosed bag and not meowing, showing how having greater expectations of animals can bring about unforeseeable gifts, as noted by Smuts. In addition to the ability to learn, the characteristic of obedience also demonstrates the capacity to understand, as stated by “il comprenait”. The description of Bébert as abnormally receptive shows that he reacts to input in ways that one would not typically associate with a cat, and the adjective “prodigieux” also highlights his exceptionality – Bébert behaves in an extraordinary way. The description viewed in its entirety gives examples of the characteristics that prove Bébert’s intelligence. However, the fact that Bonabel states “je pourrais dire intelligent s’il ne s’agissait d’une bête,” highlights the recurring anthropocentric idea that only humans can possess intelligence. Stated differently, despite all the evidence that she just offered to the contrary, the sole fact that Bébert is not human excludes him from being intelligent, in her opinion. In

this example, she shows that societal prejudices take precedence over logic and observation, demonstrating Gruen’s argument. She expects that Bébert cannot be intelligent, because he is not human, so she fails to ask any questions about the cognitive basis for his behavior. Instead, she ignores the fact that it presents evidence of intelligence, in order to preserve the idea of human exceptionality.

After Bébert’s death, Lucette bought Céline a parrot, who was named Toto. Toto, like Bébert, leaned to obey Céline. In Rigodon, he commands Toto to whistle a tune, which he does: “Toto siffle, mon perroquet... scupuleux, obéissant” (Céline, Rigodon 28). Toto not only does what Céline asks him to, but he also does it well. Thus, he, like Bébert, has become dependable. Like the capacity of animals to recognize their own kind, as noted by Derrida, the ability of birds to remember and whistle a tune has been known for so long that its remarkability fails to be noticed. However, Locke realized already in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, originally published in 1690, that this proved mental activity in birds:

[B]irds learning of tunes, and the endeavors one may observe in them to hit the notes right, put it past doubt with me, that they have perception, and retain ideas in their memories, and use them for patterns... it cannot with any appearance of reason be supposed (much less proved) that birds, without sense and memory, can approach their notes nearer and nearer by degrees to a tune played yesterday; which if they have no idea in their memory, is now nowhere, nor can be a pattern for them to imitate, or which any repeated essays can bring them nearer to (200-201).

Thus, when Céline writes of Toto’s ability to scrupulously reproduce a song, he shows the reader that Toto has a complex memory, perception, and discernment, giving evidence of intelligence in birds as well.

The obedience of Bébert and Toto demonstrates the learning capacity of animals. Bébert has learned multiple behaviors uncharacteristic of cats, most likely due his extraordinary life. Toto, the parrot has not just learned a song, but has also learned to whistle it on command. This ability to learn shows the mental capacity to understand and process information and consequently gives proof of
animal intelligence. Before they can prove their intelligence, however, they must be given the opportunity to learn, needing someone to believe in their potential, just as with Croney and Boysen’s pig study, which proved pig intelligence far beyond the carnistic perspective of meat animals. Céline and Lucette believed in Bébert, and consequently were rewarded with extraordinary behavior. The other witnesses to Bébert’s behavior support the legitimacy of his claims. By showing his animals’ learning capacity, that exceeds general public expectations, Céline shows his reader that animals should be given the chance to prove their capabilities and not be judged beforehand by any preconceived prejudices.

**Physical similarity to humans**

Crist’s description of mechanomorphia emphasizes the use of language to shape perceptions of animals as mechanical beings, who bear little resemblance to humans. Yet, the organs of the human body are also found in other mammals, and even in other non-mammalian vertebrates. De Waal explains how all vertebrates share similar physiologies:

> Apart from mammary glands, which set Mammalia apart, all organs are shared across the vertebrates, including frogs and birds. I dissected many a frog as a student, and they have everything, including reproductive organs, kidneys, a liver, heart, and so on. The vertebrate body requires a certain machinery, and if any part is missing or failing, it dies (Mama’s 165).

The bodies of humans, other mammals, birds, and even frogs function in a similar manner. Voltaire had used this argument to dispute the Cartesians of the eighteenth century, who also portrayed animals as mechanical creatures: “Tu découvres dans lui tous les mêmes organes de sentiment qui sont dans toi. Réponds-moi, machiniste, la nature a-t-elle arrangé tous les ressorts du sentiment dans cet animal, afin qu’il ne sente pas ? A-t-il des nerfs pour être impassible ? Ne suppose point cette impertinente contradiction dans la nature” (DP “Bêtes”). Céline, like Voltaire, shows that similar physiologies produce similar results. He counters the mechanomorphic tradition by highlighting the physical similarity between animals and humans and showing that the same cause will produce suffering equally in both.
Through the use of pattern recognition, one of de Waal’s strategies for studying animal behavior, Céline illustrates human/animal kinship. According to De Waal: “Without pattern recognition, observation remains unfocused and random” (Mama’s 2). Céline’s focus on symptoms, which as a physician he was quite qualified to do, enables him to recognize patterns in cause and effect.

Céline describes a seagull in Féerie pour une autre fois I that suffers from a flea infestation, like his friend André Dézarrois, whom he calls Prince Rebelle in this work. Prince Rebelle ultimately dies from septicemia from the wounds he created by scratching. The seagull is heading to a similar fate, due to the fleas:

Les puces l’ont eu ! Le Prince était infesté certes, mais toutes les créatures pareil ! et les oiseaux donc ! Je voyais un goéland se gratter sur la longue cime des hangars, là sous nos fenêtres, des heures et des heures !... le noble volatile ! et de l’autre côté du Casino ! il faisait les cent pas comme Rebelle, les cent pattes... il partait plus du tout pêcher... il fonçait sur des bouts de poisson, des restes des cageots, les ordures... un goéland à la retraite en somme... à la nuit on le voyait regrimper, très très péniblement (Céline, Féérie I 59).

The same cause, a flea infestation, is leading to the same effect, death, in both bird and human. Just as the prince scratched incessantly, so does the bird. The seagull no longer has the energy to feed himself properly, but can only eat what has been left lying around. When he returns to his home at night, it is with much pain and difficulty, which highlights his failing health.

In Copenhagen, when Lucette and Bébert must stay in a cold apartment while Céline remains in prison, both of them develop a cough from the cold: “Elle a trouvé qu’un fond de grenier... Bébert tousse, elle tousse” (Céline, Féerie I 84). The conditions and the results are the same for both Lucette and Bébert. The cold is deteriorating the health of both, which produces the exact same symptom in each of them.

These scenes refute the idea of an uncrossable line between humans and animals, as the similarity between them is undeniable. Céline goes further than physiology by illustrating the same
reactions to negative stimuli, fleas and cold temperatures. His friend and the seagull even limited
themselves to around the same number of steps each day, due to the same physical deterioration. With
these examples, Céline refutes the idea that animals will not suffer similarly to humans from the same
causes.

These examples illustrate how Céline uses his work as moral philosophy. He advocates a new
perception of animals by making the reader a witness to specific animal behavior caused by specific
animal abuse of his time, and consequently, presenting undeniable evidence that they suffer. This
evidence gives a sense not only of their physical pain, but also of their emotional suffering. He invites
the readers to imagine the animal’s perspective, thus invoking their compassion for the animal’s
experience. Céline also demonstrates how to become an effective moral actor by recognizing and
becoming responsive to individual needs, in particular those of animals. By showing areas where animal
characteristics, such as innocence, loyalty and camaraderie, sometimes surpass those of humans, he
illustrates how animals can serve as role-models, while simultaneously showing that humans are not
superior to animals in every respect. His descriptions of the animals themselves set aside his frequent
mocking tone, showing the seriousness of their situation in his time. In its place, he becomes more
descriptive, showing the complexity of their situations, and restoring the singularity and emotion
necessary for empathy that the scientific writing strove to eradicate. This descriptiveness brings the
animal condition out of obscurity and presents them as subjects with moral value.

3.3 Conclusion: Restoring empathy

Throughout Céline’s work one sees the call to stop injustice. Animals, who cannot or do not
rebel, suffered great injustice in his time. Because they do not rebel themselves, Céline rebels for them
by calling out their abuse in his work and graphically describing the harm that they suffer. He uses
illustration, rather than direct philosophical argument to advance what have become key points in animal studies, such as animal sentience, agency, intelligence, and their ability to form personal relationships. His portrayals advocate for animals by demonstrating these aspects of animals that had hitherto been either minimized or denied completely. By using common language to describe their plight, as well as including animal abuse scenes amongst other daily occurrences, he shows how common and “ordinary” (in the sense that the observers accept this treatment) animal abuse had become, as well as the logic in recognizing their abuse as abuse when all the details are provided.

Céline’s “style émotif” reflects the creativity that he values as one of the primary joys of life. It celebrates emotion over coldness and combats the increasingly mechanical nature of society at that time. By including emotion, as well as animal scenes that provoke emotion, he rebels against mechanicalism, inviting the reader to empathize with animals, and others disadvantaged by society. With his creative ability, he attempts to raise the status of animals and those lowest on the hierarchy, who frequently become victims of human aggression. Céline highlights the general acceptance of cruelty and indifference, which perpetuates animal objectification. But most importantly, his style reflects a rebellion over emotional suppression, asserting his agency to express emotion, while encouraging the reader to recognize his own emotional agency. Derrida asserts that there is, “une guerre en cours et dont l’inégalité pourrait un jour s’inverser, entre, d’une part, ceux qui violent non seulement la vie animale mais jusqu’à ce sentiment de compassion et, d’autre part, ceux qui en appellent au témoignage irréçusable de cette pitié (50-my emphasis). Céline takes a side in this war of pity, fighting back against those who try to suppress compassion in others, while calling on the reader to witness his own pity, and simultaneously illustrating the reasons why the reader should share it.

He illustrates how many humans have “absence of appropriate affect” with regard to animal harm. By depicting animal singularities, he refutes mechanical views of animals which aggravate this
problem. He invites the reader to participate in engaged empathy, where one does not need a common language to understand animals and instead has the ability to comprehend all types of communication. His vast experience with animals allows him to portray their behavior in a way that the reader can draw appropriate conclusions on animal sentience and suffering directly from the described behavior. The contrast between Céline’s and Lucette’s treatment of animals and others’ treatment of animals illustrates the difference between a mechanistic perspective, acknowledging no relatedness to animals, and an empathetic perspective, which acknowledges a kinship. Céline shows the ethics of the empathetic perspective where one always views animals as “you.” He calls on his readers to form new connections with animals where they feel free to feel emotional attachment to these creatures capable not only of pain and suffering, but joy and devotion as well.

Céline challenges convention not only in writing style, but also in philosophy. He shows emotion as part of humanity necessary to overcome the increasingly mechanistic view of both animals and humans. His depictions of animals, by provoking emotion, promote respect for animals, challenging the boundaries created by the human/animal and emotion/reason binaries. They illustrate that individual beings, not abstract categories, feel pain and fear or joy and love, and, like Bébert or the scared, lost dog, individual beings share one’s life or community.

Céline was hated by many for much of his adult life. His health deteriorated while on death row in prison and he never recovered, in addition to having a war injury. As a result, Céline saw the dark side of humanity. The persecution he faced during the latter part of his life enabled him to better understand the animals that society also allowed to be persecuted, ignored, or neglected. By virtue of his effort to increase emotion and imagination in daily life, he calls on others to recall their own experiences of pain, neglect, or suffering and use them for good by first empathizing with animals’ experiences, and then doing something about them. Individual experiences, whether human or animal,
viewed without emotion remain obscured, but adding empathy and compassion through the use of the imagination brings clarity and illumination.

For every generality, there are untold stories and unseen perspectives. Upton Sinclair wrote about the slaughterhouse pigs:

[E]ach of them had an individuality of his own, a will of his own, a hope and a heart’s desire; each was full of self-confidence, of self-importance, and a sense of dignity. And trusting and strong in faith he had gone about his business, the while a black shadow hung over him and a horrid Fate waited in his pathway... all his protests, his screams, were nothing to it—it did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all (Sinclair Chapter III).

Viewing animals as replicable, identical units negates all their hopes, wishes, emotions, and everything that makes them unique in the world. Céline’s chronicling tells the reader some of their untold stories, showing how each animal reacts to the world in his own way. By immortalizing Bébert, he shows how animals too, each one different from the next, take their own unique perspective with them when they pass. By not appreciating this perspective when one can, one misses a chance at a unique view on life.
4. Paul Léautaud: a Rebel with a Cause

An author who always claimed that he wrote only what pleased him and repeatedly criticized those who wrote simply to sell books, Paul Léautaud perhaps best represents the alterity of animal lovers in the first half of the twentieth century. Willing to live frugally in order to guard his independence, he did not allow public or private pressure to influence what he wrote. His writing did in fact anger many people, but he never changed his style or became more timid because of this. Growing up abandoned by his mother and with a father who did not show much concern for him, he developed the inner strength necessary to oppose societal norms with which he disagreed and stand up for abused animals when others simply watched, ignored the abuse, or even laughed.

Léautaud shared many similarities with Céline. Both rebels, they rejected seeking society’s approval and all prescribed thought. Each defended animals and the socially downtrodden, yet was perceived as a misanthrope by society. Léautaud, like Céline, considered his animals to be his dependents, for whose fate he was responsible: “[J]e ne tiens guère à la vie, où je trouve si peu de bonheur, où j’aime si peu de choses, mais mes pauvres bêtes, que deviendraient-elles. Je suis comme un père avec ses enfants : j’ai charge d’âmes. Il me faut durer pour elles” (Léautaud, JL 3: 6 juillet 1914). They claimed not to place great value on their own lives, but to live for those dependent on their provision. Both were ardent pacifists. Léautaud, who opposed all violence, wrote during the first World War:

La société, qui a besoin d’individus dociles et relativement honnêtes, maintient les hommes, en temps de paix, sous un réseau de lois qui les rendent à peu près vertueux. Vienne la guerre : elle élargit les mailles de ce réseau et laisse les hommes livrés à leurs plus bas et plus cruels instincts, que, par besoin social encore, elle qualifie d’héroïsme. En un mot, ce qui, en temps de paix, est un délit et un crime, devient alors un acte de bravoure et de patriotisme (Léautaud, JL 3: 15 décembre 1915).
In a similar vein to Céline, Léautaud uses irony to highlight the hypocrisy and double standards brought about by war, calling into question the use of the idea of patriotism in regard to killing others.

Furthermore, he saw industrial society as unfairly exploiting its citizens when it sent them off to war: “Je me suis levé ce matin avec un sentiment d’horreur pour la guerre, qui est peut-être si proche. La société de l’ancien régime valait mieux. Le roi faisait la guerre pour une conquête ou une autre, souvent de sécurité. La société capitaliste et industrielle est une monstrueuse exploitation des peuples, jusqu’à les envoyer à la mort” (Léautaud, JL 12: 25 août 1939). Both believed that forcing young men to go to war represented an injustice, and each criticized the extreme violence and unnecessary death.

Both authors criticized all walks of society in their writing in addition to animal cruelty. Both had dual careers and wrote about their other profession in their literature. Each was short listed for the Prix Goncourt, but ultimately did not win. From a literary standpoint, however, they differed tremendously. Léautaud did not appreciate Céline’s writing style and believed that his work would not stand the test of time:

[L]orsque j’ai reçu le premier Céline (this entry comes shortly after the release of Céline’s Mort à credit): Voyage au but de la nuit, je l’ai feuilleté et quand j’ai vu ce vocabulaire je l’ai laissé là, que je n’ai lu du nouveau que des extraits dans des articles de critique et que cela me suffit. Je n’ai aucun goût pour ce style volontairement fabriqué, que les inventions ne m’intéressent pas, comme sujet ni comme forme. J’ajoute que, dans moins de cinq ans, on ne pourra plus lire un livre de ce genre (JL 11: 13 juin, 1936).

Léautaud does not change his mind about Céline’s style, criticizing it again in 1941, saying, “que la grossièreté, la vulgarité sont faciles, que le ton populacier (à vomir) n’est pas le talent,” while trying to dissuade Lucien Combelle from admiring Céline’s work (Léautaud, JL 13: 12 mars 1941). He did not succeed. Although Léautaud does appear to be somewhat swayed by Combelle’s testimony – “A tous les traits que m’a racontés Combelle, Céline digne de sympathie et d’estime” (Léautaud, JL 13: 17 février 1941) – this apparently did not change his negative impression about his writing.
Neither Léautaud nor Céline owned a radio. Léautaud even refused to listen to his own radio interviews with Robert Mallet. Like Céline, he viewed the cinema as a deteriorating force of society. At the Louvre one day, a crowd had gathered in front of a new display showing an episode of *Gulliver’s Travels*, yet the crowd knew nothing of the book. Léautaud blamed their ignorance on the cinema: “Pas une personne qui sût ce dont il s’agissait. Toutes parlaient de ‘l’ogre.’ Les gens sont tout aux saletés bêtes du cinéma” (Léautaud, *JL* 4: 31 décembre 1923). They each believed that modern technology detracted from emotion. Léautaud even viewed the radiator as appealing to those lacking sensitivity:

Je ne suis pas plus enchanté que cela de mon chauffage central. Évidemment, cela chauffe et je n’ai plus la corvée et la fatigue de monter des seaux de charbon au premier. Mais c’est bien laid. Plus l’intimité que donne du feu qu’on voit, dans une cheminée ou dans un poêle. Plus le plaisir de se placer devant, assis dans un fauteuil, à rêver. Comment veut-on qu’on s’asseyte devant un radiateur ? […] Les gens à chauffage central et qu’il enchante, sont décidément des gens sans poésie et sans sensibilité (*JL* 11: 9 février 1936-his emphasis).

On a material level, he had no interest in the modern inventions that impressed others. He always preferred to write by candlelight with a quill pen and an inkwell. Like Céline, had no desire for a car or any other recent technology of the day. But for Léautaud, 22 years Céline’s senior, that included electricity at a time when others had added it to their homes:

Je n’ai jamais levé le nez en l’air pour regarder un avion. Je ne vais jamais au cinéma. Je ne voudrais pour rien au monde de la T.S.F. chez moi. Je serais millionnaire que je n’aurais pas une auto. Je n’ai aucune sorte de considération pour ces gens qu’on appelle ‘savants,’ dont les ‘découvertes’ sont plus le fait du hasard que de l’intelligence. Je m’éclaire à la bougie, plein de dédain pour l’électricité. Sans doute, cela encore peut faire dire que je ne suis pas intelligent. Je pense que des gens, pendant des siècles, ont vécu heureux sans connaître ni avoir tout cela et le monde me fait pitié d’avoir donné dans son existence une si grande place à ces découvertes et de béer d’admiration à leur sujet. Ce qu’on appelle si pompeusement le progrès me laisse sans aucun éblouissement. Je me rappelle toujours, à ce sujet, une anérior de feu Lavisse qui écrivit un jour que le savoir humain a fait un grand progrès du jour de l’invention de la lampe à pétrole. Ce qui pouvait revenir à dire que rien n’avait été produit de valable dans le domaine de l’esprit auparavant. Moi, je pense, pour ne pas remonter trop haut, qu’il y a eu les *Essais* de Montaigne, les tragédies de Racine, les comédies de Molière, les *Maximes* de La Rochefoucauld, les *Mémoires* de Saint-Simon, les *Pensées* de Pascal, les
Contes de Voltaire, les œuvres de Chamfort et de Diderot, dans les temps qu’on ne s’éclairait qu’à la grossière chandelle. Le fond de ma nature, je pourrais vous le dire, si je ne craignais de me montrer trop prétentieux : c’est que je ne m’intéresse qu’aux choses de l’esprit et que ces choses on en peut jouir entre quatre murs les plus nus, une table de bois blanc, un escabeau, de quoi écrire et le moindre lumignon y suffisant (Léautaud, Propos 97-98).

What ultimately matters to Léautaud is literary creation rather than technological innovation. He does not allow public opinion to influence his purchases, desires, or subjects of admiration. Rather, he prefers that which stimulates reflection on society and personal character. This may explain his preference for Enlightenment authors to those of all other periods, including his own. Throughout his life he focuses on that which does not require modern inventions – his literature, caring for animals, and expanding ideas of virtue and compassion.

Although Léautaud perceived large differences between himself and Céline, Céline did recognize some commonalities after Léautaud’s death. In an interview with Jacques Chancel, he drew a negative comparison between himself and Léautaud, demonstrating that the public must have seen similarities in their unkempt appearance late in life: “Paul Léautaud est mort. Il fallait un pauvre qui pue. Me voilà” (Chancel 98). He does not expand on this or mention Léautaud again in the interview. In another interview, he again makes a comparison emphasizing their similar non-conformity: “Depuis la mort de Léautaud, il y a place pour un rigolo dans la littérature […] Il est possible qu’on m’offre cette succession” (Audinet 197). Céline indicates in both these interviews that the two of them were more subject than others to the ridicule of society. However, this also reinforces their status as rebels; society does not mock conformists, but rather those who reject their norms.

Céline and Léautaud lived their lives refusing to allow society to dictate their priorities or beliefs. Each lived outside of Paris in a house with a yard for their many animals. Both tried to improve society and animal lives through their writing, inciting new perceptions of animals in a greatly anthropocentric
society. Their similar commitments to better the lives of animals, encourage pacifism, and defend the persecuted and oppressed of society underlie both their corpora, and reflect philosophical similarities, despite their many differences. Yet these similarities are evident in an examination of their work, revealing a shared philosophy of lifting up the oppressed. Given the anthropocentrism of the early twentieth century, animals numbered amongst the oppressed, and both Léautaud and Céline refused to sit back and accept their maltreatment, willing to forego societal approval in the process.

Léautaud published a variety of works. Best known today for his *Journal littéraire*, a journal that he kept from 1893 to 1956, his work simultaneously provided a literary history of his time, and a social history of the city of Paris as lived by a salaried clerical worker, who moonlighted as a writer. His work recounts his interactions with Guillaume Apollinaire, André Gide, Paul Valéry, and Rémy de Gourmont, as well as other poets and authors whom he knew on a friendly basis due to his clerical position at the *Mercure de France*. His job as “sécretaire de la revue” gave Léautaud access both to literary culture and to many of the authors of his day (Léautaud and Mallet 180). According to Marie Dormoy, to whom he entrusted the thousands of pages of his journal: “Le *Mercure* était non seulement une revue et une maison d’édition, mais aussi un centre littéraire comme on n’en avait jamais vu, comme on n’en reverra peut-être jamais” (Vie 190). It also afforded him a privileged glimpse of what transpired behind the scenes. The 10th volume of his *Journal* covers the period of Céline’s candidacy for the Prix Goncourt. Léautaud mentions a scene at the *Mercure* building that hints that the prize had been planned in advance for Mazeline, who ultimately received the award, after it had been predicted that Céline would win:

Comme je parle de cela ce matin avec Valette, Brian-Chaninov présent nous raconte que l’attribution du prix comme elle a été faite est due à l’influence..., sans qu’on puisse dire ni qu’on voie de quelle façon cette influence a pu s’exercer. Il en donne comme témoignage qu’en visite hier chez E..., un des personnages ..., il a vu sur son bureau un exemplaire du livre qui allait avoir le prix et a entendu E... donner des instructions
His daily interactions recorded in his journal include conversations with many of the literary figures of the time, both authors and editors. As the *Mercure* served as both a publishing house and a revue, authors came and went throughout the day, many stopping by his office to chat.

