PART THREE

SPECIESISM AND THE STATUS OF ANIMALS
ARE ANIMALS POOR IN THE WORLD? A CRITIQUE OF HEIDEGGER'S ANTHROPOCENTRISM*

Philip Tonner

To date, philosophers have struggled with the concept of animality. As witness to this, Peter Singer, in his preface to the recent collection *Animal Philosophy*, reminds us that, at best, animals have hitherto been regarded with little ethical significance in Western philosophy and at worst they have been taken to have no ethical significance whatsoever. Aristotle took animals to exist for our sake as resources; St. Paul wondered ‘Doth God care for oxen?’; Christian thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas thought that cruelty to animals was not in and of itself problematic, being problematic only as a possible source of human to human cruelty; Descartes denied that animals can in fact suffer and Kant restricted the kingdom of ends to humans, animals being mere means to our ends. Yet there were a few contrary voices: Montaigne was unhappy with human arrogance and saw fit to challenge it; David Hume argued for the ‘gentle usage’ of animals and the British Utilitarian thinkers factored in animal suffering to their accounts of utility.1 Nevertheless, such dissenting voices are in the minority and a general anthropocentrism has prevailed in the history of philosophy hitherto. In Continental European philosophy in the twentieth century discussion of animals has not featured prominently in either ethical or ontological enquiries. Martin

---

* An earlier version of this paper was delivered at Durham University at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Theoretical Archaeology Group, 18th December 2009, in the session, ‘Oneness and Otherness: Self and Identity in relation to material and animal worlds’. I would like to thank the session organisers, Marcus Brittain, Andy Needham, Nick Overton and Penny Spikins, for all their hard work in convening the session and for their helpful and suggestive comments. I would also like to thank Cheralynne Hyde of Glasgow Museums for comments on an earlier draft.