Léautaud first became well-known in France in 1950 and 1951 when he participated in a series of radio broadcasts with Robert Mallet. Before the broadcasts, he was known primarily for *Poètes d'aujourd'hui*, a compilation of contemporary poets that he assembled with Adolphe van Bever, *Le Petit Ami*, a semi-autobiographical novel nominated for the *Prix Goncourt*, and his theater reviews, written under the pseudonym Maurice Boissard for three different publications: the *Mercure de France*, *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, and *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. The director of the *Mercure*, Alfred Valette, took Léautaud’s first theater column away in 1921 after complaints from his wife, Rachilde, whose salon guests he often offended in his reviews: “Rachilde lui disait tous les jours: ‘Ce Léautaud est extraordinaire, il abîme dans ses chroniques des gens qui viennent à mes mardis’” (Léautaud and Mallet 181). Léautaud often criticized others in these reviews, and refused almost all attempts at editing their content, which led to the three different, successive journals, although he kept his clerical position at the *Mercure* while writing for other publications. He preferred to lose a position rather than have an editor tell him what he could or could not write. Dormoy notes that people read his reviews for the *Mercure* throughout Europe:

> Le *Mercure* était lu non seulement dans toute la France, mais aussi dans toute l’Europe. Le nom de cet écrivain inconnu auquel était confiée une telle tâche étonna tout le monde. Quelques-uns pensèrent que ce nom était un pseudonyme ; les autres n’osaient rien dire. A la troisième chronique, Octave Mirbeau, ayant reconnu le style qu’il avait tant apprécié dans *le Petit Ami*, affirmait : ‘Maurice Boissard, c’est Léautaud.’ Et la mèche fut éventée (*Vie* 197).
Léautaud had initially attempted to remain anonymous by using a pen name, but his style gave him away. His strong personality came through in his reviews and people either loved or hated them. Léautaud especially liked writing for the *Mercure* because he could write what he liked without fear of censorship, and felt a loyalty towards the company as long as he worked there, even though, as he often pointed out, other journals paid better. Working as a secretary at the *Mercure* allowed him to maintain a steady income while writing at his own pace. He could therefore afford to refuse to publish anything that an editor wanted to alter, when he disagreed with the desired changes.

Léautaud never had a stable family life. He was the illegitimate child of Firmin Léautaud, an actor and prompter at the Comédie-Française, and Jeanne Forestier, a theater actress and operetta singer. Born on January 18, 1872, he immediately had a difficult start to life. His mother abandoned him three days after his birth, and he almost died of neglect, due to a negligent nurse. Subsequently entrusted to a different nurse, and then to a nanny, he did not have a happy childhood. His father’s dog, Tabac, became an additional caregiver. Tabac accompanied him on his outings and comforted him when he was sad, licking his tears when he would cry in his hideout under the dining room table (Dormoy, *Vie* 23-24). At ten years of age, Paul moved to Courbevoie with his father and his father’s companion, who would later become his stepmother. He met Adolphe van Bever at the local school, who, several years later, would become his future collaborator for *Poètes d’aujourd’hui*. When he had reached the maximum age of the school at 15, he began his working life to help pay for his expenses. He held many clerical jobs before ultimately ending up at the *Mercure*, where he would remain for the rest of his working life. He worked in the same position from 1908 through the end of September 1941 (Léautaud and Mallet 179, 180, 333). From 1911 onward, he lived in the Fontenay-aux-Roses suburb of Paris, and from 1912 onward, in the home he would occupy until the end of his life (Dormoy *Vie* 85-86).
Although, as with Céline, animals do not make up the majority of Léautaud’s work, they do play a major role in his writing. His work shows not just a love of animals, but also the pressures of society to treat animals as objects, thus demonstrating that defending animals opposed mainstream thought and public pressure. While aiding lost and abused animals, he discovered others who less publicly felt the same way, consequently illustrating that despite appearances, others privately had compassion for animals, but lacked the courage to express their beliefs in public.

Léautaud’s journal reveals that animals were central to his home environment. He was immediately smitten with his first cat Boule in 1902, the only animal “adopté,” rather than “recueilli,” that he owned, and was not without companion animals from that point forward. Often while describing his evening, he describes what the animals did as well. Erica Fudge writes in *Pets*:

> Studies of the human home have been written, and I imagine will continue to be written, that do not acknowledge or explore the presence of animals. This might sound like poor scholarship — disregarding the evidence in order to construct an argument — but in fact this exclusion has been naturalized, has been made to feel like a sensible response, because it helps us to establish who it is that we imagine we are. Pets are often regarded as beneath scholarly notice to the extent that the sense of the sentimental nature of human–pet relations can make scholarship that includes pets itself seem sentimental (and, of course, sentimental does not mean the same as emotional here; it has far more negative connotations)” (14).

Whereas Léautaud’s journals do not constitute “studies of the human home,” they do give a picture of daily Parisian life during the first half of the twentieth century. By repeatedly including his animals in his work, he asserts the importance of animals in domestic life, as well as their role in the human home — as companions, protectors, and as simple refugees from the human cruelty of the world outside. Fudge elaborates on the relationship between pet and pet owner: “Pet ownership is premised on the notion that it is possible to extend one’s capacity to love beyond the limits of species; that one can have a truly affectionate and meaningful relationship with a being that is not human” (16). By emphasizing “an affectionate and meaningful relationship,” she illustrates that humans develop these types of
relationships because they see their pets as individuals. One does not form affectionate relationships with something one regards as replaceable by another similar being, but rather, affectionate and meaningful relationships demonstrate a relationship of intersubjectivity, with two active participants.

The scholarly disregard for evidence of the presence and importance of animals, that Fudge highlights, has become common in issues regarding improving animal welfare. As chapters one and two addressed, much thought that serves to perpetuate animal suffering narrows the scope of inquiry to eliminate signs of animal subjecthood, and classify this evidence as sentimental – one of the first critiques of vivisectors against anti-vivisectors in the nineteenth century. Fudge’s assertion regarding pets holds true for many animal issues; evidence regarding animals becomes suppressed through propaganda. Those who provide evidence of animal subjecthood are characterized as sentimental, childish, or unmanly (with a negative connotation). That is to say, they are frequently attacked. For this reason, one historically had to become willing to risk ridicule, like Léautaud and Céline, to stand up for animal subjecthood – because the attacks are often personal, rather than issue-based. Jean-Christophe Bailly showed that concern for animals carries a type of social stigma, which those who care about animals have also observed:

Je me suis rendu compte, malgré ruses et efforts, que très souvent les déclarations d’intensité que l’on peut faire à l’endroit des bêtes non seulement tombent à plat mais soulèvent une sorte de gêne, un peu comme si l’on avait par inadvertance franchi une limite et basculé dans quelque chose de déplacé, sinon d’obsène [...] La vérité est qu’un point de solitude est toujours atteint dans le rapport que l’on a avec les animaux. Lorsque ce point s’ouvre en une ligne et que cette ligne s’ouvre en une voûte, alors se forme un abri qui est le lieu en propre où cette solitude rencontre librement ce qui lui répond : un animal aimé. Mais pour peu que l’on sorte de cette ligne et expose cet amour (cette solitude et ce lien) et alors vient presque toujours chez ceux à qui l’on s’est risqué à en parler un mouvement de recul, semblable à celui que l’on aurait peut-être soi-même devant un tel aveu fait par quelqu’un d’autre [...] 

Contre cette puissance d’affect, la pensée, surtout occidentale, a cru bon de devoir s’armer, moins en édifiant des murailles autour d’elle qu’en parquant les animaux dans de vastes espaces-concepts d’où ils étaient censés ne pas pouvoir sortir, tandis que l’homme, lui, se serait justement défini – comme c’est simple ! – par le fait qu’il aurait su
Bailly initially emphasizes that he tried to dissuade himself through “ruses et efforts” that the social stigma against emotional ties to animals did not exist. Yet, at some point, he came to accept this as the case. One must keep these ties to oneself, because of an unspoken limit on the place accorded to animals in society, in order to avoid some type of negative reaction. Ideas and beliefs regarding animals must not exceed a strictly defined space that, above all, denies the animal a mind of his own. Both Fudge and Bailly specifically mention the extension of love to include animals, demonstrating that this concept of love has been suppressed as well, preserving a hierarchy with love being reserved for those at the top: humans themselves.

Despite this effort to restrict animals to a carefully guarded space, however, both animals and humans tend to overstep its limits. Bailly remarks that this happens naturally, without effort, thereby showing the fluidity of this boundary:

Mais quelle qu’ait pu être la prégnance – sur les savoirs comme sur les comportements – de cette structuration hiérarchisée des existences, ce qui s’est vu, et continûment, c’est que les animaux n’ont jamais pu tenir en place – ni par eux-mêmes ni dans la pensée et les rêves des hommes –, c’est que cette limite-frontière entre l’homme et la bête, les animaux, sans effort, librement, n’ont jamais cessé de la rendre vacillante (15).

While humans tried to enforce a belief system that minimized the inner lives of animals, the animals themselves repeatedly acted in ways that challenged this belief system, demonstrating that it was created by the desire to maintain human exceptionality, rather than having a basis in universal consensus that would keep the limit stably in place. This recalls Carey Wolfe’s “self-constructing narratives enacted by that fantasy figure called ‘the human’” (Wolfe 6). Yet, in every era, there have been those who attempted to impose this limit, and those who refuted it.
The mysteriousness of the animal mind lies behind the dispute. Bailly presents the resulting complication: “Comme Descartes, le théoricien même des animaux-machines, l’accordait dans une lettre⁶⁰ : ‘l’esprit humain ne peut pénétrer dans leur cœur.’ Mais il y a ce cœur, il y a le tourbillon de toutes ces vies et le battement de chacune d’entre elles” (16-his emphasis). With “le battement de chacune d’entre elles,” he affirms that these lives, each with its own individual heart, exist, not as a collective, but as separate entities that each must face their own experiences. Similarly to Montaigne and Céline, Bailly notes that much of the inner life of animals remains an area that escapes human knowledge. Fudge writes of Montaigne, referring to the previously cited passage on his cat: “[H]e is proposing that pets are significant and appropriate tools for contemplation and should not be dismissed by philosophy and philosophers” (79). Léautaud, who admired Montaigne, agrees with this point. He often observes and contemplates the hundreds of animals he cared for in his life, and emphasizes the lack of human knowledge of their inner experiences. Yet, because one easily dismisses animals from the intellectual sphere, many also easily dismissed inhumane treatment of them in Léautaud’s time. Léautaud, as I will demonstrate later, takes the opposite approach, suggesting that this lack of knowledge should prohibit cruelty to animals.

Léautaud attempts to provide evidence of both animal intelligence and emotions, which many negated in his era, citing his own empirical observation and pattern recognition over time. He studies the behavior of animals with whom he interacts in the animal entries in his journal. Dormoy writes, in her Préface to his *Bestiaire*:

> Par son amour des bêtes, par les soins qu’il prenait d’elles, par l’attention qu’il leur portait, Léautaud prendra figure de précurseur.

Jusqu’à ces derniers temps, l’homme se souciait peu des animaux. C’est seulement depuis peu qu’il cherche à prévoir leurs réactions, à deviner leur comportement, à discerner ce qui provoque leurs réactions, ce qui suscite leurs sympathies ou leurs antipathies. Il y a, dans ce domaine, un champ mystérieux à explorer.

Maintenant que la terre n’a plus de secrets, que la ‘machine ronde’ a été parcourue en tous sens, prospectée à toutes profondeurs, que l’homme est à a veille de conquérir les planètes jusqu’alors inaccessibles, il lui reste encore un vaste inconnu à découvrir : l’âme enchantée des bêtes (39-40).

Dormoy represents Léautaud as being ahead of his time. This draws another parallel with Céline, and gives evidence of a pattern in rebels with a cause. They rebel not for the sake of rebellion, but rather for a cause, in light of the problems they see in their contemporary society. As avatars in identifying these problems, they resist and denounce their origins and consequences. By perceiving animals as having an inner life, Léautaud emphasized not just love and concern for animals, but also the reasons why this is an appropriate response to their complex existence, reinforced with observed reactions and behavior, thereby showing himself to be a sort of early animal behaviorist. In calling Earth the “machine ronde,” and emphasizing the accelerating decrease of the unknown, Dormoy highlights the takeover of the mysterious by science and technology. Just as Bailly emphasized the mysteriousness of the animal heart, Dormoy calls their souls “un vaste inconnu,” but hints that Léautaud offers insight into this unknown via his daily life lived in close contact with animals.

Léautaud, above all, feels pity where much of the public does not. He perceives injustice in the abuse of animals, where others only see people acting against an object or lower life form. He also differentiates between those who want to control animals, and himself, who appreciates and respects that they have an inner life of their own. He said of Colette:

> Ce soir, au Mercure, Colette Willy. Causé ensemble animaux. Elle me parle de sa collection de chats bleus, toute une portée nouvellement née. En réalité, elle aime surtout les bêtes de luxe. La façon qu’elle parle aussi de leurs batailles de temps en temps, entre chiens et chats. Bien différente de moi qui n’appréhende rien davantage... Elle donne l’impression d’aimer les bêtes un peu en dompteur (Léautaud, PL 39).
Léautaud does appreciate Colette’s affection for animals and writes fondly of her at other moments, so one must not read this as a criticism of her person, but rather a differentiation between those, like himself, who take in street animals and those who prefer purebreds; those who fully appreciate animals’ subjectivity and those who want to form the animals to their own ideas of what they should be.\(^{61}\) Both of these criticisms come from his extensive work with stray and abandoned animals. These animals greatly outnumber those able and willing to take them in, and thus, many remain on the streets subject to violence. Additionally, many owners abandon pets that do not meet, or no longer meet their expectations. With these observations then, Léautaud critiques the origins of animal suffering. Through his daily care of community and lost animals, he has more knowledge in this area than others, yet this type of knowledge did not receive widespread acceptance at the time.

This chapter studies Léautaud’s arguments against anthropocentrism, in particular in his *Journal littéraire*, which he wrote throughout his adult life.\(^{62}\) He makes his arguments by showing animals to be individual subjects, combatting the depersonalization necessary to maintain anthropocentrism. By challenging anthropocentrism, he disputes the distorted information that prevents empathy and compassion for the animals he encounters on a daily basis. He depicts the various ways people depersonalize animals, refusing to see them as subjects or individuals, and fights back with what I will call “re-personalization,” meaning countering the common ideas of the time that promote anthropocentrism and speciesism. He does this by sharing his experience and revealing what there is to be seen if one pays attention with an open mind. Barbara Smuts, who achieved an exceptional system

\(^{61}\) For example, he writes in Volume 3 of his journal: “J’ai été, dès le premier jour, très à l’aise avec Colette, qui est une femme très enjouée, sans pose, de manières très camarades[…]. Elle ne se doute pas que toute l’aise que j’ai avec elle vient de la sympathie que m’a donnée pour elle son grand talent (22 décembre 1913).

\(^{62}\) His *Bestiaire* consists of entries that he himself eliminated from the final copy of his *Journal littéraire* for publication, but which were originally included.
of communication with her dog and lived in the wild with baboons, learned much about animals by discarding received ideas. In her Reflection on Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals*, she writes: “My own life has convinced me that the limitations most of us encounter in our relations with other animals reflect not their shortcomings, as we so often assume, but our own narrow views about who they are and the kinds of relationships we can have with them” (Smuts, Reflections 120). These narrow views can be difficult to combat because they often underly spoken and written messages without being explicitly stated. Adam Weitzenfeld and Melanie Joy state: “Dominant ideologies and narratives, and the complexes they inevitably form, maintain power largely by remaining invisible” (24). Léautaud constructs arguments against these invisible forces, by showing the harm they inflict by denying subjecthood, and by establishing the greater understanding of animals brought about by holistic observation in their daily environment. He agrees that the animal mind remains mysterious, but not opaque.

4.1 Franchir la limite: compassion and ethics

When Bailly states that declarations of intensity regarding animals meet with unfavorable reactions as if “l’on avait par inadvertance franchi une limite et basculé dans quelque chose de déplacé, sinon d’obscène,” he illustrates the hidden nature of this limit – one discovers it only by crossing it. He even begins this idea by stating that despite the ruses and efforts he himself had made, he had to recognize the reality of the reactions, highlighting the *unspoken* line keeping animals in a specific conceptual space. By stating that dominant ideologies maintain power by being invisible, Weitzenfeld and Joy indicate the necessity of bringing them out into the open in order to confront them. Céline demonstrated that in the early twentieth century, as mechanization increased, both compassion for animals and emotion in general were suppressed. Philip K. Dick also associated the two. However, as
Céline, Dick, and Sinclair suggest, this was the result not of explicit arguments against emotion, but rather of its systematic replacement by mechanization, making literature, rather than philosophy, a more effective means of illustrating both the underlying ideologies and the ethical problems they entail.

Michael Allen Fox and Lesley McLean stated: “There are many ways of arguing in ethics: logical reasoning, dramatization, the use of examples or vignettes, anecdotes, parables, metaphorical comparisons, psychological sketches, storytelling—all of these devices and more have been used to forward conclusions” (147). Their extensive list of ways of arguing in ethics implies that different cases call for different methods – suggesting that ethics does not conform to a one-size-fits-all approach.

Rather than contesting stated arguments, Céline revealed prevailing attitudes in society through his literature. Léautaud uses his *Journal littéraire* in a similar manner.

In one of his many similarities with Céline, Léautaud had compassion for the unfortunate in life, both animals and humans. He pitied those whom he felt did not merit their fate, with animals taking precedence due to their inability to change theirs as well as their innocence. Despite their stylistic differences, Léautaud, like Céline, believed in the importance of emotion in writing: “Ce n’est pas tout de bien écrire, il faut encore que sous les mots passe une sensibilité” (Léautaud, *JL* 1: 18 mars 1901). For him, writing consisted of more than vocabulary and composition. In order for him to consider a work well-written, it must convey and induce emotion. He rejects pure mechanism, when he states, “Ce n’est pas tout de bien écrire.” Good mechanics alone do not make for good literature. Rather, one must balance the mechanics of writing with sensitivity. He uses this formula for his writing on animals, not sacrificing the one for the other. While he maintains his very frank characteristic style, he simultaneously expresses his own sensitivity for animals, establishing reasons why his reader should share this sensitivity.
Despite his reputation as a misanthrope, Léautaud could still be moved by poetry. Robert Mallet stated that he has seen him cry while reciting Verlaine’s poetry from Sagesse and that his voice “s’était subitement cassée puis tué dans l’émotion du vers de Charles Guérin: ‘L’amour qui seul survit dans la cendre des choses’” (Mallet 66). He was also moved when hearing people sing with emotion in their voices, which he exemplifies in his Journal littéraire. It was in fact this willingness to feel and appreciate emotion that led to his compassion for animals and other unfortunate beings. Anna Kingsford stated, “Sentiment is but another name for that moral feeling which alone has made man the best that he is now, and which alone can make him better and purer in the future,” stating that morality depends on the ability to feel for others (Maitland 86). Rousseau showed that this occurs by virtue of being able to recall one’s own experiences and imagine the experience of the other. Léautaud’s work reveals that this ability becomes more refined with use. As he worked more extensively with animals and understood the reasons behind their condition, he developed both more compassion for animals and others he viewed as unfortunate along with a heightened understanding of animals and source of their suffering; learning through a lived context.

Léautaud himself believed that his love of animals further developed his other moral values. He became more compassionate and opposed to violence as his love of animals progressed:

A quel point l’amour des animaux aura fait se développer, grandir les idées d’altruisme que j’ai toujours eues en moi, la pitié de la misère, la haine de la violence, l’espèce de gêne à regarder la trop grande richesse à côté de la grande pauvreté. Cet amour a grandi sinon créé ma valeur morale. J’y pense tous les jours, et il y a déjà quelque temps que je n’admire plus guère qu’une chose au monde : la bonté (Léautaud, Bestiaire 7 mai 1911).

He came to appreciate goodness over other personal characteristics because this love heightened his moral sense. In this excerpt, compassion breeds more compassion and love of good. Speaking of the motivation for actions, Arthur Schopenhauer states, in On the Basis of Morality:
Another’s suffering in itself and as such directly becomes my motive by means of compassion [...]. Compassion now not only restrains me from injuring another, but even compels me to help him. Now according as, on the one hand, that direct participation is keenly and deeply felt, and, on the other, the distress of someone else is great and urgent, I shall be induced by that purely moral motive to make a greater or smaller sacrifice for another’s needs or distress. Such sacrifice may consist in an expenditure of my bodily and mental powers on his behalf, in the loss of property, health, freedom, and even life itself [...]. This wholly direct and even instinctive participation in another’s sufferings—compassion—is the sole source of such actions when they are said to have moral worth, that is to be free from all egoistic motives... If, on the other hand, a charitable action has any other motive, it cannot be anything but egoistic (163-64-his emphasis).

Schopenhauer presents ethics as based on compassion, which he places second only to justice in this chapter. Léautaud reveals an understanding of ethics based on both in the above extract. His ideas of altruism represent the sacrifice noted by Schopenhauer. He in fact ate very poorly himself for much of his adult life in order to feed his menagerie and other animals in need and to keep his “pavillon” in the suburbs, which he needed to house his animals and give them a safe space to roam. Dormoy wrote in her Préface: “Ce fut pour assurer le bonheur de ses chiens que Léautaud [...] consentit à quitter Paris” (19). Not only did he sacrifice living in Paris, close to his office, but he made the daily trip on public transport with a heavy sack of provisions for his animals. On nights he went to the theater for his critiques, he often went home first to feed his animals before heading back to Paris and then back to the suburbs.63 Dormoy emphasizes in the Préface the great number of animals he cared for at his home as well as his sacrifices for them:

Entre le départ de Blanche (a long-time companion) et la guerre de 1914, il hébergea de façon continue – les nouveaux venus remplaçant le jour même ceux que la mort lui enlevait – une cinquantaine de chats, une dizaine de chiens. Il y eut aussi un âne, une chèvre, une oie appelée Aurel. Quelque chose comme une Arche de Noé en miniature. Pour ses pupilles, Léautaud se dépensait, se sacrifiait sans compter (21).

63 This usually depended on when he had or did not have a maid to help with the animals.
Léautaud himself gives the number of animals he has had in his life in one of his radio interviews.

Speaking of his large yard, he tells the listeners how many dogs and cats he owned up to that point: “J’ai eu au moins trois cents chats et cent cinquante chiens. Ils sont tous morts de leur belle mort, chez moi, et ils sont tous enterrés dans le jardin” (Léautaud and Mallet 188-89). He not only buried all of them in separate graves, he even has a map of their burial sites (making his animal count reliable due to documentation): “Et j’ai un plan de mon jardin avec les noms sur les emplacements des tombes” (Léautaud and Mallet 189). He also went to great lengths to feed and find homes for homeless animals, and to return lost animals if he could find out where they lived. Dormoy writes:

Il n’y avait pas que les bêtes à domicile. Il y avait aussi celles du dehors. Comme on pourra le voir tout au long de ce Bestiaire, quand Léautaud voyait des chiens errants, des chats perdus, il s’occupait à les placer, à leur venir en aide d’une façon ou d’une autre, ne pouvant tout de même pas les ramener tous à Fontenay. Il prenait le parti des chevaux martyrisés, des chats pourchassés, des chiens maltraités (Préface 22).

His compassion for these animals compels him to help them, and in the process he enjoyed less property, health, and freedom than he would have otherwise had. His hatred of violence along with being troubled by the proximity of excessive richness and great poverty demonstrates Schopenhauer’s first principle, a concern for justice. Schopenhauer states that any charitable action stemming from egotistical motives cannot have moral worth. Yet, many mocked and ridiculed Léautaud for standing up for animals. Weitzenfeld and Joy state: “To care about the exploitation and suffering of those institutionally or intrinsically less capable of reciprocating and self-actualization (such as animals) is considered irrational and sentimental” (16). This concept led to public scorn and derision. But it is precisely this lack of power to reciprocate that makes caring for animals devoid of any egotistical motivations, and consequently, according to Schopenhauer’s definition, a genuinely moral act.

Feeding and finding homes for lost and abandoned animals became a way of life for Léautaud. He did this daily in addition to his regular position at the Mercure, attending the theater at night for his
reviews, and his career as a writer, including his journal. His expenditure of both time and money, when he had little of both, demonstrates an abundance of compassion for unwanted animals. An example from his journal in 1913 shows how he dedicated a large part of his Saturday and spent an not-insignificant amount of money to place a stray dog with a good family:


This does not represent an isolated instance in Léautaud’s life. He regularly purchased a collar and tag for the dogs he placed, and also took them to their new home, rather than making the adopter come to him. He illustrates how compassion leads him to make a great expenditure of time, money, and bodily powers all to improve the lives of lost animals.

Léautaud’s aid to needy animals extends beyond food and housing. One very cold January, on a day where he emphasizes the extreme cold by describing his need to wear two shabby jackets to the theater, he agrees to place a trap on a roof to rescue a cat who had been there for 12 days:

Il s’agit d’aller placer un piège sur le toit, demain, de façon à prendre cette bête, qui vraiment doit souffrir là, par une pareille température. Deux traits charmants de bonté : une locataire du premier fait du feu jour et nuit de façon à chauffer un peu la maçonnerie d’une cheminée sur le toit contre laquelle ce chat se réfugie, et une vieille femme qui habite une mansarde lui pose chaque jour à manger. Je ne suis pas content
de passer dehors mon après-midi de demain. Comment ne pas aider au sauvetage de cette bête. Il est entendu que j’irai (Léautaud, JL 3: 16 janvier 1914).

Not allowing his own misery in the cold to affect his decision, he again acts out of pure compassion. Furthermore, he reveals that two other people also believe a stray cat to be worthy of compassion dedicating their own time and resources to help him stay alive. Schopenhauer says that compassion is “direct and even instinctive participation in another’s suffering.” When Léautaud writes, “Comment ne pas aider au sauvetage de cette bête,” he conveys an instinctive need to help the stranded cat. All three directly participate in the cat’s suffering by their expenditures of bodily effort and material resources, establishing that his suffering drives their compassion. By showing himself and others willing to save a stray cat at a personal cost to themselves, Léautaud expands the conceptual space of the stray, affirming that his life has value, a value worthy of personal sacrifice.

Besides the cold, Léautaud also braved difficulties with winter snow and ice for the sake of animals. During a particularly difficult December, when the government rationed items during WWI, he carried heating coal home along with meat for his animals each day in the bad weather:

Je gêle dans ma maison de Fontenay. Pas moyen de travailler. Il faudrait faire de grands feux et le charbon manque. Avec les tickets que m’a passés Mme Cayssac avant notre brouille, d’autres tickets que m’a passés une employée du Mercure, j’ai pu en acheter à Paris, de façon à suppléer à la quantité insuffisante accordée par la mairie de Fontenay. Ce charbon est dans mon bureau du Mercure. Pas moyen de réussir à la faire transporter ici : le messager circule à peine à cause du mauvais état des routes, et on me demande des prix fous pour le voiturer en voiture à bras. J’ai donc pris le parti de l’apporter moi-même, chaque soir, par petites quantités, entre 15 et 20 kilogs. Ayant déjà chaque soir 4 kilog. de viande à apporter, on voit ma charge, le soir, dans la nuit, pour monter la côte de la gare à chez moi dans la neige et le verglas. Je ne ferai pas cela pour moi. Si j’étais seul, du reste, il y a beau jour que je me serais installé temporairement à l’hôtel à Paris, ou chez Mme Durand, mais il y a mes bêtes. Comme on est conquis par ces êtres, à vivre en leur société. La pensée qu’elles auront un peu de chaleur me rend mes corvées presque aisées (Léautaud, JL 3: 23 décembre 1917).

64 His abbreviation
By enduring the extreme cold and ice for the sake of his animals, he illustrates a sacrifice “free from all egoistic motives,” that consequently has “moral worth.” By making this sacrifice with moral worth, he affirms the moral value of the animals. When one makes a sacrifice, especially one that requires the extreme effort and personal expense described in this passage, one implicitly conveys that those for whom one makes the sacrifice are worth the cost to oneself. Having no egotistical motives, then, validates the moral worth of the object of the sacrifice, because one makes the sacrifice solely for their good, to the detriment of one’s own good.

On a personal level, Léautaud often dressed and ate badly because so much of his income went to animals in need, including his own menagerie. He describes his wardrobe of hand-me-downs in his journal: “Je suis en effet habillé avec les vêtements de rebut de ce M. Georges Doussier. Je porte ses pantalons, ses gilets, ses vestons, jusqu’à des caleçons et des chemises qui viennent de lui” (Léautaud, JL 4: 7 janvier 1922). Although he does not often complain of his ragged clothing, he does have a limit. He had been invited to a luncheon at the home of the man whose wife gave him the hand-me-downs, and he could not fathom going there in the husband’s clothing: “Or, aller déjeuner chez ces gens, habillé dans les vêtements du mari ! J’ai beau rire de beaucoup de choses, j’aime mieux éviter celle-là” (Léautaud, JL 4: 7 janvier 1922). Out of compassion, he spends without complaining for the needs of animals, but this does not indicate that he sustains no embarrassment over his material conditions that would be better without this expense. Later in the same volume, he outlines how much of his daily expenses go for himself and how much for his animals:

Mes animaux, rien que pour leur nourriture, me coûtent une moyenne de 8 francs par jour. Ajouter la pharmacie, les suppléments pour les malades. [...] Quand je marque mes dépenses chaque jour, quand j’inscris 20 francs, il y 15 francs pour les bêtes et 5 francs pour moi. Je vais avec des souliers percés, du linge en loques et souvent sale par économie, ce qui est une grande souffrance pour moi, je mange insuffisamment et des choses qui me répugnent, je porte mes vêtements au-delà de toute durée toujours par
Although he wrote this entry two years after the description of his hand-me-downs, his life had not changed drastically in that period. In each period, he had housed and fed multiple animals. Describing his dirty clothing as a “souffrance” shows, without exaggeration, that he does suffer for acting on his compassion, but that does not stop or hinder him. These passages give an example of the selflessness brought about by empathy. Rather than attempting to rationalize how animals should suffer for human gain, he shows the opposite – human suffering for basic animal welfare.

Léautaud’s animal charity extended beyond the homeless animals and his own; he even fed the neighbors’ cats in winter, who came into his house. In addition to food, he allows them to make themselves at home:

J’ai en ce moment, avec le mauvais temps et le froid, quatre chats du voisinage, qu’on laisse dehors probablement, qui, la maison toujours ouverte, viennent trouver la chaleur, de quoi se coucher tranquilles et une pâtée toujours servie. Quand je fais mon dernier tour à minuit, je les trouve dans la cuisine, ouvrant de grands yeux inquiets dans la crainte d’être chassés. Je fais comme si je ne les voyais pas (Léautaud, JL 12: 5 décembre 1937).

By pretending not to see them, he expresses concern for their comfort, wanting to put them at ease, thereby giving evidence of his selfless reasons for allowing them to stay. He does not expect anything from them, even attention or affection. Rather, he gives without asking for anything in return.

Furthermore, besides living very frugally himself, he set aside money for his animals should he die, so that they could still live relatively well. After recounting an episode he saw in the street which revealed that an automobile cost 25,000 francs, he wonders where people come up with the money to purchase one, then describes his own financial situation:

J’ai 67 ans, j’ai travaillé toute ma vie, je travaille encore, je me passe de bonne. J’ai la vie la plus modeste qui soit. Je n’ai jamais été dépensier. Je vis seul. Je me refuse bien des choses. Et c’est tout juste si j’ai, pour assurer le sort de mes bêtes à ma mort, quelques
billets de mille francs que je tremble de voir s’épuiser ou réduits à rien (Léautaud, JL 12: 4 avril 1938).

Léautaud expresses here a view of animals as subjects worthy of personal sacrifice for the betterment of their lives. His concern for their welfare demonstrates that “it is possible to extend one’s capacity to love beyond the limits of species” (Fudge 16). By expressing his love for his animals, he challenges the hidden line forbidding this expression and takes a step towards eliminating Bailly’s “point de solitude [qui] est toujours atteint dans le rapport que l’on a avec les animaux,” and thereby expanding acceptance of public expression of love for companion animals.

Léautaud does not want recognition for his work with animals, only attention to their cause and knowledge of their suffering, so that others will attempt to lessen it. When presented with the possibility of a reward, he prefers that it go to someone of even more modest means. In a letter to Paul Guillemin in 1913, he expresses the need to give rewards to the poorest who work for animal welfare:

> Pour ce qui est d’une récompense, je voudrais bien que vous abandonniez cette idée. Ne vous fâchez pas de ce que je vous dis. Je pense que les récompenses, même les plus modestes, représentent des frais. J’estime donc qu’il ne faut les donner qu’utillement, c’est-à-dire aux cochers, aux charretiers, aux gardiens, à tous les gens modestes, en un mot, chez qui elles pourront stimuler le zèle protecteur à l’égard des animaux. Aussi aux pauvres gens qui prennent sur leurs maigres ressources pour venir en aide à des bêtes. Je m’en voudrais donc de détourner à mon profit aucune de ces récompenses, même la plus petite. Certes, j’ai chez moi toute une troupe de chiens et de chats recueillis. Je m’occupe aussi de temps à autre d’en placer le mieux que je puis. Je nourris également çà et là, quelques chats sans gîte ni maître. Mais la satisfaction que j’en retire me suffit. Loin de vouloir recevoir des récompenses, je voudrais avoir les moyens d’en donner moi-même (Léautaud, CG 412).

In this letter, he reveals his priorities – the animals’ welfare comes before all else. For Léautaud, a reward serves to incentivize compassion for animals or as a recompense to those for whom their expense represents the biggest personal sacrifice. His personal satisfaction at having helped animals becomes its own reward – he neither needs public approval nor wants to accept resources that could contribute towards others working for the same cause.
The author and wife of his boss, Rachilde, recognizes that Léautaud gains nothing from all he does for animals. Furthermore, she emphasizes that others who pity animals lack his courage:

Hélas ! des fortunes lui couleraient des mains et aussi des chevelures d’or, que rien ne saurait laver la grande souillure de l’humanité, la tare que représente l’injuste douleur infligée à l’animal, et c’est pour cela qu’il jette tout ce qu’il possède, y compris son cœur, dans le gouffre de sa propre pitié.

Nous sommes beaucoup qui lui ressemblons, à cet homme, le héros de la plus effroyable des aventures : devenir le champion d’une cause perdue d’avance puisqu’il n’y a rien à y gagner, ni gloire ni argent, pas même l’estime de ses contemporains... Mais nous sommes, avouons-le, moins braves que lui. Nous ne savons pas nous affranchir de tous les préjugés, nous nous cachons pour savourer notre passion et cela est honteux... comme tout ce qui se cache (Rachilde 208-9-her emphasis).

She makes the prejudices of the time evident, by noting the injustice inflicted on animals that most do not have the courage to fight. She also emphasizes that his contemporaries do not join his fight because they will obtain nothing from it. Léautaud himself believed that the selflessness of aiding animals in need increased its value: “Il n’y a rien au monde de plus beau que la bonté et la charité, et la bonté et la charité pour les bêtes sont les plus hautes, parce que là il n’y a aucun calcul, aucun intérêt, aucune vanité en jeu, mais bien le désintéressement le plus complet” (Léautaud, CG 632). Both Rachilde and Léautaud uphold Schopenhauer’s view that egotistical motivations reduce the morality of an act.

Léautaud’s multiple sacrifices, at much cost to himself, validate the ethical relevance of animals, simultaneously affirming the value of their individual lives and presenting them as worthy of compassion and empathy.

Although Léautaud primarily helped homeless animals, he also showed concern for the homeless people of Paris. Seeing a woman sleeping on a public bench, he wished he could feed all the homeless, regardless of their species:

Hier au soir, à dix heures et demie, en revenant de chez Montfort, place du Carrousel, sur un de ces bancs de pierre qui sont près des guichets du Louvre, une femme, couchée et dormant, la tête dans ses bras sur son baluchon ! Quel bonheur de pouvoir les ramasser tous, bêtes et gens,

It is conceivable that his constant occupation with homeless animals in fact led to more compassion for others in that situation, as it led to a greater awareness of the problems of homelessness. Although he was not able to help this woman, his desire to do so shows a further desire to help those who cannot reciprocate.

Despite not holding any personal religious beliefs, Léautaud was moved to tears upon hearing of the death of a priest in one of the early battles of WWII, at his first encounter with Robert Mallet. When Mallet tells him how the priest had expressed a desire not to die the very day before his death, partly due to all the good he still wanted to do and all that remained undone in his parish, tears begin to course down Léautaud’s cheeks. He becomes even more emotional when Mallet tells him the contents of the letter found on his body:


He unintentionally demonstrates here that his compassion extends beyond animals. Mallet contrasts his reputation for cynicism with his sincere response to the priest’s death: “Depuis que je raconte de tels faits, c’est la réaction la plus spontanément généreuse que j’aie connue. Elle vient d’un homme dont la réputation de cynisme n’est plus à faire. Ce genre de cynique-là vaut mieux que tous les hypersensibles qui baignent leurs mots de larmes et gardent les yeux secs” (65). Léautaud possesses a sincerity that others with a less cynical reputation do not. When Schopenhauer writes of the necessary lack of selfish motivation in ethics, he expresses the need for this type of sincerity. The spontaneity and complete lack of anything to gain from his reaction to the story of the priest demonstrates a compassion that is
“keenly and deeply” felt, and therefore also an attestation to his stated hatred of violence (dying in war) and love of goodness (that of the priest), which shows a consistency of ethics.

Léautaud detested all cruelty, including verbal cruelty. Although he often claims to dislike children, his journal shows examples to the contrary. One Sunday, while walking his dog, he interacts with a toddler who then gets yelled at by his father. Léautaud intervenes on behalf of the child:


He retains a consistent opposition to cruelty, whether directed against a human or an animal. By calling the man a brute, he criticizes the use of fear as a method of control. Keith Thomas wrote about nineteenth century England (which exceeded France in animal welfare concerns) in Man and the Natural World: “Pity, compassion and a reluctance to inflict pain, whether on man or beasts, were identified as distinctively civilized emotions” (188). Léautaud embraces these emotions and rejects all violence, physical and verbal, against humans or animals. His values reflect these “civilized emotions,” and by opposing cruelty and violence with compassion, and direct intervention, and then documenting his experiences, he attempts to establish them as opposing forces.

His hatred of violence extends beyond his immediate surroundings to include everywhere that it occurs. In criticizing colonization in 1939, he reveals himself to be ahead of his time in this area as well. At the outbreak of WWII, he compares Hitler’s attempts to colonize Europe with the rest of Europe’s attempts to colonize non-white countries:

Hitler veut coloniser pour ainsi dire l’Europe. France, Angleterre, Italie, nous avons colonisé des peuples tranquilles, inoffensifs, qui vivaient paisiblement chez eux, qui ne
He maintains here his dislike of violence and the conviction that might makes right. Additionally, he exhibits a consistency of ethics by highlighting the similarity between the two situations, and the fact that the conquered peoples have not had a voice in their situation. Furthermore, he shows that Hitler’s idea of a superior race had a precedent in the other countries’ “justifications” for colonization, demonstrating a strong sense of logic uninfluenced by propaganda. Moreover, he incites compassion for the colonized. Thomas emphasizes the correlation between movements for human rights and movements for animal rights, as many participated in both:

[T]he concern for animal welfare was part of a much wider movement which involved the spread of humane feelings towards previously despised human beings, like the criminal, the insane, or the enslaved. It thus became associated with a more general demand for reform, whether the abolition of slavery, flogging and public executions or the reform of schools, prisons and the poor law (184).

Céline himself had linked animals and prisoners, dedicating Féerie pour une autre fois “Aux animaux, Aux malades, Aux prisonniers.” He advocated for school reform in addition to empathy for animals and prisoners, illustrating this connection. Léautaud also advocated more humane feelings for all the oppressed; he did not believe in any justification of Europeans’ treatment of colonized peoples.

When the French government decides to send colonized people to war, Léautaud again perceives the injustice of their treatment and describes the situation in a manner that invokes the compassion of the reader:

La nouvelle est partout que le gouvernement va faire venir un million de coloniaux pour remplacer sur le front autant de soldats français. Voilà qui va faire apprécier à ces gens qui vivaient tranquillement chez eux, ne demandant rien à personne et ne menaçant personne. Les Français leur disent aujourd’hui : ‘Venez donc vous faire casser la figure à notre place pour défendre la France.’ Et encore, on ne les prie pas : on les enrôle de

Similar to Schopenhauer, Léautaud focuses on justice and compassion as the root of ethics. In his view, the French committed a first injustice in the initial colonization and a second in the conscription of the colonized. In both instances, Léautaud sees a lack of compassion for the weak, and a use of force to accomplish the goals of the more powerful. He maintains his opposition of compassion and force, demonstrating again how one is antithetical to the other.

In Lost Illusions: Paul Léautaud and his World, James Harding notes several instances of Léautaud’s compassion towards the unfortunate. In these examples, and demonstrating further similarities with Céline, Léautaud advocates for the downtrodden and criticizes those who oppress them:

For those who were wretched and suffering he had immediate compassion. He often lamented the fate of the human wrecks he saw in the street – little old women who, he knew, existed on practically nothing in slum attics, and the men in rags who spent their nights in railway station waiting rooms sleeping on benches. It pained him that he could not afford to give them the money they needed.

He had no great love of policemen who, in those days, often acted as oppressors of the poor. One afternoon, on the Pont des Saints-Pères, he saw two inspectors seize a tramp and hustle him, limping on his wooden leg, into a taxi. ‘What harm was the poor fellow doing where he could be seen every day in the same place?’ Léautaud wondered. ‘God knows what those bullies can have done to him in that taxi, alone with him and capable of everything as they are.’

A similar feeling overcame him when he saw a soldier weighted down with a heavy pack and chained to one of two gendarmes guarding him. What, Léautaud thought to himself, could the poor wretch have done? Despite the fine phrases of the politicians, the brutalities of military life continued.

So long as a person was afflicted by misfortune he could rely on Léautaud’s pity. He saw a man and woman in the street, obviously reduced to the very depths of poverty. The man held the hand of a 3-year-old boy swaddled in rags and munching a piece of bread. Léautaud gave the boy two francs. ‘I could scarcely speak I was so moved,’ he commented. ‘I should have given at least a 100-franc note.’ This was the action of a man who lived almost on the poverty line himself (Harding 98-99).
Harding’s examples portray Léautaud not as a misanthrope, but as one who had compassion for the truly unfortunate. The police and military examples illustrate his pity for those victimized by power hierarchies, and the examples of the impoverished depict his pity for those on the lowest rung of the socio-economic hierarchy. His love of animals extends this same sense of pity to all living creatures victimized by various hierarchies. While vivisection and police agents’ mishandling of unleashed pets, some of whom were simply wandering close to their home, represent some of the most powerful hierarchies to which domestic animals were subject, the pets of the poor, in addition to their owners, became the victims of social hierarchies. Léautaud’s journal gives examples of poor pet owners who had to relinquish their pets due to lack of resources. He also criticizes the way in which various animals fell prey to the philosophy of might makes right.

Léautaud explains his concept of pity as caring for the weak and those that must do without in life, defending animal advocates against the exclusivist claims that, in a nutshell, one cannot love both animals and people: “Je sais qu’on dit : ‘Qui aime les bêtes n’aime pas les gens.’ Il y a grande chance pour que ceux qui parlent ainsi n’aient rien du tout. On ne limite pas ainsi ses sentiments. Le voudrait-on, on ne le pourrait guère. Être capable de pitié, c’est l’étendre à tout ce qui est faible, sans défense, et malmené ou privé moralement ou physiquement” (Léautaud, Théâtre 60). He then gives an example of the lack of pity for the poor that he often noted in the middle and upper classes:

Il y a quelque temps, je passais une après-midi rue Royale. Il s’y trouve […] une pâtisserie de grand luxe. Le nez à la vitre, un gamin de six ou sept ans, en loques, presque les pieds nus, petit camelot de je ne sais quelle camelote, regardait l’étalage, les yeux tout ronds à la vue d’aussi belles friandises. Dans la pâtisserie, une cliente dont la limousine reluisante attendait rangée contre le trottoir, et que deux coquettes demoiselles s’empressaient à servir, tandis qu’à la caisse trônait la patronne, confortable et cossue […] Je considérai un instant l’indifférence de cette riche cliente, de ces jolies demoiselles, de cette patronne souriante, qui ne voyaient rien du petit bonhomme collé à la vitre, alors que lui donner un peu de plaisir eût été pour elles si peu de chose. Je touchai l’épaule du gamin, lui faisant signe de me suivre. Nous entrâmes tous les deux. Après avoir présenté mes salutations, je le plaçai devant l’étalage et je lui dis : ‘Éh ! bien,
He illustrates here that when one exercises true pity, one does not do it for recognition, but out of compassion for the object of one’s pity. If one truly pities another, making a life happier or more comfortable brings joy to the benefactor. Not only did Léautaud brighten the boy’s day, but he left the happier of the two for being able to do so. Yet, he himself does without. He illustrates that many oppose compassion for animals with compassion for people in what they say, but he does not see many examples of others actually exercising this compassion for people. Ultimately he makes the point that those who oppose compassion for animals perhaps use compassion for people as an excuse for a general lack of compassion, as they say this without giving any actual proof of compassion for others.

During a radio interview, Robert Mallet gives another example of Léautaud’s pity, that Léautaud himself did not recount – André Billy had noted it in his own work: “Il dit vous avoir vu un jour, rue de Médicis, aider une vieille chiffonnière à tirer une voiture dans les brancards de laquelle elle s’épuisait” (Léautaud and Mallet 213). Again, Léautaud acts out of a desire to aid others, with no expectation of public admiration or approval. After this example, Mallet explains to Léautaud and the listeners that he believes Léautaud’s extreme pity for animals has led to his false reputation as someone with no pity for people: “Si je voulais citer tous les passages de votre œuvre où vous exprimer des sentiments de charité à l’égard de vos semblables, je n’en finirais plus. Au fond, c’est votre pitié extrême pour les animaux qui vous fait souvent paraître impitoyable pour les hommes, que vous accuez de l’être à l’égard des animaux” (Léautaud and Mallet 213). Mallet illustrates the anthropocentrism of the time: Léautaud does not excuse those who mistreat animals, so the public believes that he dislikes men. Mallet then
cites Léautaud himself to emphasize Léautaud’s consistent attitude of generosity. Two of his three examples emphasize acting on, rather than simply feeling, pity: “Une autre fois, vous dites: ‘Seules ne sont pas des illusions: la bonté, la générosité, la pitié qui agissent, qui aident et qui secourent.’ Une autre fois encore : ‘Une seule chose est arrivée à compter pour moi : c’est la bonté, la faculté de sentir, la pitié qui agit’ (Léautaud and Mallet 213). For Léautaud, pity serves as a call to action. As Schopenhauer stated, it compels one to help another and “make a greater or smaller sacrifice for another’s needs or distress.” By emphasizing that one should act on their pity, Léautaud supports this philosophy that genuine compassion involves direct participation in the life of another.

During Léautaud’s lifetime, people frequently criticized a concern for animals by opposing it to a concern for children, implying that the two were mutually exclusive. Léautaud resented the false premise of this argument. In 1922, after having written an unspecified article on animals, he received a letter from an aviator captain applying this argument. Léautaud not only became offended by his lack of logic, but also, as a pacifist, he did not appreciate criticism for concern for animals from someone who, he felt, made his career out of warfare. He points out the hypocrisy of professing a great concern for children when one has likely killed some of them in one’s career: “Il est tellement agaçant de voir des gens vous opposer les enfants quand on s’occupe des animaux, et cette tendresse pour les enfants revêtant une telle ironie chez ce capitaine aviateur, qui dut en bombarder quelques-uns pendant la guerre” (Léautaud JL 4: 21 août 1922). Wanting to publish the letter and a response in La Nouvelle Revue Française, he had to defend his proposition to Jacques Rivière, the editor. He explains the conversation in his journal, emphasizing the misguidedness of the aviator’s ideas (“les erreurs de jugement que j’y trouve,” “ces idées tout à fait fausses,”) and his disdain of his career: “[J]e mets si grand prix à tous les sentiments d’humanité que j’ai en horreur le métier qu’il fait” (Léautaud, JL 4: 21 août 1922). When Thomas wrote that the animal welfare movement “was part of a much wider
movement which involved the spread of humane feelings towards previously despised human beings,”
he followed this with a long list of examples of those opposed to various human rights issues, including
George Nicholson, the English vegetarian advocate, who wrote *On the Conduct of Man to Inferior
Animals*, stating that he was “against war of every kind,” thereby implicitly linking war enemies to
“previously despised human beings” (185). Léautaud, in a similar manner, opposed “sentiments
d’humanité” to war, expressing that war, going against the civilized emotions of “compassion and a
reluctance to inflict pain,” lacked a concern for humanity. Above all, Léautaud wanted to show that
those who apply this argument are the only exclusive ones: “Il y a trop de gens qui pensent comme cet
homme. Il est bon de leur montrer que les protecteurs d’animaux ne sont pas du tout exclusifs. C’est
eux qui le sont, exclusifs, avec leur amour des enfants et leur dédain des bêtes. Nous, nous sommes
pitoyables aux uns et aux autres” (Léautaud, JL 4: 21 août 1922). He sees people who think like the
aviator as having a limited amount of compassion, which cannot cross “la limite cachée” to include
animals, while doubting that in reality they have a general compassion for children.

Léautaud knew and interacted with people at various levels of society, but showed the greatest
kindness for those on the lowest rungs. When he found a way to help the poor, he often did. In 1935,
he befriended a street merchant and noted that he wanted to find some children’s books to give to her
for her children:

> Je me suis mis en petites relations amicales avec une marchande de marrons, à la porte
du Luxembourg, face Odéon, chargée d’enfants, à qui j’achète quelquefois pour 10 sous,
et donne de vieux journaux pour ses cornets. Il faut que je cherche dans mon stock de
services de presse du Mercure quelques livres pour enfants pour les lui donner”
(Léautaud, JL 11 21 octobre 1935).

Illustrating pity in action, he finds a creative way to help this woman. His multiple instances of giving to
those in need establish a consistency of ethics, applied to humans as well as animals, and multiple
actions to help the weak of society. In this instance, he indeed looks for a way to help children, contradicting the exclusivist claims of the aviator.

Léautaud pitied the poor and victims of violence and appreciated animals in opposition to the many problems of his time. They gave him a joy that contrasted with the callousness and other issues brought about by human actions: “Grâce merveilleuse des bêtes, des chats en particulier. Je reste des heures à les regarder, à la fois ravi et ému. A côté de tant d’horreurs, d’abominations, de tueries, de dévastations, de stupidités” (Léautaud, PL 66). It was his ability to feel strongly about violence, devastation, and other harms that contributed to his compassion for those that remained innocent of their causes and enactments. Furthermore, these actions represent a lack of empathy, their existence showing the deterioration of empathy in society and reinforcing his belief in an ethics of compassion.

Kathleen Kete explains in *The Beast in the Boudoir* how dogs specifically, and pets in general, had come to represent the opposing qualities to the cruelty of society in nineteenth century Paris: “[B]y the late 1860s and 1870s the affective behavior of canines offered dramatic contrast to an increasingly cruel bourgeois and urban world, male, alienating, and relentlessly unsentimental. The pet became the countericon of the scientific, and dehumanized age” (7). The pet does not lose its “affective behavior” like the human. Whereas the human became less sentimental and compassionate with urbanization and mechanization, pets did not change their basic qualities. Léautaud advocates compassion and contrasts the loyalty, affection, and weakness of pets to human cruelty and coldness, thereby attempting simultaneously to increase compassion and decrease all that opposes it.

Even in his own home, Léautaud had a partner, Blanche, who ridiculed his compassion for his animals. This same partner had attempted to take Boule, his first cat, for herself when they separated, but did not desire a large number of animals in their home. Upon the death of one of his cats, at a moment when he had lost several due to illness, she criticized his sadness for their death: “Les
moqueries de Blanche pour mon chagrin cette fois-ci encore à propos de la mort de Souris, et l’habitude qu’elle a prise de me traiter d’idiot, de me dire qu’on peut me trouver spirituel ailleurs mais qu’elle je ne l’étonne pas – j’ai beau faire, je commence à trouver cela un peu écœurant d’un côté – excessif de l’autre” (Léautaud Bestiaire 28 août 1912). Her ridicule affirms the strength of the prevailing anthropocentric attitudes of the time – one should not express sadness at the death of a pet, in this case one who had only died two days before he wrote this entry. The death itself did not go quickly, with the cat giving signs of a painful passing. She died “après bien près d’une heure d’agonie, de cris, de soubresauts” (Léautaud Bestiaire 26 août 1912). The difficult death no doubt increased his sadness, due to the cat’s visible suffering. Léautaud remained with her through the entire agony, during which she continued to give signs of anguish:

[J]e restai auprès d’elle jusqu’au bout. Je la vis ainsi agoniser, se tordre, je l’entendis crier, de ces cries aigus, dans lesquels je sentais que tout son être se défendait, se raidissait, se tendait contre la mort […] Quels instants j’ai encore passés là, moins de chagrin, peut-être que de dégoût, d’amertume, de découragement, de pitié, à voir cela, un être si beau, si bon, si innocent, toute petite chose destinée à n’être que toute que grâce, affection, joliesse, partir ainsi, mourir (Léautaud, Bestiaire 26 août 1912). His description portrays the lived experience of the cat to his reader, showing the reasons to pity her.

By contrasting her painful death with the gifts she could have given had she lived, he gives further reason for his chagrin. Blanche, on the other hand, felt deprived of her rest and inconvenienced by Souris’ death: “Blanche se plaignant de se trouver ainsi réveillée, dérangée dans son repos, bafouant mon chagrin, mes larmes, craignant pour telle ou telle étoffe […] avoir de ces paroles, de ces préoccupations, devant la mort de ce petit être ! Qu’elle est donc bâtie différemment de moi !” (Léautaud, Bestiaire 26 août 1912). The contrast between his empathy for Souris and Blanche’s concern for herself, even in the face of obvious suffering, mirrors the difference between Léautaud’s understanding of the animal experience and that of society at large. He understands that Souris’ twisting and crying demonstrate pain, while Blanche does not pay attention, due to her desire to sleep.
Not only does she limit her concern to herself, she also ridicules Léautaud for his pity, even in the middle of Souris’ agony, demonstrating her desire to ensure that animals’ experiences are subverted to human desire for a certain level of comfort. Her ridicule illustrates that Léautaud had, in fact, “franchi une limite,” and reached a point of solitude, due to his refusal to maintain the mainstream concept of animals’ place.

Léautaud demonstrated an ethics consistent with Schopenhauer’s analysis – based on justice, compassion, and sacrifice. His compassion and self-sacrifice for animals, including those on the street, crosses the unspoken line shown by Bailly and Fudge that discourages a display of affection and love for animals. Yet, as one who believed in his cause, he consistently dared to cross this line, attempting to radiate an ethics of compassion in early twentieth century Paris. By demonstrating compassion for both animals and human weakness, he illustrates the lack of exclusivity of compassion – one does not limit compassion to one or the other. Rather, one should have compassion for the weakest and most oppressed, who need it the most, and who have the least chance of improving their unfortunate situations without help. By acting on his pity for society’s cast-offs of various species, he establishes that true pity firstly acts on a motivation to help the other, and secondly, does not search for self-gain. By opposing self-gain to genuine compassion, because with compassion, “I shall be induced by that purely moral motive to make a greater or smaller sacrifice for another’s needs or distress,” he fosters greater compassion for animals. As Rachilde noted, he combats the dominant attitude expressed by Weitzenfeld and Joy, that caring “about the exploitation and suffering of those [...] less capable of reciprocating [...] is considered irrational and sentimental,” and instead promotes caring about those less capable of reciprocating as an expression of a true sense of compassion.

The Courage to separate from society
Because many mocked compassion for animals, one had to become a rebel in order to truly take a stand against those whose actions led to mistreatment or abuse of animals. Léautaud, like Céline, did not limit his rebellion to animal welfare. He rejected much mainstream thought and did not seek to conform to trends or popular ideas. He realized the value of developing the courage to be oneself, even when one risks disapproval:

Qu’on est long avant d’oser être soi. Ce n’est pas qu’on soit soi très tard, non, c’est bien ce que je dis, il faut beaucoup de temps avant de se décider à se montrer tel qu’on est, délivré du souci de ce qui est admiré et qu’avant on cherchait naïvement à imiter, se forçant à le trouver bien, malgré la secrète différence que l’on en sentait avec soi” (Léautaud, JL 1: 5 janvier 1904).

Developing this courage enables him to confront those harming animals, without worrying about what others will think of him. As Rachilde indicated, when one has no hope of any personal gain, one must have greater courage than the general populace to stand up for “une cause perdue d’avance.”

Léautaud, however, refuses to hide behind popular ideas and does not accept the defeat of the animals’ cause. He risks not only ridicule and shame, but also physical harm to defend animals.

When standing up to two workers terrifying a street cat, Léautaud demonstrates this lack of concern for what others will think. As Céline revealed in his writing, in the early twentieth century, cruelty to animals sometimes served as a type of entertainment for the perpetrators. In these instances, the signs of pain or fear on the part of the animals did not provoke any pity on the part of the actors. Léautaud experiences this in his encounter with the workers who ridicule him when he criticizes their actions:

Deux grands gaillards, des ouvriers endimanchés et deux femmes, l’avaient cerné, cherchant à l’attraper avec leurs pieds. La malheureuse bête criait de frayeur, des cris comme je n’en avais pas encore entendu chez un chat. Celle-ci parvient à passer entre eux, et à se sauver dans le terrain des bêtes. Ces gens descendant la rue Claude-Bernard, je les rattrape, et m’adressant à un des hommes, un gaillard taillé en hercule, je lui dis, indigné que j’étais presque jusqu’aux larmes, mais me contenant pourtant : ‘Pourquoi vous amusez-vous à vouloir faire du mal à cette bête ?’ Il me
demande ce que cela me fait. Je lui dis que cela me fait quelque chose, que je trouve cela honteux et que je le dis. Ça chauffait un peu. Les deux femmes étaient parties sur l’autre trottoir. Il n’y avait plus que ces deux brutes en face de moi et Mme Planche. Je répète que je trouve cela honteux et les traite de brutes et de cochons. Là-dessus, ils me tutoient, me traitent de youpin, blaguant mon lorgnon, ont des airs de me menacer (Léautaud, Bestiaire 30 décembre 1909).

Remaining unmoved by the cat’s cries, despite the fact that Léautaud had never heard a cat make such a sound, the two workers display empathy erosion. When Elisa Aaltola states that “Sympathy emerges as an extraordinary capacity that acts as the doorway to the reality of others and provides the grounds for morality,” she shows the intertwining of sympathy, reality, and morality, adding the aspect of reality to Schopenhauer’s connection between compassion and morality (“Empathy” 77-78). The worker’s lack of compassion shows a refusal to see the reality of the cat, displaying the paradox that leads to repeated animal suffering. The very fact that he is a living creature, which makes his reactions unpredictable, becomes the reason for participating in behavior that disregards the other aspects of his being a living creature-the ability to feel fear and distress. In this way the workers see an incomplete picture of their actions, which Léautaud attempts to point out by asking why they want to “faire du mal à cette bête.”

By the expression “faire du mal,” he asserts that they are causing harm, with “à cette bête” emphasizing that the harm occurs to a living creature. By asking Léautaud what their actions have to do with him, the workers express an objectification of animals that displays an absence of empathy. Through their actions and words, they convey their perceived irrelevance of the fear and distress of the cat, and consequently, an anthropocentric belief system, for their entertainment takes priority over the cat’s welfare. Weitzenfeld and Joy state that “anthropocentrism, which has narcissistically privileged humans as the center of all significance, is not an innate disposition, but a historical outcome of a distorted humanism in which human freedom is founded upon the unfreedom of human and animal others” (3).
The men’s reply to Léautaud demonstrates their belief that causing distress to the cat, eliminating his freedom, should be allowed for the sake of their freedom. Weitzenfeld and Joy also state:

> Anthropocentrism, as an ideology, functions to maintain the centrality and priority of human existence through marginalizing and subordinating nonhuman perspectives, interests, and beings. Anthropocentrism requires that a society have a concept of humanity, assign privileged value to it, and measure all other beings by this standard (4).

Whereas the cat makes his interests known by his crying, the workers show their prioritizing of themselves by ignoring the cat’s perspective, and thereby show the privilege they award to themselves as humans, who being much larger, have a physically superior edge over the cat. When they ridicule and appear threatening to Léautaud for standing up for the cat, they assert their perceived right to subordinate the cat’s experience, keeping him in a restricted conceptual space that does not acknowledge his inner life, or allow for a belief that they are harming the cat. Furthermore, like the vivisectors who criticized and insulted those who opposed them, they turn the attention away from their own actions by criticizing his person.

Léautaud continues by emphasizing the public acceptance of cruelty to street animals. Whereas others had seen the actions of the workers, no one else had stepped in to oppose their behavior: “Et il passait à côté de nous, et qui avaient vu ces gens agir, d’autres gens. Pas un ne s’est joint à moi. Je le disais hier à la S.P.A. [Société Protectrice des Animaux] à l’inspecteur en chef Vincent : Quand on s’occupe dans la rue d’une bête malheureuse, sur dix personnes qui vous regardent, il y en a huit qui rigolent” (Léautaud, *Bestiaire* 30 décembre 1909). With this description, he documents the strength of anthropocentrism in society and the ridicule one faces for standing up for animals. Aaltola argues that empathy erosion “enables one to treat others as objects instead of subjects, as points of manipulation instead of valuable beings” (“Empathy” 79). Those who laugh, as well as those inflicting the distress, clearly do not view the “bête malheureuse” as a valuable being. The workers illustrate this belief by
trying to manipulate the cat with their feet and then insulting Léautaud for pointing out that they were harming a living being. In highlighting the laughing of bystanders when confronted with animal cruelty, Léautaud attempts to change the ethics of society – to show a link between compassion and ethics – by illustrating the perspective that those without compassion for the suffering animal ignore.

When defending animals against abuse, Léautaud even disregarded his own personal safety for their sake. Dormoy describes how he frequently confronted those he saw causing harm to animals: “Plusieurs fois il provoqua des bagarres avec des passants ou des enfants qui malmenaient leur animal. Un jour il provoqua une véritable émeute en inventivant des ouvriers qui s’apprêtaient à faire rôtir un rat qu’ils venaient de capturer. C’est miracle que ces brutes ne lui soient pas tombées dessus” (Préface 22-23). Again exhibiting a consistency of ethics, he defends animals based on their defenselessness in the face of human violence. Despite the fact that rats were considered pests, he still believed that they should not be forced to suffer. In 1927, he observed two typographers from Flammarion dousing rats with gasoline then burning them alive. He felt so strongly that he wrote two letters – one to a city councilor who had publicly protested this common action, and another to the Messieurs Flammarion themselves (Léautaud, CG 631). He did not protest the killing of the rats, but rather the cruel manner that the typographers used. In the second letter he stated: “Je me moque de leur grossièreté à mon égard, mais n’êtes-vous pas d’avis de leur dire qu’il y a d’autres moyens de supprimer des rats que de les brûler ainsi tout vifs, histoire de rire?” (Léautaud, CG 631). In this instance as well, when protesting the burning, he received insults and had a door violently slammed on him, demonstrating quite literally the opposition of violence and compassion. Those intent on violence diametrically oppose compassion for their victims and react with more violence.
Léautaud extends his willingness to challenge those harming animals even when it makes him the center of attention, with no support from others. Dormoy describes a scene in a café where Léautaud alone defends the well-being of a cat:

Je l’avais emmené déjeuner dans un restaurant en plein air des environs de Paris. Etablissement d’une certaine classe, public choisi. Son entrée dans le jardin avait suscité un silence impressionnant […]


Hors de lui, Léautaud se leva, criant au maître de la bête féroce : ‘Mais rappelez votre chien, voyons !’

Sa voix au timbre grave, vibrante de colère, résonna de telle sorte que tout le monde se tut et que le maître du chien, tout pâle, alla vers sa bête, la mit en laisse, et l’emmena. Rassuré, mais exsangue et crispé, Léautaud leva, me disant : ‘Je m’en vais. Je ne veux plus rester ici. Tous ces gens sont des coquins.’ Il se dirigea en hâte vers la sortie […] Nous remontâmes en voiture. Je reconduisais Léautaud à Fontenay. Pas un mot ni pendant le trajet, ni en me quittant. Il était aussi bouleversé par cet incident qu’il aurait pu l’être par le plus atroce des drames humains (Préface 23-24).

Speaking up for the cat against all others, when no one else was on his side, reveals a self-sacrifice behind his act – he risked public ridicule and humiliation for the well-being of another creature.

Furthermore, leaving immediately afterwards and his total silence illustrate his genuine distress at the incident, demonstrating that his sole concern was the welfare of the cat. By calling out the dog’s owner when the others cheered on the dog, Léautaud depicts the application of the unspoken boundary prohibiting emotions for animals in daily life. No one else attempted to stop the man from allowing his dog to terrify the cat, once again illustrating the paradox of using the fear of a living being for entertainment. They see that the cat’s fear exists, but do not empathize with his state of fear. They use
the unpredictability due to his agency for entertainment, but do not acknowledge that agency itself provides evidence of an inner life.

In the previous examples, everything occurred in the open, but in another instance, he had projectiles thrown at him from the interior of a building where he could not see the aggressors. Workers threw construction materials at him when he went to care for a street cat living in the construction area:

En face de l’enclos où il s’abrite, il y a une nouvelle maison – le numéro 112 – à l’intérieur de laquelle des ouvriers travaillent encore, parqueteurs, peintres, plâtriers, etc... Ils ont sans doute remarqué mes allées et venues à propos du chat. Hier, ils ont commencé à s’amuser à jeter dans l’enclos des morceaux de lames de parquet. Cela tombait soit à côté de moi, soit sur les charpentes sous lesquelles le chat s’abrite, et cette bête, qui commençait à répondre et à se montrer à mes appels, en est redevenue soudain extrêmement sauvage comme avant. Aujourd’hui, j’arrive à midi dix, et je vois bientôt tomber autour de moi de larges et épais plâtras, lancés d’une fenêtre ouverte à l’entresol. Je traverse la chaussée, je pénètre dans la boutique du boulevard, non encore finie de clore, et je monte l’escalier dans l’idée de trouver à l’entresol les ouvriers et de les prier de cesser des plaisanteries aussi bêtes. Mais plus personne : des bruits de pas qui s’éloignent et des rires. Je redescends, en me mettant de la peinture plein mon pardessus et je vais parler à la concierge. Puis je reviens à la palissade. A peine là, nouveau plâtras, qui tombe à cinquante centimètres de moi, lancé d’une fenêtre d’un étage supérieur (Léautaud, Bestiaire 11 novembre, 1908).

When he notes the workers’ knowledge of his caring for the cat, he connects their bullying of him to this care, thus linking their attacks to anthropocentrism. The workers obviously thought that they could harass a person taking care of an animal, as well as the animal himself, with no consequences, as demonstrated by the repetition of their attacks. In so doing, they appear to have the intention of scaring off Léautaud, so that the cat would be left with no one to care for him.

Throughout these examples, he remains consistent in his efforts to reform society by making known the harm done to the animals, consequently moving them from the limited conceptual space in which they are considered objects of manipulation to a greater conceptual space that acknowledges their inner lives, including the capacity to suffer fear. By braving shame and ridicule, he attempts to
contest the insensitivity of members of society towards animals and the subordination of the animal's perspective. Having the courage to stand alone in his public battles against violence to animals emphasizes his belief in the moral relevance of animals, demonstrating through his own actions that might does not make right, and that their experiences matter to him as they matter to the animals.

4.2 Relationships with pets

Léautaud’s willingness to risk ridicule for the sake of animals stemmed from a strong sense of empathy and pity that he acquired through his interactions with them. He often writes of his emotions towards animals, and his actions make evident his moral conviction regarding animal subjecthood and treatment. Due to his extensive work with multiple animals, this subjecthood has become undeniable to him.

As his life progresses, he gives up more and more of what used to please him in order to focus his attention on his own animals and other animals in need. His own happiness stems from theirs:

> Rien, rien, rien ne compte pour moi que mes bêtes. Là, ma méfiance ne joue pas, et ma tendresse s’augmente de ce qu’elles sont toutes des animaux recueillis. Mon bonheur se double du bonheur que je leur ai donné. Je me moque que cette note fasse rire, à l’âge que j’ai. Mon amour des bêtes n’a jamais été une affaire de plaisir. A la vérité, une grande pitié.

> Les gens qui ne s’intéressent pas aux bêtes, qui n’en ont jamais eu, les sots qui rient qu’on puisse les aimer, ne savent pas quelles merveilles de bonté, de fidélité, d’attachement, d’intelligence curieuse, on trouve en elles. C’est la plus charmante compagnie, quand on sait s’y prendre, et je parle de toutes les bêtes, sans exception. Nous ne connaissons rien d’elles, avec notre sotte façon de les regarder de loin. Quand on vit avec elles, que de choses on découvre, que d’autres on éveille quand on sait leur donner confiance ! (Léautaud, PL 50-51).

Given that all his animals were abandoned or strays, he emphasizes that he gave them a home, not for a need of a pet for his own satisfaction, but because they had no home. Even his uncommon (for Paris) pets came to him by chance. He found his goose in the street, the goat’s previous owner asked him to take her, and the most unconventional of all, his monkey appeared in a tree in his yard one day in
November 1934: “Mes chiens aboyaient au pied d’un marronnier, ils aboyaient en l’air et la guenon, très haut dans le marronnier, les canardait avec des marrons […] Alors, cette bête, j’ai fini par l’apprivoiser et, maintenant, chez moi, elle est chez elle” (Léautaud and Mallet 199). Léautaud does not keep his pets for his own entertainment or desire to gain benefits from them, but instead to fulfill their needs, which would not be met on the street. Yet, in return, he does receive benefits, which he lists. In addition, he points out that knowledge of the inner lives of animals was, at that time, quite limited. He understood animals better than others because he took the time to get to know them in their daily setting. Frans de Waal, who advocates holistic observation, stated: “The best way to understand animal emotions is just to watch spontaneous behavior, either in the wild or captivity” (Mama’s 57). Léautaud shows here how holistic observation provides increased knowledge of animals. When he states, “Nous ne connaissons rien d’elles, avec notre sotte façon de les regarder de loin. Quand on vit avec elles, que de choses on découvre, que d’autres on éveille quand on sait leur donner confiance,” he demonstrates a belief in this method of gaining knowledge. By living together with animals, one participates in holistic observation, thereby discovering hitherto unknown aspects of animal subjecthood. Léautaud indicates that anthropocentrism often stems from those who do not have sufficient experience with animals to understand them. Smuts, having worked closely with multiple animals, expresses the belief that: “[T]reating members of other species as persons, as beings with potential far beyond our normal expectations, will bring out the best in them, and that each animal’s best includes unforeseeable gifts” (Reflections 120). Her work demonstrates this potential in animals with whom she interacts, Céline’s work shows this to be true of Bébert, and Léautaud discovers this with his grand menagerie. Harding described Léautaud as someone with an “acute power[] of observation” (12). This power, added to the hundreds of animals that he owned personally in his lifetime, makes Léautaud a unique expert on animal behavior. Harding’s citation highlights that observation is itself a skill, at which one can be more
or less gifted. Harding, comparing Léautaud to Jules Renard, characterized his observations as bringing clarity: “They observed themselves with the same ruthless clarity they brought to observing those around them” (12). Noting this clarity supports the accuracy of Léautaud’s observations. By keeping a journal for over 50 years, Léautaud likewise shows a keen interest in observing and noting his surroundings, which includes his own animals, community animals, and cases of animal abuse by various sources. The quantity of animals itself, spread over time, gives him multiple beings to observe, enabling him to distinguish general traits from unique instances and characteristics. Through his skills, including emotional discernment, and an acute power of observation and interpretation, Léautaud brought about a new understanding of the lives of animals.

His love of animals stems in part from their goodness, fidelity, and attachment, as he states in this passage, giving a particular reason why one has a moral obligation towards them – their ability to reciprocate in relationships. Anca Gheaus states in “The Role of Love in Animal Ethics”: “The love we have for some animals and their ability to return it generates the special ethical relevance of these animals” (584). One owes specific animals, those capable of actively participating in relationships, special ethical consideration due to this ability. This differentiates higher animals from plants and nonliving objects, as well as from lower animals, such as insects (although Léautaud will also show lower animals as responsive to humans). Gheaus points out that this forms part of the basis for ethical consideration in general: “Being a creature who can give and receive love is one of the hallmarks of ethical relevance” (586). Léautaud shows this capacity throughout his journal, both in his and others’ relationships with animals, by including animals’ reactions to their owners, to him, and to each other, which supports animal subjecthood. Reciprocating a relationship can simultaneously fulfill a need or desire of the human and that of the animal, showing a two-way sense of ethics – they each respond to the other’s needs and have needs of their own. The former demonstrates a direct value that they have
for people in the way of directly and positively impacting their life. The latter makes them moral patients, to use Regan’s terminology. Because they have needs, they can experience both benefits and harm, and thus, they merit ethical treatment that takes this into consideration. Gheaus explains the various ways that animals contribute to human life:

From stories told by people who have had intimate relationships with animals we know that animals can give us a kind of love that directly responds to many of our emotional needs: they show tenderness, unconditional trust, company, comfort, sometimes attention and responses to our states of mind. They can share our joy or show compassion when we are ill, afraid, or sad. They can try to cheer us up (591).

Importantly, she shows that this type of knowledge comes from people who have had intimate relationships with animals; it is people with direct personal experience with animals who attest to these characteristics that both qualify them as subjects and show them as bringing benefits of their own into relationships. Restricting animals to a narrow conceptual space also restricts knowledge about their inner lives. But those willing to see that to which others close their mind in advance can develop a mutual relationship with animals. Gheaus notes that love of individuals leads one to value others who could fill that same role in another’s life: “Our love for particular human beings, toward whom we are partial, enables us to understand the moral value of people in general. People’s moral identity is partially determined by the fact that they are potential objects of other people’s love” (594). Seeing certain animals, then, as potential objects of others’ love endows them with a type of moral identity, regardless of whether they fill that role at any given moment in time – they innately have this capacity. By seeing the goodness, fidelity, and attachment of which domestic animals are capable, Léautaud expresses that they all have the ability to fill this role, and thus, all have moral worth.

In his encounters with lost dogs, Léautaud often noted their desire to have an owner. Many of them seemed genuinely lost, with no sense of how to return home. He describes his attempt one morning to find the owner of a lost dog whom he had taken in for the night:
Je suis parti ce matin avec le grand chien blanc par le boulevard Montparnasse, un peu du boulevard Port-Royal jusqu’à la rue Saint-Jacques, demandant çà et là si on le connaissait. Rien. Lui-même – je l’avais laissé en liberté – n’a pas paru connaître un chemin quelconque, très attaché à me suivre. Ce qu’ils font tous hélas ! quand on les trouve ainsi, et si heureux qu’ils sont d’avoir trouvé un maître (Léautaud, Bestiaire 22 mai 1911).

By describing the dog as happy to have found an owner, Léautaud establishes the dog’s desire for a relationship. In Lad: A Dog, Albert Payson Terhune writes: “Any man with money to make the purchase may become a dog’s owner. But no man—spend he ever so much coin and food and tact in the effort—may become a dog’s Master without the consent of the dog” (4-his emphasis). The word consent gives subjecthood to the dog; it conveys that he has a will of his own. Léautaud shows in this extract, that the dog demonstrates this subjecthood by stating his attachment to following him. When Fudge discusses Terhune’s statement, she writes: “But how is this consent to be represented? How can an animal that cannot engage in a written or verbal contract, agree to be a pet? For it is the animal’s agreement that is so important if the relationship is to be understood as mutual” (29). Léautaud illustrates this agreement by first stating that the dog had been given his freedom to choose, but rather than heading off on his own, he, in fact, chose to follow him.

Although abandonment and mistreatment constituted two of the primary sources of animal suffering, Léautaud pitied animals who suffered for any reason. Sometimes the care of animals depends on the resources of the owner, which results in less care than would be desirable. When he encounters a visually impaired man, who wants to take care of his dog, but the dog is obviously ill and needs special care, he does what he can to make things a little better for him:

Cet aveugle avait une chienne, sorte d’épagneul croisé de Saint-Bernard, pelée par endroits, les yeux pleins d’humeur, l’air si triste, si résignée ! Quand l’homme s’est remis en route, son bavardage fini, je l’ai arrêté, et lui ai donné dix sous, en lui disant d’en faire un peu profiter sa bête. Il m’a assuré être très bon pour elle, la soigner de son mieux. Elle a cinq ans et c’est la maladie qui vient de la prendre. Cet aveugle a perdu sa femme il y a dix mois. Ils avaient élevé leur bête toute petite. Cette mort a profondément
In this passage, he establishes that dogs suffer from illness and separation, just as humans do. Writing of the sadness and resignation of the dog, he conveys his understanding of animal emotions, which enables him to feel pity and empathy for her condition. The disparity between the pets of the rich and the poor provokes compassion for those of the underprivileged who would care better for their companion animals if they had the resources to do so, as well as for the owners.

In this passage, Léautaud gives an example of an aspect of income disparity that received little attention – the greater difficulty of caring for pets who have become part of the family. The relationship between the couple and their dog demonstrates a type of “affectionate and meaningful relationship,” as noted by Fudge. They had raised her from a puppy, and the dog has suffered emotionally from the death of the wife. This description endows the dog with familial status and distinguishes between her and inanimate property, giving her ethical relevance due to her abilities to both suffer harm and participate in a relationship. Léautaud draws attention to the inner life of the dog by describing her as “triste” and “résignée,” while in the same description showing the causes of these emotions. When Aaltola stated that, “[i]t is behavior that serves as the reference point and constructs empathetic insights: the sorry gait, the barren look, or the playful flicks of the tail,” she shows how one can read animals by the outward signs that they give (“Empathy” 83). Léautaud illustrates his accuracy in reading the signs that contribute to his empathetic insights. He first notices the physical ailments of both dog and owner, but then discovers further causes of these emotional states – she had lost her mistress whom she had known her entire life. By giving money for something that could brighten the dog’s day, he demonstrates an empathetic reaction to the effect of income disparity on pets – one can help the
pet's owner do something extra for them. This further illustrates the ethical relevance of animals; Léautaud recognizes that simple actions can benefit them, and expresses through his own actions and descriptions that life can go better or worse for them, that they have a psychophysical identity over time, and that, consequently, they suffer both physical and psychological harm. He also establishes the importance of people to their animals; the dog had an attachment to the wife, to the extent that “Cette mort a profondément affecté cette bête.” The effect of the death on the dog, substantiates the importance of the relationship to the dog; not only do owners form deep attachments with their dogs, but dogs also form attachments to specific people, illustrating that just as people appreciate individuals, the same holds true for dogs.

Animal Neglect

Other cases of animal suffering come from both intentional and unintentional neglect, such as not buying a collar for a dog one allows to roam, who then gets lost and ends up on the street. From Léautaud’s journal, one can tell that strays proliferated in Paris at the time. All his own animals came from the streets; he took them in so that they could have food and security. By writing continuously about the animals he found roaming, often fearful and starving, Léautaud shows them as subjects, who each undergo their own individual suffering. The problem was widespread, but each individual animal suffered in his own way. He often describes each animal’s individual breed or coloring and specific behavior, showing them as having their own unique story.

In 1909, he goes from a general statement about the problem of abandoned and unwanted animals to two specific cases, showing how the general problem is a collection of suffering individuals:

Les histoires de bêtes perdues, abandonnées, dont des gens veulent se débarrasser sous les prétextes les plus divers et souvent les plus futes ! J’en apprends tous les jours de nouvelles. Cette après-midi, dans la cour du 18 rue de Condé, une jolie...
et toute jeune chatte noire, là depuis ce matin. La concierge s’est informée dans la rue. A personne ! Abandonnée là sûrement ce matin. J’ai réussi à la caser au Collège Sévigné. Ce soir, en allant rue Denfert-Rochereau, conversation avec un conducteur d’auto. Il me parle incidemment d’une sorte de danois mâtiné de dogue de Bordeaux appartenant à son patron. Intelligent, bon, obéissant, très affectueux, mais pas du tout de garde. Pour cette unique raison, le maître veut le faire tuer.

J’écrirais chaque jour trois pages si je voulais tout noter (Léautaud, Bestiaire 24 décembre 1909).

When Upton Sinclair wrote four years earlier about the individuality of each hog destined for mass slaughter, he also described the differences between them, showing that a pig is not a generic machine-like creature:

Each one of these hogs was a separate creature. Some were white hogs, some were black; some were brown, some were spotted; some were old, some young; some were long and lean, some were monstrous. And each of them had an individuality of his own, a will of his own, a hope and a heart’s desire; each was full of self-confidence, of self-importance, and a sense of dignity […] [Fate] did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all” (Chapter 3).

Neither the physical appearance, nor the personality of each pig was the same, yet each was de-individualized in the same way. He shows both the method and the consequences of this de-individualization process. By describing the cat and dog each as an individual along with the problem of the owners acting as if the wishes and feelings of their animals “had no existence at all,” Léautaud emphasizes the widespread attitude of de-individualization of domestic animals. The cat was not a generic cat, but “une jolie et toute jeune chatte noire.” The dog was not simply “un chien,” but “une sorte de danois mâtiné de dogue de Bordeaux,” who was also “intelligent, bon, obéissant, très affectueux, mais pas du tout de garde.” Each of them has their own qualities, mostly positive. Yet, despite this, Léautaud would have to write three pages every day if he wanted to note all the animals that he encountered in Paris alone. Like those responsible for the mass pig slaughtering, the owners who neglect and abandon their pets ignore the needs and desires of the pets themselves.
Others simply take their pets far from their home to abandon them. Léautaud was talking with a concierge who had found his lost dog, when the concierge told him that after having gone to the police station, he discovered that the only dog at any station was a very old dog at a station far away. They both agreed that the dog had likely been abandoned because he was no longer useful: “Encore des gens qui avaient un vieux chien dont ils ne voulaient plus et qui ont été le perdre dans un quartier éloigné du leur. Un chien vous a été utile ou agréable, tant qu’il était valide. Il devient vieux ! A la rue ! Va crever où tu pourras ! Pas même la charité de le faire abattre à défaut de cette conscience de lui assurer ses vieux jours” (Léautaud, Bestiaire 24 juillet 1920). His use of the word “conscience” links this treatment with ethics. By abandoning a dog in an unfamiliar area and leaving him to die alone, the owner treats him unethically. Doing so because the dog had lost his utility, due to old age, objectifies him and effectively denies that he has moral relevance.

Léautaud frequently criticized those who abandoned their pets or did not look for lost pets, because the majority of the animal cruelty that he witnessed involved animals found on the street. He saw these owners as the root of the problem of animal abuse, as they exposed the animals to abuse. By writing about the various reasons people abandon their animals and the multiple strays he encounters, feeds, and houses, he attempts to educate the public about this avoidable suffering. He believes that a civilized society does not stem from exalting humans, but from taking into account all its members, including animals: “Je ne crains pas de le dire: une société n’est pas complètement civilisée quand on n’y a pas la notion et la pratique des devoirs envers les animaux” (Léautaud, Passe-temps 209). He gives examples of ways that society does not meet its obligations to its animals, whom he portrays as an

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Ironically (because Léautaud despised Céline’s writing style), Léautaud’s style resembles Céline’s in this excerpt when he writes: “Il devient vieux ! A la rue ! Va crever où tu pourras!”

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important part of this society. He established how civilized emotions oppose direct violence, and he extends the idea of “civilized” to include fulfilling obligations to the animal members of society.

4.3 Animal Cruelty

Léautaud initially became interested in animal welfare given all the cruelty that he witnessed while out and about in Paris, much of it inflicted on lost and stray animals. He often states that he has greater compassion for animals because they cannot talk or defend themselves. In Le Différend, Jean-François Lyotard explains the logic behind this perspective:

Quelqu’un éprouve plus de douleur à l’occasion d’un dommage fait à un animal qu’à un humain. C’est que l’animal est privé de la possibilité de témoigner selon les règles humaines d’établissement du dommage, et qu’en conséquence tout dommage est comme un tort et fait de lui une victime ipso facto. — Mais, s’il n’a pas du tout les moyens de témoigner, il n’y a même pas dommage, du moins vous ne pouvez pas l’établir (50).

Thus, because the human idea of justice depends on testifying for oneself, animals cannot participate in the same system of justice and cannot defend themselves, either physically or by bearing witness to harms done. In order for animal welfare to advance, humans must attest to the harm done for them, which drives Léautaud to write on their behalf.

Street animals had no owner to look out for their welfare, and consequently suffered much abuse in the first part of the century. Some Parisians directly abused street animals, others abused them via their own pets. Léautaud gives another example of animal suffering brought about as a type of entertainment for those responsible:

[I]l y a aux Halles un boucher qui s’amuse de temps en temps à lâcher un énorme chien sur les malheureux chats qui vivent là errants, lequel chien souvent ne les tue pas, mais leur casse une patte, ou leur crève un œil, ou leur enfoûce les côtes, etc, etc. Dire qu’il existe de tels individus ! Ils sont même légion. J’ai bien vu de paisibles bourgeois promenant leur chien le soir et le faisant passer à travers les grilles du Luxembourg pour faire la course aux chats. En réalité, les gens n’aient pas les bêtes. Ou ils n’aient que la leur (Léautaud, Bestiaire 30 nov. 1909).
By emphasizing that these actions take place in plain view of all in the large city of Paris, Léautaud emphasizes the generalized anthropocentrism of the time. People who participate in this type of activity “sont même légion.” The fact that the dog does not kill the cats, but gravely injures them and leaves them to suffer shows an extreme lack of empathy, on the part of the dog owner, rather than an attempt to view the situation from the cats’ point of view. By stating that the people do not like animals, after showing the results of this attitude, Léautaud shows the need for a new perspective on animals, illustrating what Maurice Barrès wrote in a reply letter to Léautaud on the subject of vivisection: “[C]e sont les mœurs du public qu’il faudrait changer, influencer, éduquer.”

Léautaud attempts to do this through educating the public on the animal experience. While people could walk or turn away and ignore the events as they take place, Léautaud spells out what they ignore and the effects this has on living beings. Because this happens “de temps en temps” at the same butcher’s, ignoring the problem perpetuates this type of animal suffering, including imitations of it elsewhere in Paris.

Léautaud lamented the lack of pity for animals in his frequent encounters with cruelty. While checking on stray cats at the Séminaire, he worried about their fate, again due to local butchers: “Mauvais endroit, du reste. Ils reviendront au Séminaire, ou s’en iront au marché Saint-Germain, endroit redoutable pour eux, car on les y tue, assomme, livre à des chiens sans aucune pitié. Toujours le fait des bouchers. Il faudrait qu’ils soient chez des gens qui s’occupent de les apprivoiser, de les surveiller, etc., chose rare” (Léautaud, Bestiaire 1er décembre 1909-my emphasis). He presents a solution requiring engaged empathy; for this particular type of cruelty to stop, the cats need secure homes. Because the butchers lack pity for the cats, he has no hope of a change in their behavior, but only of saving the cats by getting them off the streets. By highlighting this lack of pity, he demonstrates

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67 To be discussed in the next section
the need for more empathy in society. If the butchers empathized with the cats, the cats would be
secure from this particular threat. Alternatively, if more members of society empathized with them,
they could protect them from this threat, which would also save them. However, because the general
public does nothing to intervene or change the situation, the cats continue to suffer dog attacks and
unnecessary death. This interestingly begins to reveal a pattern in some butchers in the first half of the
century. In Céline’s work, a butcher drew a large crowd to help torture a pig. In both this example and
the previous one, butchers use dogs to attack cats, supporting, before the slaughterhouse studies, that
killing animals for a living can lead to empathy erosion (or initially attracts people with lower levels of
empathy, or both).

In addition to direct cruelty, many abandoned their pets or turned them over to the authorities
when they became inconvenient, treating them as disposable. In so doing, they see them not as
valuable beings, but instead as burdens. Léautaud illustrates an instance where this occurs, focusing on
the experience of the dog:

Un commerçant de la rue Saint-Placide avait un caniche, depuis longtemps. La pauvre
bête devient malade. Il se rend au commissariat. Sur sa demande, on vient lui prendre
son chien. L’homme du commissariat le tirait par une corde, le malheureux chien ne
cessant de regarder en arrière la maison d’où on l’emmenait [...] Voilà quelles sortes de
gens – et elles pullulent – ont des bêtes” (Leautaud, Bestiaire 24 décembre 1909).

Even those who own pets sometimes lack compassion for their own animals. By showing how the
officer pulled the dog who kept looking back to his house, Léautaud illustrates the dog’s desire to
remain at home, showing the reader that this act violates the dog’s will. Simultaneously demonstrating
animal awareness and preference beliefs, the dog’s behavior gives evidence of harm by deprivation –
the deprivation of his home and security. Whereas the dog demonstrates loyalty through his actions,
the shopkeeper demonstrates disloyalty. Léautaud again illustrates domestic animals’ predisposition
towards reciprocal relationships. He shows the owner’s behavior as not respecting an emotional bond.
Gheaus explains the connection between the morality of human actions regarding animals and relationships of trust: “Certain claims about the morality of our behavior toward animals make sense only because we stand in some kind of emotional relationship with them. Some forms of betrayal or manipulation—understood as the destruction of a pre-existing trust—depend on the possibility of establishing emotional relationships” (Gheaus 592). In this way the owner’s actions constitute a betrayal. The behavior of the poodle illustrates an emotional attachment to his home. By physically not wanting to move further away from it, as well as continually looking back, he demonstrates the existence of a “pre-existing trust,” that the owner betrayed in having an officer remove him from his home.

The likely fate of the unwanted animal in such situations was death. Bailly also writes of human disloyalty towards domestic animals when their death comes from human hands. In this instance, he is criticizing butchering, but the logic applies to all killing of healthy, tame, domestic animals: “[A] la familiarité que souvent il établit avec la bête, l’homme finit par n’offrir, en tuant, que désaveu et trahison” (Bailly 127). He establishes a similar logic to Gheaus – the type of relationships formed between domesticated animals and humans serves as grounds for loyalty. When one kills an animal who has lived his life peacefully with humans, one betrays that animal. Consequently the animal has been wronged.

In one of his radio interviews with Mallet, Léautaud provides another example of a dog’s loyalty that highlights this betrayal. He also includes cats amongst those who form deep attachments to their human. Besides loyalty, he includes the ability to suffer as a primary reason to care about the fate of domestic animals:

Je commence par dire que je n’ai absolument rien contre les gens qui ne s’intéressent pas aux animaux et qui n’en veulent pas chez eux. Ceux à qui je fais des reproches parce qu’ils commettent une action abominable, ce sont les gens qui prennent un animal,
chien ou chat, par fantaisie ou utilité, et qui, lorsque leur fantaisie ou leur utilité est passée, le jettent à la rue. Je trouve ça monstrueux, n’est-ce pas. Avec des êtres qui sont sensibles, qui peuvent souffrir et qui, de plus, s’attachent en général si profondément à ce qu’on appelle leur maître !... Ainsi, je me rappelle que, voici assez longtemps, il a paru dans les journaux ce fait-divers : un homme, dans les environs de Paris, avait pris la résolution de noyer son chien ; alors il est allé au bord de la Marne et, à trois reprises, il a jeté violemment ce chien à l’eau, et le chien revenait toujours sur la berge. La quatrième fois, cet homme était furieux, et il a fait un tel effort que lui-même est tombé dans l’eau, et le chien l’a ramené sur le rivage. C’est encore le chien qui l’a tiré d’affaire ! (Léautaud and Mallet 207).

The dog displays not just his useful lifesaving skills in this example, but also the ability to discern that his human risks drowning. Ironically, he saves the life of the person intent on killing him, emphasizing the injustice of the situation.

Léautaud particularly pitied animals because they had no recourse for maltreatment, as Lyotard explained. Furthermore, at the time, animal suffering in Paris was rather common:

Il n’y a pas de comparaison entre la détresse d’une bête et celle d’un être humain. Celui-ci peut demander, réclamer, etc... L’autre, non, et a encore en plus les mauvais traitements. Je pense souvent aux animaux de Paris. Les chevaux sont les plus malheureux : mal nourris, mal traités, et obligés de travailler—puis viennent les chiens perdus—puis les chats abandonnés qui eux du moins peuvent se dérober aux coups et aux prises—puis les oiseaux (Léautaud, JL 1: 17 mars 1906).

Like Zola, he pitied animals who could not talk to express their needs, and felt this was a reason to pity them, rather than objectify them. Moreover, animals are mistreated in a way that humans are not.

Léautaud shows how anthropocentric philosophy becomes enacted in society. With lack of speech as one of the principal historical reasons to deny animal subjectivity, Léautaud shows that animal maltreatment results when one accords speech too central a role in ethical consideration.

In these scenes, Léautaud illustrates the ways that society neglects its moral obligations to animals. By documenting animal maltreatment, he testifies on their behalf, since they cannot do so themselves. He consequently establishes the damages done to the animals and their status as victims.
By giving the animal side of the story, he invites the reader to contemplate the treatment of animals, indicating that society should view the animal perspective as worthy of attention and contemplation.

**Fate of strays**

Whenever Léautaud places a street dog in a new home, which he did frequently throughout his adult life, one of the recommendations he makes is to immediately purchase a collar and tag with the address of the new home. When he finds dogs with collars without an address or no collar at all, he laments the lack of concern for the well-being of the dog. The fate of animals in the street in early twentieth century Paris was uncertain at best. They were at risk of hunger and thirst on the one hand and violence from people on the street or ending up as a vivisection experiment on the other. While Léautaud pitied both people and animals on the street, he felt that the animals had a worse possible fate ahead of them: “Songer qu’on est là, chez soi, tranquille, à l’abri, et que des malheureuses bêtes parcourrent ainsi les rues au hazard... Des gens aussi, hélas! Mais les gens peuvent parler. On ne les écoute pas toujours, il est vrai. Mais enfin, rien de cruel, aucune violence ne les attend. Tandis que les bêtes” (Léautaud, *Bestiaire* 163 sans date 1911). In addition to the common problems of homelessness, animals were subject to human cruelty in a way that people were not. He again associates the lack of human language with violence towards animals who cannot plead their own case.

Even if a lost dog has an owner who wants to bring him home, his destiny was still uncertain if the police caught him. After finding a home with a street merchant for a stray dog, Léautaud discovers that the dog had escaped his leash and began following a police officer, who refused to return the dog:

> Sa fille revient avec moi, court après l’agent, essaie de ravoir le chien, mais est repoussée. J’arrive moi-même à l’agent. Tous mes efforts, ma colère, mes reproches, mes injures même n’ont pu avoir raison de cette brute, entêtée à emmener sa prise, qui se laissait emmener si docilement avec cela. Inconscience de cette bête, allant si bénévolement à sa mort” (Léautaud, *JL I* : 19 décembre 1906).
He illustrates here why he put so much effort into finding good homes for strays. This dog was gentle and followed without being on a leash – he just happened to follow the wrong person, which most likely led to his death.

In a similar incident, an agent refused to give two dogs, who were inseparable, to a member of the S.P.A. who offered to take them. Instead, he took them to the station, and then sent them to the Fourrière, which handed many animals unclaimed by their owners over to the vivisection laboratories. Even when the member showed up with her card, which the agent had requested, he would not let her have the dogs:

A onze heures du matin, deux chiens étaient couchés au pied du mur de l'église Saint-Sulpice : un grand noir, qui avait une patte écrasée, et un petit griffon jaune, qui ne voulait pas le quitter, couché tout contre lui. Mme V… membre de la S.P.A. qui passait là, voulut prendre ces deux chiens, pour les transporter en voiture chez elle pour les premiers soins. L’agent 129 du VIe s’y opposa, à moins de présentation de sa carte. Mme V… n’ayant pas sa carte sur elle demanda dix minutes à l’agent pour aller la chercher – elle habite rue de Seine. Quand elle revint, les deux chiens n’étaient plus là. L’agent avait fait ramasser et emmener au poste de la place Saint-Sulpice. Mme V… s’y étant présentée, avec une carte portant quelques mots de Mme de Silva, ne put obtenir aucune attention à sa requête, rien qu’un refus. Les animaux étaient au poste. Ils iraient à la Fourrière. Un point c’est tout […] Et voilà deux chiens qui auraient pu être recueillis, remis à leur maître, peut-être, et qui vont aller grossir le nombre des victimes de laboratoire (Léautaud, Bestiaire 22 avril 1912).

The contrast between the dog who refuses to leave his companion and the agent who refuses to give them a chance to find a home accentuates the cruelty towards strays who posed no threat to others. It illustrates the “dramatic contrast” described by Kete between the “affective behavior of canines” and “an increasingly cruel bourgeois world, male, alienating, and relentlessly unsentimental.” One finds the affective behavior of canines not only between humans and canines, but between canine and canine. The refusal of the agent to show compassion for either the dogs or the S.P.A. member epitomizes “male, alienating, and relentlessly unsentimental,” by refusing two dogs, one of them injured, who were
obviously attached to one another, a safe refuge, which would still have kept them off the street and accomplished any public interest goal of the capture.

On another occasion, Léautaud remarks that a lost dog he had caught had found a good home, noting that it is always worthwhile to attempt to catch lost dogs. If they do not find a home or go to the refuge, they run the risk of becoming part of vivisection experiments:

[Je suis allé voir, rue de l’Echaudé, chez un loueur de voitures où Mme Véret l’a placé tout de suite, le grand chien blanc que j’ai trouvé une nuit, au commencement de cette année, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. Bien portant, gai, très affectueux, en un mot, pas malheureux. Preuve qu’il faut toujours faire son possible pour attraper un chien perdu. On court la chance de le placer, et en tous cas on lui donne un abri, la pâtée, et même s’il doit être abattu au Refuge, on le sauve des souffrances de la vivisection (Léautaud, Bestiaire 28 novembre 1911).]

He emphasizes here both the risk of being a street animal towards the beginning of the century and the suffering involved in vivisection, as death is a better option for these animals than life as an experimental subject. Throughout his journal, vivisection remains one of his biggest concerns. The Fourrière frequently supplied laboratories with animals for experimentation, which underlies Léautaud’s concern for getting animals off the streets.

At another moment, he writes of a dog that he could not catch, which leads him to think of other pursuits that ended in the same way. This haunts his thoughts that evening as he writes in his journal:

Malheureuses bêtes, qu’elles m’auront fait souffrir. Même quand je ne les vois pas, quand je suis là, chez moi, je pense qu’il en est d’errantes, de ramassées brutalement, d’enfermées à la Fourrière dans d’étroites cages, plusieurs jours de suite, puis asphyxiées, et surtout livrées aux hôpitaux. Misérables gens, ceux qui les possédaient, qui ne les ont pas surveillées. Et qui, les ayant perdues, s’en fichent comme de l’an quarante” (Léautaud, Bestiaire 168 sans date 1911).

The dogs endure suffering throughout the entire chain of events. His own suffering, while reflecting on their pain, opposes his empathetic reaction to their situation with the lack of compassion of those who
contribute to the chain of harm: those who do not look for their lost dogs, those who harshly grab them off the street, and those who kill or experiment on them. By ending this reflection with his thoughts on the former pet owners, he reminds the reader that these animals that end up asphyxiated or as experiments have been pets who have the capacity for mutuality, which reaffirms their status as agents. Furthermore, he supplies details that give a comprehensive understanding of their situation. They were snatched “brutalement” and kept “plusieurs jours” in “étroites cages.” His elaboration with descriptive adjectives allows his reader to better empathize with the dogs, because it gives the specifics of their experience. Like Céline, he avoids generalities in his animal passages that lead to incomplete, and often misconstrued knowledge. Without knowing that the Fourrière keeps animals in narrow cages, one might imagine a large cage, such as some rescue organizations have currently. Without knowing that agents grab them brutally off the street, one might imagine them being kindly collected before being placed in this imagined large cage, etc. Thus, the specifics allow for more accurate knowledge. They also provide context for his other accounts of stray and lost dog captures, such as the two canine companions above, as it accentuates the future conditions of the peaceful dogs.

Not only dogs, but unwanted cats could also end up as experiments. In one instance the death of the cat owner leads to their confiscation by police:

Ce matin, lettre d’une dame [...] au sujet de 34 chats laissés par une dame Lebas [...] décédée, et dont les fils, dès le lendemain, sont allés au commissariat de police, lequel a mobilisé quatre agents avec trois cages, pour l’enlèvement de ces malheureuses bêtes. Cette dame me dit pourtant ne pas insister ‘sur le carnage épouvantable qui s’est produit’ et leur envoi à la Fourrière. Elle me demande si je peux faire quelque chose pour ces bêtes, les sauver des laboratoires, ayant appris par les journaux et la Radio que je recueille les animaux abandonnés. Je n’ai pu que lui répondre négativement. Il est au reste presque certain que la Fourrière ne me les donnerait pas” (Léautaud, JL 18: 26 Septembre, 1952).

In the first half of the twentieth century, lost and stray pets were frequently used for experiments on both sides of the Atlantic. They were purchased directly from people who would pick them up on the
streets and sell them (without checking to see if they were stolen, which sometimes occurred) and also from pounds. The only sure spots, other than having a home of their own, were the refuges run by the rescue groups, as Léautaud points out above. These did not guarantee life, but they did save them from vivisection. Lynda Birke shows the importance of regarding animals as individuals in “On Being a Pragmatist: Reflections on Animals, Feminism, and Personal Politics.” She argues that individual animals will suffer harm if animal welfarists hold out for complete animal liberation while ignoring the animals suffering at the moment. She also points out that doing nothing perpetuates the suffering of animals currently being used for experiments:

Having been in several labs and seen the animals there, I would rather go away knowing that something had been done to make better the lives of those animals. I might prefer that they weren’t there at all, but can I really go away having gazed into their eyes and ignore those individual lives? That specific suffering? I remember one animal technician telling me that they had to keep the animals in their lab in opaque cages, because the scientists didn’t like it “when the animals were watching.” Gazing back makes it personal. These animals are no longer so easily relegated to numbers—and most laboratory animals are depersonalized in precisely this way—rather, they become individuals (351-her emphasis).

She recognizes that each animal in the labs represents a case of individual suffering, rather than generalizing them into one aggregate case. Depersonalization allows for easier infliction of suffering, whereas individualization forces one to acknowledge the effects on the individual. Léautaud opposed vivisection and appreciated all who made an effort to stop it because he saw all animals as individuals and recognized that each animal used for an experiment resulted in harm to that specific animal.

After reading a letter in L’Intransigeant of February 23, 1911, from a patient of l’hôpital Tenon in Paris who claimed to have seen a dog led into a vivisection room, heard his cries for two and a half hours, then saw them lead the dog, bleeding, into another room, Léautaud wrote to the politicians Louis...
Martin and Maurice Barrès, wanting them to have a witness account of vivisection68 (Léautaud, *Bestiaire* 23 février 1911). Barrès replied in a letter that the answer lies in educating the public: “Barrès me dit une chose très juste, à quoi je pense bien souvent, à quoi je pense chaque jour, étant donnés les exemples que je rencontre : ce sont les mœurs du public qu’il faudrait changer, influencer, éduquer” (Léautaud, *Bestiaire* 27 février 1911). Their agreement illustrates Léautaud’s conviction that an absence of ethics towards animals exists on a large scale that extends beyond a few marginal cases; he sees a general problem in society at large.

Léautaud often tried to educate others regarding vivisection, displaying a belief that it continued because of a lack of public awareness. If someone seemed badly informed to him, he would take it upon himself to increase their knowledge, as he did with Maurice de Waleffe, the director of *Paris-Midi*:

“Maurice de Waleffe, le directeur de *Paris-Midi* a publié dans son journal, vendredi dernier, un article sur la vivisection qui m’a paru un peu léger pour une question où tant de cruauté est en jeu. Le soir même rentré chez moi j’écrivis une longue lettre à Waleffe pour tâcher de le renseigner mieux qu’il ne paraissait l’être” (Léautaud, *Bestiaire* 7 février 1912). A follow-up article showed that his and others’ attempts to portray a more complete reality sometimes proved effective. Besides his own letter, others had also written in response to the original article. Additionally, another article appeared in a different journal, detailing the thousands of animals on which the Pasteur Institute experimented, with their complaint about a lack of animals on which to conduct experiments:

*Le Matin* publiait un article consacré au manque d’animaux dont se plaignait l’Institut Pasteur, article qui contenait en outre l’énumération des différents animaux, depuis les pigeons, poules, rats, souris et cobayes, jusqu’aux chevaux, chiens, chats, et singes consommés annuellement par l’établissement : au total pas loin de quarante mille animaux. Et aujourd’hui, en lisant à midi le *Paris-Midi* d’hier – je ne le lis jamais que le

68 *L’intransigeant* subsequently published an article after a certain Henriette Doringe had visited the hospital and spoke with staff members that refuted the original letter. Léautaud did not believe the hospital staff. (*Bestiaire* 24 février 1911).
lendemain dans l'exemplaire du Mercure – je trouve un nouvel article de Waleffe sur la question, dans lequel il exprime de tout autres sentiments, sous l'effet – il le dit – de l'article du Matin d'hier et des nombreuses lettres qu'il a reçues, au nombre desquelles la mienne (Léautaud, Bestiaire 7 février 1912).

The letter itself gives details of the vivisection performed in Paris at the time. Not only the Pasteur Institute, but also the hospitals performed live animal experiments. Léautaud notes in this letter that many of the experimenters had no regard for animal suffering. Furthermore, even after the completion of the experiments, they lacked the compassion to put them out of their misery, demonstrating empathy erosion:

Lisez un peu les faits exposés à la Chambre, séance du 16 décembre 1909, les nombreux témoignages d'étudiants, de médecins, de fils de praticiens, à propos d'animaux opérés tout vifs, et laissés ensuite tels quels dans le laboratoire, à expiration tout déchirées, tout pantelantes. Voulez-vous un exemple entre bien d'autres ? Je le copie pour vous. “Il y a quelque temps, dans un hôpital de Paris, le directeur entendit des coups de revolver. Il se précipita dans la cour et vit un interne qui déchargeait son arme dans les vitres de l'amphithéâtre. Il l'interrogea. ‘Je délivre ces malheureux,’ répondit l'interne. Et il désigna du doigt quatre ou cinq chiens sur lesquels les étudiants avaient fait des expériences et qu'ils avaient laissés le corps, ouvert, poussant des cris affreux.” Ce ne sont pas là des racontars de vieilles femmes. Ce sont choses vues, par des gens du métier“ (Léautaud, “Contre la vivisection” p. 2).

The intern who shot the “malheureux” exemplifies how the vivisectors did not fulfill their duties to the dogs. After the experiments, rather than doing anything to alleviate their suffering, they left their bodies open, while they were still “poussant des cris affreux.” This lack of concern for unnecessary suffering, as Léautaud emphasizes, happened frequently, as per the testimony of those who had firsthand knowledge.

Furthermore, the institutions that conducted experiments paid strangers who brought animals to them, creating an incentive for the poor to bring them animals for money. One man had been encouraged by his friends to sell his own dog to the medical school:

Il y a un mois, je revenais un soir du Vaudeville. Place du Théâtre-Français, je m'arrête à un camelot, pour acheter un journal. Cet homme, d'aspect minable, avait avec lui un
chien, d'allure analogue, sale, grelottant, une patte blessée. Je m'enquiers : l'homme, un malheureux logeant dans un de ces bouges du quartier Maubert. Il a trouvé le chien et l'a gardé, mais ne sait s'il pourra le conserver. “Il y a des camarades qui me disaient : ‘Mène le donc à l'Ecole de médecine. T'auras cent sous’” (Léautaud, “Contre la vivisection” p. 2).

This example reveals how the laboratories participated in the betrayal that Bailly and Gheaus revealed. By buying animals for experiments directly from pet owners, they take animals who had relationships with humans, and most likely had placed extreme trust in humans, only to betray that trust by inflicting suffering.

Some used these animals for demonstrative purposes, contributing no new knowledge. Yet, the medical school repeated these demonstrations with each new session of a course. Léautaud provides a solution, proposing the use of modern technology to avoid repetition (in this instance seeing a possible benefit of recent technology):

Nous savons tout de l'anatomie d'un chien, d'un chat, d'un singe, d'un volatile. Alors, pourquoi tant répéter d'inutiles démonstrations ? Savez-vous qu'il y a toute une série d'opérations extrêmement cruelles qu'on refait chaque année dans le même cours ? Par exemple celle-ci : prendre des chiennes grosses à diverses époques, et leur ouvrir l'abdomen, pour montrer la position des petits. Quel intérêt, je vous prie, pour des étudiants en médecine humaine ? Il n'y a même pas l'analogie entre la durée de la gestation, puisqu'une chienne porte environ neuf semaines, et une femme neuf mois. En tout cas, qu'on prenne ces choses une bonne fois au cinéma et qu'on cesse ces cruautés (“Contre la vivisection” p. 2).

He also emphasizes the susceptibility of physicians to human error, asserting that their post should not serve as a reason to leave their decisions unquestioned. Léautaud points out the hypocrisy of not leaving them unaccountable when it comes to humans, but crediting them with no accountability towards animals: “Que diable, nous ne reconnaissions pas les médecins infaillibles en ce qui nous concerne. Allons-nous leur accorder celle infaillibilité quand il s'agit des animaux ? Vous n'êtes pas, je pense, de ces gens pour qui la fonction crée l'intelligence” (“Contre la vivisection” p. 2). He emphasizes the double-standard allowed for vivisectors due to the refusal to consider animals as individuals. They
take animals off the street who can defend and show affection to their owners for experiments without holding them accountable for their usefulness (as in the vivisections endlessly repeated for a new audience), or for ending their suffering at the end of the experiments (as in the dogs whom the intern shot). By not holding them accountable, the public and the law grant them this “infallible” status with respect to animals, whereas with respect to humans, the same people recognize their fallibility.

The Fourrière itself frequently refused to give up animals to those who wanted to rescue them. Even with a letter from the S.P.A., they often would not offer animals the possibility of a caring home. While looking for his own lost dog, Léautaud saw a cage of cats that he hoped to rescue, but they denied the request:

[D]ans une cage : quatre ou cinq malheureux chats qui miaulaient à chaque passage de visiteurs. J’ai décidé de tâcher d’obtenir qu’on me les donne. Je suis allé trouver Mme de Silva. Elle m’a donné une lettre pour le contrôleur de la Fourrière, demandant les chats pour elle (elle a l’adjudication des animaux du Domaine) moyen plus sûr, m’a-t-elle dit, que de les demander pour moi. Marie est retournée aujourd’hui à la Fourrière pour le Bouvier (the lost dog), qui n’y était encore pas. Elle a remis la lettre pour les malheureux chats. Refus absolu. Je suis hors d’état de penser à autre chose qu’à toutes ces malheureuses bêtes enfermées là, pour quelle fin, hélas ! L’imbécillité et la cruauté réunies : voilà ce qui peint la Fourrière et son règlement (Léautaud, *Bestiaire* 25 août 1923).

Léautaud perceives a lack of logic and compassion in their refusal. While the cats communicated a desire for freedom and Léautaud made an effort to take them out of the pound, the pound kept them unnecessarily and without good reason.

When Rachilde stated that the cause of animal suffering was lost in advance, she revealed the tremendous power behind the anthropocentrism of the day. Throughout his work, Léautaud shows the power of the institutions, both educational and medical, to obtain and use animals brought into the pound, many of whom, according to Léautaud, were simply caught while wandering close to home. Any
animal not on a leash was subject to seizure, which was misused by the police, as Léautaud explains in a footnote:

On a des exemples de chiens capturés aux pieds de leurs propriétaires, parce que non tenus en laisse et non muselés. Dans la banlieue que j'habite, un jour de marché, un agent prétendit capturer un chien de maraîcher, qui se trouvait sur le siège de sa voiture, sous le prétexte qu’il était là seul. Heureusement, le propriétaire survint, et nullement intimidé par le personnage, lui fit remarquer que sa voiture était encore son domicile et que le chien se trouvait là chez lui. Le trop zélé ‘flic’ dut tourner bride (Léautaud, Passe-temps 178-his emphasis).

Furthermore, the laboratories could demand capturing animals on the street for their experiments. At one point, Léautaud noticed a renewal in the active pursuit of dogs:

A Fontenay, en avril 1949, je voyais, place de l’Eglise, des agents – ce qu’on n’avait pas vu depuis longtemps – capturer des chiens. J’ai parlé à un agent et il m’a dit : ‘Monsieur, les laboratoires ont fait une démarche à la Préfecture de Police pour qu’on active la capture des chiens : ils ont besoin de sujets d’expériences’ (Léautaud and Mallet 204).

Even in the mid-century, the laboratories still used former and lost pets for experiments. Although Léautaud criticized all types of animal cruelty, he criticized those who either abandoned their pets, or did not try hard enough to find them if they strayed the most, as these pets supplied the vivisection laboratories. Even if they avoided the laboratory, many other problems awaited them on the street, such as hunger and general cruelty. Yet, as one can tell from his journal, numerous stray dogs and cats wandered the streets of Paris at the time. Fudge writes in Pets:

In its methods of representation literary texts can also be regarded as laying bare the world in that they have the potential to show things in ways that jolt us out of our everyday perceptions [...] Literature can lead us to a reassessment of the world, which can, in turn, lead to a reconnection with it. Literature, in short, can lead to a reactivation of compassion for that which has been deadened by familiarity” (69).

Léautaud expressly attempts to jolt his readers out of their everyday perceptions. He undoes the normalization of both hungry stray animals left in the street and their capture for use in physiological demonstrations and laboratory experiments. In de-normalizing these occurrences, he leads the reader
to reconnect with animals, which in turn, he hopes, will lead to a reactivation of compassion for them.

The familiarity of these animals on the street, as well as the public nature of leading animals to their death at the time (the experimenters at the Sorbonne unloaded trucks of dogs in broad daylight, and Léautaud records instances of seeing horses going in groups on foot to the slaughterhouse) leads to public desensitization due to the commonplace nature of the events. In drawing attention to the animals themselves, Léautaud reframes these events. He defamiliarizes them and draws attention to what lies ahead for the animal behind closed doors.

**Other negative uses of animals**

Although Léautaud limited his own work with animals to companion animals, he had compassion for all animal suffering, and did not condone any source of it. In addition to traditional domestic animals, other animals also suffered mistreatment at the hands of humans, including show animals, exotic animals removed from their natural environment, and mining horses. Wherever Léautaud finds animal cruelty, he addresses it with his writing, using literature to reignite compassion for that which has become normalized and familiarized.

At that time, owners and trainers of show animals often abused them in order to make them perform as desired. He describes a trick used by owners of dancing animals to give the illusion of dancing:

> Je ne vois jamais de ces animaux dressés à faire des tours, que ce soient singes, chiens, chats ou autres, sans penser par où ils sont passés, pour apprendre les tours qu’on les voit faire. Je le disais à deux passants qui s’étaient un peu arrêtés, comme moi : ‘Je ne sais si vous avez vu dans des fêtes foraines un singe qu’on fait danser en musique sur une plaque de métal. On croit qu’il danse vraiment, qu’on le lui a appris. Le vrai, c’est qu’il y a sous la plaque de métal un petit réchaud à alcool allumé. La plaque est ainsi plus ou moins chaude, plus ou moins brûlante. Les gambades du singe, sautant sur une patte, sur une autre, sont simplement un effet de la brûlure qu’il ressent et qu’il cherche à éviter.’ Les deux passants ont convenu que c’est abominable” (Léautaud, *JL* 17: 28 Juin, 1947).
These actions by trainers reveal the influence of mechanomorphia, which as Aaltola affirmed, results in empathy erosion, due to thinking of the animal involved as an object of manipulation:

> It would appear that most societies and far too many individual people suffer from empathy erosion, and even psychopathic and narcissistic tendencies, in their relations to non-human animals. In Buber’s terminology, they treat other animals as an ‘it’ to be rendered into an object of manipulation [...] Arguably, it is precisely the unwillingness to empathize with other animals that has led to the current climate of “mechanomorphia” (Crist 1999) or “anthropodenial” (de Waal 2006), within which animals are wrongly depicted as machine-like creatures poor or wholly lacking in mental content and ability (Aaltola, “Empathy” 79).

Trainers who place a burning object under the feet of an animal, by only searching for a cause that will produce the desired effect, reduce the animal to a mechanical object. As their primary concern is the reaction to the stimulus, they ignore the harm of forcing the animal to remain on a burning surface, seeing only what they want to see of the situation. Eileen Crist explains the result of mechanomorphic presentations of animals:

> The logical corollary of a technical-causal language is the presentation of animals as puppetlike, guided by theoretically explained forces that are beyond their control and understanding. The consequence of technical-causal idioms of representation is that animals appear mindless; otherwise put, the conceptual space that might admit a vision of inner life drastically shrinks” (85).

These trainers treat their animals as mindless puppets by regarding the burning plate as a type of string to pull to get the animal to dance, without considering the simultaneous mental reaction to having their feet burned. In contrast, Léautaud and the couple passing by recognized the harm in burning an animal’s feet, demonstrating an understanding of an inner life in animals.

An issue that continues and that still makes the news in the twenty-first century is keeping a big cat as a pet. In Léautaud’s day, recognizing the cruelty of taking a wild animal out of its natural habitat was relatively limited. Léautaud, however, shows himself to be quite ahead of his time in recognizing the harm done to the animal. He recalls a conversation with a man who wanted to have a tiger and a private zoo: “Il a convenu de ce que je lui ai dit qu’il y a une certaine cruauté, à prendre ainsi chez soi,
quand ils sont tout jeunes, des animaux, à les habituer à une certaine existence, et à les rejeter quand il devient dangereux de les avoir chez soi, et qu’on ferait mieux de les laisser dans leur milieu normal” (Léautaud, JL 16: 15 septembre, 1944). Because Léautaud had spent a significant amount of time with a variety of animals, including not just dogs and cats, but also a donkey, a goose, a goat, and a monkey, he understands the causes of animal harm better than many others of his day, including environmental effects on wellbeing. He also understood that different species have different needs, and that not meeting species-specific needs represents a type of cruelty.

Léautaud also understands that the needs of exotic animals differ from those of domestic ones. In a conversation with Gide, which took place after the death of Dindiki, Gide’s small nocturnal monkey, the discussion turned toward the benefit of replicating a natural environment for animals removed from their native homes. Both recognized the harm to displaced animals when one introduces a life unnatural to them. Gide first blames himself for Dindiki’s death:

‘Je garde du reste un remords à l’égard de ce petit être. Je me dis que c’est moi qui l’ai tué. Vous le savez, c’était une sorte de petit singe. Ces animaux vivent uniquement la nuit. Je le gardais tout le temps avec moi, je l’obligeais à vivre le jour, je le privais de sommeil. Il a certainement dû en résulter une sorte de fatigue nerveuse…’


Gide recognizes that animals have natural needs that differ from those that humans attempt to impose on them when they take wild animals as pets or turn them into exhibits. When Léautaud explains that one considers them to be toys, he reveals the status of these animals as objects of manipulation. When one does not consider their needs, one views them as existing to fulfill human desires, just like the show animals.
Some negative animal treatment occurred for public consumption, and other cases continued because of a lack of public knowledge of its existence. Most likely because their owners keep them out of the public eye, mining horses received much less attention than street transport horses. The horses, once taken down into the mines, stayed beneath the earth’s surface. Consequently, not many people other than the mine workers had knowledge of their underground life. One of them, a former miner who attempted to have a literary career, Louis Gérin, published an article on their conditions only to have the journal that published it sued by the mining company. Léautaud recounts both these conditions and the attention given to the new horses by the veteran horses:

Il me fait un tableau du sort des chevaux de mine, passant leur vie entière, dix-neuf ans ou plus, sous terre, à la lumière ou dans la nuit, ne remontant au jour que pour mourir, souvent couverts de blessures, aux oreilles notamment, blessures qu’on raccommode le plus souvent avec du fil de fer. Ces chevaux, pourtant, doux, sensibles, intelligents, connaissant par cœur les détours de la mine, le temps de leur travail, jusqu’au nombre de bennes qui compose leur besogne quotidienne, refusant de continuer quand ce nombre est atteint, vivant là, êtres animés, dans une sorte de tombe. Il me donne ce détail : quand de jeunes chevaux arrivent dans la mine, pour y trouver le même sort, les vieux viennent à eux, les examinent, les flairent, comme pour respirer sur eux l’odeur de l’air et du grand jour, s’attachent à eux, les suivent, les accompagnent, comme des anciens qui mettent les bleus au courant. Gérin me dit qu’on n’a jamais rien pu obtenir pour améliorer le sort de ces malheureuses bêtes. Lui qui a été mineur, qui a vu de près l’existence qui leur est faite, il a écrit un jour, dans un journal de la localité, un article révélant nombre de faits de cruauté. La Compagnie, intentant un procès à ce journal, a obtenu, contre lui, une condamnation à des dommages-intérêts assez élevés. Rares sont les mineurs qui s’attachent à un cheval ou à un autre, et lui apportent du dehors de petites gâteries, des carottes, par exemple. En général, des êtres extrêmement frustes, qui jugent leur propre sort pénible et misérable, et partent de là pour juger que celui de ces bêtes ne compte pas (Léautaud, JL 12: 9 décembre 1937).

The way in which the old horses greet the new horses recalls the war horses in Céline’s writing and depicts the social needs of horses; they come to greet their conspecifics. The behavior that demonstrates their needs as social beings, however, contrasts with their use as transport machines, especially their lack of access to sunlight and fresh air. The suit pursued by the mining company exemplifies the interest of animal oppressors to keep their actions in the dark, which remained very
possible in the mining industry. Furthermore, those who could reveal the truth suffer from the job conditions themselves, and have no empathy to extend to the horses, which upholds Pierre Gascar’s description of abuse of horses occurring when the workers themselves suffer abuse. These and the slaughterhouse stories support the hypothesis of the occurrence of empathy erosion when workers themselves endure mistreatment.

In all these situations, humans use animals as objects of manipulation for their own ends. In the cases of show animals, zoos, and mining, others participate directly or indirectly in their exploitation. The public goes to the zoos and stops to watch the fair animals, and those who work in the mine contribute to the horses’ mistreatment. But Léautaud shows a progression of thought in his journal entries. The Hamburg zoo had modernized and eliminated fencing. A miner educated the public about the horses’ conditions and a journal had published what he wrote, obviously believing that the story had public interest. Léautaud himself takes up their cause by including these entries in his journal. Because animals cannot bear witness to their treatment, or seek damages, as Lyotard explained, he does this for them, revealing the hidden conditions of fair animals and mine horses, and explaining the objectification that occurs when humans take animals out of their native habitat for their own personal pleasure, without taking into account the interests of the animals. In so doing, he establishes the damages brought about by these situations, making the case for better animal treatment.

4.4 Animals as subjects: Re-personalization

Like humans, as Regan pointed out, animals’ lives can go better or worse for them. Their lives can be peaceful or traumatic, they can be cared for or alone, healthy or unwell, with each of these criteria making a difference in their experiential life. Animals are subject in a more complete way than people to human control over their lives and the conditions of these lives, which, according to Léautaud makes people responsible for their fate:
La vie des bêtes vaut la nôtre. Des chiens sont heureux, d'autres non. Certains vivent leur vie, d'autres se perdent, ou sont abandonnés, et meurent soit supprimés, soit dans les laboratoires d'hôpitaux. Et pendant ce temps d'autres naissent, qu'on élève, et qui continueront le mouvement. La seule différence, c'est que de leur existence à eux, c'est nous autres, humains, qui en décidons ; comment nier dès lors que nous sommes responsables, absolument, du sort qui leur échoit. Il n'y a pas à nier. C'est indiscutable. Mais c'est là une question de conscience, et c'est bien ce qu'il y a de plus rare : la conscience (Léautaud, Bestiaire 165 sans date 1911).

Because their life can go better or worse, because they can suffer harm due to neglect or actions of humans, one cannot deny that, at least for domestic animals and those living under human control, humans are responsible for whether they fare well or poorly. Léautaud includes animals in a larger concept of community, as did Céline. When Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka stated that one should view animals as “neighbors, friends, co-citizens, and members of communities,” they advocate expanding one’s view of responsibility (24). One should ensure that one’s neighbors and friends fare well to the best of their ability. The emphasis placed by Léautaud on the differences between dogs illustrates the individuality of each one, showing similarities with humans, but the fates with which they meet differ drastically from those of humans. By first showing similarities between animals and humans, and then the significantly worse outcomes with which many animals meet, Léautaud illustrates the anthropocentrism behind their situation; in a just society, similarities should result in similar treatment. In stating the responsibility of humans for these outcomes, he critiques this anthropocentrism that allows for the perpetuation of this injustice, which reflects the rarity of conscience that he stated. Through these associations – injustice; responsibility for this injustice, due to anthropocentrism; and rarity of conscience which allows the continuation of this injustice – he critiques this anthropocentrism as unethical (the purpose of one’s conscience is to lead to ethical behavior). However, the lack of acknowledgement of similarities results in blindness to this injustice. Weitzenfeld and Joy state that historic versions of humanism “were unjust and illusory because they subordinated
what humans share with animal others (e.g., human embodiment and desire) to transcendence and instrumental reasoning, and founded a violent antagonism in which human freedom is enacted through the subjection of all that is nonhuman (19-parentheses theirs, emphasis mine). The subjection of those who share important characteristics with humans amounts to injustice because it ignores the similarities, focusing on the differences, hence the “illusory” description. In this analysis, anthropocentrism is unjust and illusory because it is built on distorted knowledge, meant to lead to subjugation, and consequently, does not allow for an undistorted development of conscience, which Léautaud shows by acknowledging its rarity. Schopenhauer states:

It is simply and solely [...] compassion that is the real basis of all voluntary justice and genuine loving kindness. Only insofar as an action has sprung from compassion does it have moral value; and every action resulting from any other motives has none. As soon as this compassion is aroused, the weal and woe of another are nearest to my heart in exactly the same way, although not always in the same degree, as otherwise only my own are. Hence the difference between him and me is now no longer absolute (144-his emphasis).

He interweaves justice and compassion, because only compassion can lead one to genuinely care about the life of another, and what causes them “weal and woe” in their experiential life. This compassion erases the difference between one and the other, establishing a link between compassion and difference – where there is absolute difference, there is no compassion. Thus, when Léautaud states that animals’ lives “vaut la nôtre,” he erases an absolute difference that could prevent this compassion from developing which would allow for the development of an ethics of responsibility. He does not, nor do Weitzenfeld and Joy, erase or ignore the differences. After all, humans control their fate because of these differences. But the differences do not negate the similarities; they exist side by side, providing reasons for both responsibility, due to the differences, and compassion, due to the similarities.

Surrounded by his own domestic animals, and caring for others who lived in the streets, Léautaud recognized the individuality of each animal. When he describes the street animals, he notes
individual characteristics of each one, differentiating each of them from all the others. For his own cats, he recognizes them as a type of “person”: “Chacun (de ses chats) est vraiment une petite personne avec sa personnalité” (Léautaud, JL 18: 12 septembre 1952). Smuts notes that one considers nonhuman animals as persons when one enters into a personal relationship with them. She emphasizes that this does not constitute anthropomorphism, but rather it entails viewing them as subjects:

[R]elating to other beings as persons has nothing to do with whether or not we attribute human characteristics to them. It has to do, instead, with recognizing that they are social subjects, like us, whose idiosyncratic, subjective experience of us plays the same role in their relations with us that our subjective experience of them plays in our relations with them. If they relate to us as individuals, and we relate to them as individuals, it is possible for us to have a personal relationship (Smuts, “Reflections” 118-her emphasis).

When Léautaud expresses that his cats are little persons, he expresses that, because of their individual personalities, they are each individual subjects and that he has intersubjective, individual relationships with each of them. Each of them reacts to him in a slightly different way, as he does to each of them, because of their personality differences.

Léautaud calls his menagerie a society, emphasizing their inclusion in a community, and the relevance of human-animal interactions to that community. Because a society consists of a collectivity of individuals, this term recognizes each member as capable of making a distinct contribution to the whole. When, in the same description, he uses the terms “société” and “petite personne,” to refer to animals, Léautaud emphasizes their capacity for and participation in personal relationships:

On sait que j’ai une nombreuse société de chats. Je viens encore d’en perdre un, la chatte Lolotte. Je l’avais recueillie en 1913, grosse comme le poing, sous le plancher d’une baraque de jouets, au Luxembourg, où elle se garait peureusement des passants, avec un autre chat tout pareil à elle, son frère Tobie, qui ne vécut que deux années. C’était une petite personne fort intelligente, volontaire, maniérée, qui parlait tout le temps, un peu pimbêche […] Elle voulait toujours être seule pour manger, pour se promener, pour dormir, et ne se plaisait qu’avec moi. Sitôt que j’arrivais, ou le dimanche quand je restais à la maison, elle me suivait partout, et si je travaillais ou lisais, ne quittait pas sa place auprès de moi. On a toujours l’air un peu ridicule quand on
célèbre les mérites des bêtes qu’on a, comme si elles en avaient que n’ont pas les autres. Il est pourtant très vrai qu’on fait des animaux, quand on s’occupe d’eux, quand on les fait vivre, près de soi, quand on les considère, ainsi qu’on doit le faire, comme des êtres vivants et sensibles, des êtres merveilleux, d’un intérêt inépuisable, chacun ayant, comme nous, son caractère et ses goûts particuliers [...] La pauvre Lolotte est morte vendredi dernier, 15 juin 1923. Depuis quelque temps, elle ne quittait plus ma chambre et mon lit. On montait plusieurs fois dans la journée pour s’occuper d’elle. Les deux derniers jours, elle pouvait à peine bouger. Elle savait très bien miauler d’une manière spéciale pour qu’on lui donnât à boire, ce qu’on faisait aussitôt. J’ai pu lui tenir encore un peu compagnie le dernier soir, à mon arrivée. Je me suis assis un moment sur mon lit, à côté d’elle, lui tenant une patte dans la main, de l’autre main la caressant doucement, en lui parlant. Elle s’accrochait de ses griffes à ma main pour me retenir plus longtemps, trouvait encore la force de ronronner pour me marquer son contentement de me voir près d’elle, nous deux qui, depuis dix ans, étions deux si bons amis [...] C’est quelque chose de perdre ainsi une compagnie de dix années. C’est un grand vide dans une maison. Ce n’est pas tout de suite qu’on s’y habitue (Léautaud, Passe-temps 61-63-my emphasis).

Léautaud portrays his own empathy here as well as reasons that others should consider cats worthy of empathy. His ten-year relationship with Lolotte provided him with sufficient time to understand her individual personality, which he describes in detail, giving evidence of her particularities. In this way, the reader must attend to the individual life of a cat, who differs in her behavior from other cats, and consequently, makes her own unique contribution to the small community consisting of Léautaud and the other animals. Lolotte also had a special way of meowing that communicated exactly what she wanted. Because of his extended experience, Léautaud could differentiate, and then interpret, that particular meow, demonstrating her capacity to effectively communicate across species boundaries.

This communication does, however, require effort on the part of the human. One must move beyond any preconceived ideas that preclude interspecies communication. Fudge explains how this type of communication entails both compassion and imagination:

To bring an animal into one’s home, to live with it as a member of the family, is not simply to ignore difference; it is to engage in an ongoing process of translation. It is to make educated guesses that rely on both empirical observation (watching how an animal responds) and imagination. A thought that begins ‘If I was a cat...’ could be
relegated to the realm of ‘mere’ anthropomorphism, but it is also a productive – not to say compassionate – mode of cohabitation (68).

This translation requires both understanding of the species and the individual. Thinking as if one were a cat requires one to first know cats as a species. By implying that this beginning step of animal translation stems from compassion, and ultimately aids the relationship, Fudge challenges the use of the term “anthropomorphism” as a negative quality. If one cannot get past a preconceived idea that animals cannot communicate; this sets up a barrier that hinders human-animal relationships. Given his keen senses of observation and compassion, Léautaud has learned how to translate Lolotte’s meows and behavior, which results in a mutual relationship of companionship and allows him to respond correctly to her needs.

His description gives evidence of how Lolotte participated in their relationship, resulting in them becoming “si bons amis” over a period of ten years. For Léautaud, Lolotte cannot be replaced by another cat because he loved her as an individual, not as a representative of a species. He demonstrates with this passage that “one can have a truly affectionate and meaningful relationship with a being that is not human” (Fudge 16). Only an affectionate and meaningful relationship leaves the void of which he speaks, and to which he cannot adjust. Fudge further states: “We need to find an ethics for human-pet relations that does not assume that being like a human is the only possible subject status, but that accepts the animal-ness of the animal” (65). Lolotte behaves like a cat – she meows, purrs, and uses her claws to hold what she wants to keep, but that does not exclude her as a subject. Rather, through her usage of these behaviors, the reader sees the mutuality of the relationship, and consequently, the presence of another subject. She responds differently to Léautaud than a human would, but she responds nonetheless.

**Interspecies relationships**
In order to see other animals as subjects, one must understand non-human types of agency, and not hold the human up as the only relevant standard. However, the anthropocentrism that maintains this exclusive standard has been established through institutions and philosophy, as Weitzenfeld and Joy point out, affirming that it is a learned attitude, rather than a natural understanding: “Anthropocentrism [...] is a historic development born from specific institutional and philosophical traditions” (5). Léautaud frequently depicts qualities typically denied to animals in order to break through societal messages preventing compassion for them. Their ability to communicate is one such quality. Lori Gruen stated: “Defining humans as unique in their capacity to use human language is akin to saying only humans have human intelligence. But we don’t want to define away the possibility that the capacities or skills that make up human intelligence might be shared by others” (13). Léautaud often notes interspecies interactions, revealing how animals adjust to other species in their environment. After the birth of his kitten, le Chinois, he notes in his journal the careful attention given to the kitten by his monkey. At first, when le Chinois’ mother kept him in an armoire, the monkey tries to show her good intentions to her:

“La guenon surtout est assidue à regarder, s’appuyant des mains au bord du bas de l’armoire, avançant petit à petit la tête, faisant des gentillesses à la chatte. Il est visible qu’elle voudrait bien se joindre à elle pour prendre soin du nouveau-né” (Léautaud, JL 16: 12 Juillet, 1944). The mother does not let her near her le Chinois at first, but she persists in attempting to show her good intentions while respecting the cat’s actions to keep her away:

La guenon s’enhardit de plus en plus à entrer dans l’armoire. Elle voudrait bien prendre place à côté de la Minette pour s’occuper avec elle du chaton. La Minette l’oblige à se retirer, la guenon reste alors devant l’armoire à lui faire de petites démonstrations aimables pour lui plaire et la rassurer, démonstrations qui consistent en petits bruits de la bouche et en petites salutations de la tête (Léautaud, JL 16: 14 Juillet, 1944). The monkey and the cat understand and respond to the actions of the other. When the mother finally does leave him alone, the monkey sees her opportunity to care for the kitten:
Pour la première fois, la guenon a approché le chaton. J’étais assis près du fauteuil dans lequel il était avec sa mère. Celle-ci est venue s’installer sur mes genoux, le laissant seul. La guenon a grimpé sur le fauteuil. Le chaton n’a pas bougé, posé en rond. Elle s’est tenue tout contre lui, s’est mise à l’épucrer, comme elle faisait avec le Grison, son grand camarade. Le chaton, qui se laissait faire, se déplaçant, elle levait les bras en l’air, pour lui laisser les mouvements libres. A un moment, elle l’a pris dans ses bras, tout contre sa poitrine. Il m’a semblé qu’elle allait plus doucement qu’à son ordinaire dans ses mouvements, ses gestes, plutôt d’épucement. A un moment, il s’est mis à jouer avec une de ses pattes posée à plat sur le fauteuil, à se dresser légèrement contre elle, comme il fait avec sa mère. Elle ne bougeait plus, certainement pour ne pas l’effrayer, et le regardant, avec des yeux ! une telle douceur ! Je ne peux qualifier cela que : instinct maternel. La chatte, sur mes genoux, regardait tranquillement” (Léautaud, JL 16: 6 Août, 1944).

Léautaud documents here the ways in which animals can communicate and care for each other between species. The monkey communicates with the mother for a period of time before making contact with the kitten, so when she finally does, the mother does not see her as a threat. Furthermore, she understands, when she finally interacts with him, his delicate condition as a newborn; she knows to lift her arms to allow free movement and picks him up and holds him without causing harm or fear. The lack of human language, or any common language for that matter, did not prevent the monkey from communicating effectively with la Minette and le Chinois. By including these excerpts, Léautaud not only affirms that successful communication exists outside of human language, but also, and just as importantly, animals can communicate without a shared language at all.

In addition to direct communication, animals adjust to others in their environment through observation. Just as Bardamu had his chicken, so did Léautaud, and like Bardamu’s chicken, Léautaud’s picked up the habits of his surroundings. In the case of Léautaud’s chicken, he adapted to the habits of the dogs and cats of the house, exemplifying Regan’s point that chickens have a social structure. This particular chicken had no other chickens with which to socialize, so he became part of the existing mammalian social structure, as did Bardamu’s chicken:
Il y a quelques années, une voisine est morte, qui vivait seule avec une vieille poule. Ma bonne l’a recueillie. Elle s’est tout de suite trouvée très à l’aise au milieu des chats et des chiens qu’elle connaissait de vue et qui la laissent fort tranquille, et a pris peu à peu leurs habitudes. L’été, dans le jardin, elle se pose comme eux sur un coussin, au soleil, et l’hiver, quand le froid sévit et que les feux sont allumés, elle sait très bien entrer dans la maison par la porte toujours ouverte, et s’installer devant le poêle, sur un fauteuil, au milieu des chats qui l’entourent, restant là comme eux à somnoler, à jouir de la chaleur, avec de petits gloussements de satisfaction. C’est un spectacle à la fois comique et touchant, qui me fait éclater de rire et me ravit (Léautaud, Passe-temps 192).

The chicken recognizes the habits of others, and peacefully becomes part of their society. She even knows to find a cushion or a chair on which to sit. Léautaud documents here what one can learn from observing animals. When one opens one’s mind to the concept of a chicken as a member of society, one can discover that they also have the capacity to learn from other animals, including non-avian species, that they can adapt to unusual habitats for a chicken, such as sitting with cats in front of the fire, and observe an existing social structure, like humans, for instance. As an added benefit, seeing his chicken warming by the fire made Léautaud “éclater de rire,” adding some touching entertainment to his winter nights. These examples illustrate the ability of even unconventional animals, such as a monkey and a chicken, to adapt to living amongst other species by using their innate cognitive abilities. No humans needed to teach them these adaptive skills, instead they had it within themselves to discern how to peacefully become part of the society imposed upon them.

The above example shows not only communication between animals, but also the caring of one animal for another. By grooming and hugging the kitten, the monkey demonstrates a kindness towards him. In the prior example of the dog with the injured paw, whose canine companion refused to leave his side, Léautaud remarked, in addition to the lack of compassion of agent 129, the amazing companionship of the griffon:

Quelle histoire touchante, aussi. Ces deux chiens étaient certainement des chiens de voiturier, de maraîcher, allant aux Halles. Ils en revenaient. Ils retournaient chez eux. Un autre membre de la S.P.A. les a vus passer vers neuf heures, devant chez
lui, à la jonction de la rue de Seine et de la rue Mazarine, le petit griffon jaune marchant à côté du grand noir. Seulement, comme celui-ci avait une patte blessée, de temps à autre, il s’arrêtait, se couchait un peu, pour se reposer, reprendre haleine, donner un peu de répit à sa souffrance. Le petit griffon jaune, lui, qui n’avait rien, aurait pu le laisser, trotter tout seul et regagner sa maison. Mais non ! Il ne voulait pas quitter son compagnon, son grand ami, sans doute, et quand celui-ci s’arrêtait, il s’arrêtait aussi.

Imaginez-vous-les, maintenant, dans une des cages sordides à la Fourrière, enfermés là sans le moindre égard, séparés sans doute l’un de l’autre, et le pauvre blessé sans soins, en attendant tous les deux le martyre du laboratoire (Bestiaire 22 avril 1912).

Comparing the other choices of the griffon with his actual actions reinforces both the agency of the dog and his ability to form relationships. He put aside any wants of his own, prioritizing his companionship with the injured dog, consequently showing compassion for the other’s needs. This example of putting another’s needs above his own shows a special moral relevancy of dogs because of this ability to demonstrate interest in another’s well-being, making them what we tend to refer to as humane. In both the monkey excerpt and this one, Léautaud uses words of friendship to describe inter-animal relations, creating awareness of their capacity to participate in mutual relationships with another living being.

Furthermore, the contrast between the treatment merited by this “histoire touchante” and their likely fate, “tous les deux le martyr du laboratoire,” makes obvious the injustice of using these pets, capable of active participation in mutual relationships, as vivisection experiments conducted without concern for excess suffering, such as described by Léautaud in his letter to Maurice de Waleffe.

Even in the early twentieth century, some recognized capacities in animals as small as insects. The artist Valentine Hugo had come to the Mercure with illustrations and stopped to talk about animals with Léautaud. She cares for animals from frogs to bugs and tells him how each reacts to her:

Merveilleuse histoire de crapauds qu’elle a chez elle, qui la connaissent, qui se dressent à son approche, qui répondent à son appel, qu’elle soigne quand ils sont malades […]

69 Léautaud originally states that she has toads, but later corrects it to frogs: “Je m’aperçois que je me trompe dans les lignes ci-dessus. Ce ne sont pas des crapauds que Mme Valentine Hugo a chez elle et dont elle a parlé, mais des grenouilles (UL 12: 18 juillet 1939).
Elle parle de ses crapauds se dressant sur leurs jambes arrière, à son approche, semblables à des corps de petites femmes, ayant des cris différents selon la circonstance : plaisir ou mécontentement. Elle parle d’une mante qu’elle a eue, qu’elle prenait dans sa main, les doigts fermés, laissant un creux, la mante nichée dans ce creux, de l’autre main la nourrissant, et la mante levant la tête vers elle et la regardant. Une araignée, qu’elle avait découverte chez elle, dans un angle du plafond d’une pièce. Elle lui donnait des mouches mortes. A son approche, l’araignée accourait au bord de sa toile. Mme Fernande Olivier, présente, et moi, nous étions troublés, émus, ravis, et en même temps attristés, à la pensée, à la connaissance du si petit nombre d’humains capables de penser, de réfléchir, à tout ce que peuvent être les bêtes, jusqu’aux infiniment petites. Quel monde épais nous sommes peut-être, auprès de cet autre monde si ignoré, si cruellement ignoré (Léautaud, JL 12: 18 juillet 1939- my emphasis).

Just as Céline writes of finding tenderness for all animals, including the “tout petits” and insects, Léautaud describes their behavior in a way that gives evidence of interaction with humans, showing that some of the “infiniment petites” do possess a type of cognition. Emphasizing that one knows so little of this inner life, provides a basis for a greater tenderness towards animals. With the expression “si cruellement ignoré,” he provides both the cause and the effect of the lack of tenderness: ignorance of an inner life and the resulting cruelty.

When he speaks with those who have discovered a side of animals previously unknown to them, Léautaud highlights that much about animals remains beyond human knowledge. Again with regard to toads, but actually toads this time, he shows his belief that much cruelty to animals stems from ignorance:

Auriant a été passer l’après-midi hier chez Georges Normandy à Eaubonne. Il a vu chez lui un album certainement peu connu du caricaturiste Alfred Le Petit, qui s’était pris d’intérêt, même d’une sorte d’affection pour les crapauds, qu’il avait étudiés et observés de très près. Auriant me dit qu’il y a des dessins fort émouvants : des crapauds dans des poses avec des regards presque humains, un autre représentant un crapaud torturé, écarteré par des gamins et dont l’expression (les yeux) est déchirante à voir. Auriant dit qu’il n’en revenait pas, qu’il n’aurait jamais cru qu’on pouvait trouver cela chez des animaux comme les crapauds. Je lui ai répondu ce que je dis souvent et que je pense au-delà de toute expression : “Nous ne connaissons pas les bêtes. Les hommes ont encore là un monde immense à découvrir. Quand ils l’auront découvert, ils seront épouvantés de leur cruauté à leur égard.” (Léautaud, JL 9: 18 juin 1931).
Léautaud tries to correct this problem with his journal and other writings; he describes what he has learned about animals through his own heightened capacity for observation. This example shows that the people of the time had the wrong starting point regarding animals. They began with the incorrect assumption that animals have no inner life. Léautaud shows the falseness of this anthropocentric assumption in his multiple examples of animal behavior, interactions, and characteristics. By attributing cruelty to human ignorance, he emphasizes that this lack of knowledge does not excuse or justify animal cruelty. Instead, given the evidence of their having an inner life, one should treat animals with compassion.

A greater understanding

From his heightened understanding of animals, Léautaud recognizes that the conceptual space given to them by society misleads the public as to their capacities and subjective experiences. He goes to great length to educate the public through his writing and actions. By confining animals to this restricted conceptual space, those who profit by causing animal suffering earn public complacency or approval. However, by releasing them from this space, Léautaud attempts to show our obligation towards animals.

While speaking with Edmond Jaloux at the Mercure, their conversation turns towards this responsibility: “Nous nous sommes trouvés en plein accord sur tous les détails de cette question, depuis le plaisir d’avoir des animaux (Jaloux a un chat), leurs qualités et jusqu’aux devoirs à remplir leur égard, la protection qu’on leur doit, les cruautés dont ils ont à souffrir et combien la France est répréhensible à cet égard” (Léautaud, JL 4: 25 avril 1922). His reasoning includes the combination of their having a good or ill of their own, combined with their helplessness in front of people. Human actions determine their quality of life, without them having any control over these actions: “Vous prenez une bête. Vous pouvez faire son bonheur ou la faire souffrir, sans qu’elle puisse rien” (Léautaud, JL 5: 16 mars 1926). In fact,
human actions towards animals brought about his concern for them. He saw an unfulfilled need: “[J]e suis venu aux bêtes par réaction contre l’abominable conduite des humains à leur égard” (Léautaud, CG 983). His writing returns repeatedly to their defenselessness against human harm. In a letter to an anonymous person, Léautaud expressed his appreciation for a photo this person had sent him in which his small son gently holds a cat:

Elevez bien cet enfant non pas seulement dans l’amour des bêtes pour le plaisir qu’il y a à en posséder, mais aussi dans l’idée de toute la protection et de toute la charité qu’on leur doit, en cas de danger ou de besoin, à ces pauvres êtres sans défense. Il y a une chose qui est bien supérieure au talent : c’est la bonté, c’est l’entraide, même d’humains à animaux (Léautaud, CG 549).

He returns to the idea of goodness as the most important aspect of a person; a goodness in action, that responds to those in need, both human and animal.

4.5 Conclusion: Moral identity

Through his literature, Léautaud strives to testify on behalf of animals, establishing the harm done by ignoring their perspective. His repeated descriptions of animal life in Paris give a historical account of their condition in the early twentieth century, which reveals the prevalent anthropocentrism that relegated them to a limited conceptual space, a space that maintains the “point de solitude” reached when one reveals affection for an animal. To combat this solitude, he conveys his own love and compassion for animals, sending the message that one can have affection for animals, and that therefore, they possess a special moral identity as a subject or potential object of the affection of another.

His own care for community animals, done without any hope of personal gain, reinforces their moral status by establishing that their lives and personal experiences have value. Through these actions, and his writing, he attempts to reform the perception of animals in the home and in society, re-individualizing them, and establishing their potential for mutual relationships with humans and with
each other. He uses descriptions from his own life to reactivate a “compassion for that which has been deadened by familiarity.” The neglect and maltreatment of animals had become commonplace, as evidenced by his own encounters. Rather than accepting the familiarity of it, he emphasizes the animal experience, and attempts to re-sensitize his readers to this experience.

Like Montaigne, Léautaud expresses the importance of intellectually contemplating animals, accepting that the unknown could encompass so much more than that which the society of his time attributed to them. He revealed that confining animals to a limited space exacerbates cruelty, because one does not accept the limitations of one’s own knowledge. Writing of his contemplation of his own animals, and the discoveries he made through this contemplation, he presents animal lives as a subject worthy of future contemplation and interest.

Undoing the false ideas of the time, he illustrates that one can have compassion for both animals and people, when one acts from a genuine concern for the weak and downtrodden of society, even, and especially, if society does not support or ridicules that particular compassion. When one develops the courage to publicly demonstrate compassion for those deemed inferior or unworthy by society, then one can truly stand up for one’s own beliefs and spread compassion for the marginalized as both Léautaud and Céline did, following in the footsteps of the rebels before them, such as Montaigne, Voltaire, Hugo, and Zola, all of whom advocated for the better treatment and understanding, of both animals and people. Advocating for the cast-offs of society has always required courage, whether they be people with unfamiliar customs, religious minorities, criminals, or animals. Yet, those willing to do so expand the limits of compassion to some of society’s weakest members. By advocating compassion for the weak and defenseless of all species, including humans, Léautaud, labeled like Céline as a misanthrope, spread compassion not where it was popular, but where it was needed.
Conclusion: Animals as Valuable Beings

When Derrida writes of “une lutte inégale” and “une guerre en cours,” he establishes the violent outcome of viewing animals as objects or as lower forms of life who remain at humans’ disposal for whatever they see fit. He also conveys the animals’ inability to change their fate, or their status, themselves. Lyotard reveals that, because of their inability to establish damages through witnessing, animals cannot defend themselves according to established methods of justice. Céline and Léautaud take up this battle through their literature. Since animals cannot tell their own stories or claim justice for themselves, these authors tell their stories for them, fighting a battle against the violence committed against animals by some and the indifference of others that allows the continuation of this unequal war against animals. As pacifists, they do not fight violence with violence, but with words. Violence against an entire group must find persuasive words to create a following, in order to quell resistance. Through the animal passages in their work, Céline and Léautaud combat the anthropocentrism underlying the arguments in favor of allowing the continuation of violence against animals. In the pacifist tradition, they do not call for violence as a remedy to violence, but instead, for greater compassion, in the obvious hope of creating a society with greater consideration for all its animal members.

Their principal effort focuses on the role of emotion and empathy. Through their writing, they portray empathy as the counterpoint to human cruelty. By writing from their personal experiences, they support learning about animals through a lived context. Each depicts animal suffering, with its physical, situational, and societal causes. These descriptions bring the readers into the animals’ world by focusing on the direct effects to the animals, void of any anthropocentric rhetoric that could minimize their compassion for the animals, by rationalizing their suffering. In this way, the authors close the emotional distance created when one can ignore all or part of the animals’ experiences. Through
this bridging, they affirm that the ability to ignore the cruelty does not negate its importance. By
portraying both the origins of the cruelty and the solution of empathy, Céline and Léautaud attempt to
change perceptions of acceptable treatment of animals and inspire engaged empathy. They accomplish
this through descriptions that invite their readers to understand the animals’ own perception of events,
by first attending to the effect on the animals, then using their imaginations to empathize with them.

Céline and Léautaud establish animals’ capacity to form personal relationships that differ with
each individual animal and person, and their loyalty to these relationships. As Montaigne and Voltaire
expressed before them, animals possess an exceptional sense of loyalty that many humans abuse.
Céline and Léautaud denounce this abuse of loyalty as a betrayal. Furthermore, many animals, but
especially dogs and cats, have this capacity for mutuality. Consequently, even those animals not actively
in relationships with humans, possess this innate ability. As Léautaud established, many dogs
immediately form bonds with the first human to interact with them. As creatures who form
relationships that can have value to both parties, they merit special ethical consideration.

In *The Beast in the Boudoir*, Kathleen Kete wrote that, “during the nineteenth century, faithful
dogs took the place of faithless people” (25). Both Céline and Léautaud focused on the faithfulness of
animals and the duties of humans that that faithfulness entailed. Although each author had experiences
with unfaithful people, Céline had exceptionally difficult experiences in this area. He consequently
placed primordial importance on both faithfulness and justice. Animals represented not only
faithfulness, but also innocence, another characteristic he found lacking in his contemporaries. He often
juxtaposed cruel treatment of animals with these qualities, to establish the injustice of this treatment.

Léautaud also saw injustice in maltreatment, but focused primarily on pity. He saw animals as
the counterpoint to the increasing cruelty in the world. His own sacrifices for animals conveyed an ethic
of pity over self-interest, which he attempted to propagate through his writing. Through these
sacrifices, he established that making their lives better can bring happiness to the person making the sacrifice. He participated in both their suffering, through his pity, and their contentment, through his own. With this direct participation in their mental states, he establishes empathy as the bridge to understanding the experiences of others. Throughout his over fifty years of writing, he maintains a consistent anti-violent ethic, opposing both initial and retaliatory violence, such as with the Paris Commune and the Épuration, revealing his own underlying sense of ethics in his writing and actions, and consequently supporting an anti-violent ethical foundation for his beliefs opposing animal cruelty.

By advocating for empathy, and presenting similarities of animals to humans, as well as positive characteristics of animals that often surpass those of humans, such as greater loyalty, these authors endeavor to undo the desensitization brought about by industrialization and mechanization. They encourage relating to animals as individuals who make a distinct contribution to the whole. Their own sacrifices, in addition to their personal experiences with animals, substantiate an intrinsic value of animals. They strive, through their work, to redo ethical consideration for animals that had been gained during the Enlightenment, but lost again, as depersonalization and mechanization increased.

The treatment of animals that ensued, as noted in my first chapter, reveals that their efforts did not take hold on a large scale. Yet, conditions gradually improved as awareness of animal maltreatment expanded. Cages became larger, more replacements to experimentation were found, and more people became vegan or vegetarian. As Lynn Hunt wrote: “Rights cannot be defined once and for all because their emotional basis continues to shift, in part in reaction to declarations of rights. Rights remain open to question because our sense of who has rights and what those rights are constantly changes” (29). Though she was discussing human rights, this also holds true for nonhuman animals, whom philosophers, animal theorists, and the authors of this study uphold as subjects of justice. If Céline and Léautaud saw the intensive feeding operations and toxicity testing of today, they would doubtlessly be
horrified. Whereas the condition of pets and strays has significantly improved, and the usage of fur for fashion drastically decreased on the one hand, mass agriculture and animal testing shows little signs of stopping on the other, although there too, little by little, progress has been made. Humane farming is slowly expanding and over 4,000 beagles bred in a single facility for medical testing have just been freed for adoption on a judge’s order, as of July 2022 (Griffen). But that number alone from a single facility, along with the pig farm where Grégory worked, with 1,800 sows, discussed in chapter two, document that the overall numbers of animals suffering from human harm has only gotten worse, even as conditions slowly improve. As both Céline and Léautaud criticized mechanization, along with its coldness, neither would be surprised that the increasing mechanization of life brought about greater mechanization of animals. Céline tried to warn against the lack of tenderness to animals brought about by an overly-calculated society, and Élisabeth de Fontenay, in *Le Silence des bêtes*, describing the animal suffering today, notes that they suffer, “plus que jamais aujourd’hui, au-delà de ce qui est imaginable, en raison de la toute-puissance techno-scientifique et agro-alimentaire du calcul” (23). This observation establishes that Céline correctly perceived the cause and effect relationship that led to today’s large-scale suffering. These numbers illustrate the need to adopt empathetic reading practices in reading the works of Céline and Léautaud and focus on the animal experiences they have so carefully portrayed. In so doing, the reader can bridge the gap created by ignoring or rationalizing the effects of human maltreatment of animals.

Like Voltaire and Hugo, Céline and Léautaud attempt to incite compassion for all *misérables*, animal and human. They include animals amongst other victims of oppression. All of these authors had a strong sense of the importance of justice, and denounced the injustice of hierarchal oppression, especially displays of power. In his book, *Man and the Natural World*, Keith Thomas writes, “Usually... the concern for animal welfare was part of a much wider movement which involved the spread of
humane feelings towards previously despised human beings like the criminal, the insane or the enslaved,” supporting a history of combining human and animal causes (184). These authors each defend the despised in their own way. All of them defended those on whom others turn their backs. Céline and Léautaud continue a tradition of other animal welfarists who embraced both human rights and animal welfare, revealing a fundamental concern with oppression and injustice, and fighting for those who have no popular support.

The era of Céline and Léautaud saw many changes and much turmoil and violence. The horrors of two world wars doubtlessly diverted attention from animal welfare, but it did not decrease their suffering. Céline, in fact, reveals increased animal suffering in times of war. Léautaud documents in his journal all the abandoned animals when Parisians fled the city. By presenting, not only the continuation, but some worsening conditions of animals brought about by war, they advocated continued compassion for animals, even amidst other priorities, just as Henry Stephens Salt noted that animal welfare should not be put off in order to focus exclusively on humans, because the two are interrelated. The literature of Céline and Léautaud supports this relationship. Animals can bring comfort in times of difficulty and harming animals does not bring about world peace. In their works, in fact, those who harm animals are never shown to be at peace, whereas Léautaud finds peace at home with his animals. Derrida noted a war in progress, and a war has two sides. Although he focuses on the effect of the war on those who care about animals, a war also effects those waging it, suggesting that the constant battle does not provide peace for those instigating violence either. This indicates that further study in this area would be helpful, especially in light of the fact that those who most promote or benefit from violence towards humans or animals usually remain removed from the actual acts of violence. Céline establishes this with respect to war, yet it remains true for the death penalty, another parallel that could be more deeply explored, as well as for slaughterhouses.
This study, which explores Céline’s and Léautaud’s advocacy for animals and parallels with each other, also leads to other possible areas of study. One unexplored parallel that stands out is their ardent pacifism, to which each was deeply committed. Thomas revealed a connection between training for battle and hunting, leading those opposed to cruel sports to consider hunting itself warlike (183). He noted another connection linking cock-fighting and bear-baiting with private combat, with those against “animal sports” often also opposed to private duels (183). These connections offer further support of a link between pacifism and compassion for animals. Voltaire and Hugo also demonstrated their own type of pacifism regarding individual lives. This link between pacifism, non-violence, and animal welfare merits greater exploration. In her book, Inventing Human Rights, Lynn Hunt explained how the different elements of the artistic realm – literature, and the performing and visual arts – led to the development of human rights. Animal studies traces the animal condition in philosophy, activism, and legal advancements, but lacks an in-depth study on the relationship between animal welfare and artistic movements. The link between human rights and art, however, raises the possibility of a correlation between these two that should be explored further, in light of the link between art and empathy. A third future area of inquiry suggested by my research is the historical condition of animals in Paris during Léautaud’s lifetime. The offices of the Mercure received many periodical publications and Léautaud often references articles he read that recount animal news. He provides the publication, but often not the date or article title, making it too much of an undertaking for this project, as it would be an entire project itself. Yet, the abundance of material he references suggests that much historical insight could be gained by following the trail he left.

As I originally envisioned including Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, a contemporary of Céline and Léautaud, this study seems unfinished. She also often includes compassion for animals in her work and affirms a more peaceful nature in those who exemplify this compassion. Including her literature would
strengthen my study, especially as she also writes from her personal experience. Pierre Gascar, although briefly included, also merits a chapter unto himself. Both of these authors contributed to animal studies with their literature, focusing on animal experiences, but, like Céline and Léautaud, do not play a role in animal studies as a field.

Céline’s and Léautaud’s difficult experiences in life gave them the courage to fight for others encountering difficulties, especially animals, because they suffered regular abuse and had the fewest defenses. By using their own empathetic abilities, they strove to create empathy in their readers, and to develop their compassion for animals. They combatted mechanistic views of animals, and those that give humans unrestricted dominion over animals, by depicting the animals’ perspectives in their literature. By sharing these perspectives, they revealed animals’ agency, sentience, and positive qualities, allowing the reader to perceive each animal as a unique individual. Depicting them as interactive and relational beings, they illustrate a kinship with humans that liberates them out from the limited space to which they are consigned in order to maintain the “fantasy figure” of the human. By freeing them from this space, they pave the way for new relationships with, and concepts of, animals, where humans no longer see a single, all-inclusive category, but an individual being.

My study reveals that my authors, although not previously considered in animals studies, merit inclusion in this expanding field. Their work includes recurring emphasis on animals, focusing both on the difficulties faced by animals in their time, and on the way the animals and society dealt with these difficulties. Furthermore, they argue directly for animals, establishing their innocence, intelligence, and other positive qualities that affirm their value as sentient beings, and consequently arguing against maltreatment. All of these elements have their place in animal studies, and Céline’s and Léautaud’s talent in relaying them to their readers makes them ideal representatives of the movement to improve the lives of animals. Furthermore, as the animal studies field focuses primarily on Anglophone literature
(with the exception of directly philosophical works), this study indicates that French authors have made their own important contributions to the philosophy of animal welfare and that French literature deserves greater recognition for its theorization of empathy and denunciation of cruelty or indifference towards animals.
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