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Susanne E. Foster

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Lewis on Animal Immortality

Abstract

Presents Christian arguments against the immortality of animals and Lewis's contrary opinion. Argues that Lewis's views stem from his concerns with animal suffering, his environmental ethics of Christian stewardship, and his thoughts on the nature of immortality for humans.

Additional Keywords

Animals—Religious aspects; Animals in C.S. Lewis; Lewis, C.S.—Attitude toward animals

LEWIS ON ANIMAL IMMORTALITY

SUSANNE G. FOSTER

Traditionally, Christians have denied the immortality of the animal soul. The arguments for this conclusion are varied. First, there is the argument from tradition. Since the Church has never taught that animals survive their bodily deaths and has, on occasion, taught that animals do not survive their deaths, Christians have good reason to believe that animals have no immortal soul. In addition to the argument from tradition, there are also two philosophical arguments against accepting animal immortality, namely that animals participate in no activities that do not involve their bodies, so they could not survive without their bodies, and, second, continued existence would have no meaning for a being which was merely sentient and so had no memory of itself over time. It is interesting, then, that C.S. Lewis follows George MacDonald and others in speculating that animals, or at least some animals, may have a share in immortality. Even more important, however, is that the view that animals are immortal — a view which Lewis knew full well must be regarded as speculative — pervades his works and is an integral part of his theology.

In this paper, I will recount the arguments against animal immortality and Lewis' response to them. Then, I will argue that Lewis' commitment to the immortality of animals stems from three considerations. First, Lewis is concerned with the problem of animal suffering, and his speculations on animal immortality provide a satisfying resolution to that problem. Second, his views on animal immortality enhance and bolster his environmental ethics, his model of Christian stewardship. Third, his speculations on the possibility of animal immortality allow him to clarify the nature and meaning of the immortality of human beings.

II

The standard Christian argument against the immortality of the animal soul is the argument from tradition. From Biblical times onward, both scripture and the tradition have been virtually silent about an afterlife for animals. In matters of faith, the silence of tradition is often reason enough to reject a thesis. Yet, there is stronger evidence on the question of animal immortality, for, on occasion, the church fathers and theologians have spoken on this issue. When they have, they have denied the immortality of animals. For example, Cardinal Bellermino, one of the few Christian figures to explicitly argue that animals are objects of moral concern, accepted "the Church's teaching" that animals do not have souls.¹ Even more authoritatively, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Thomas Aquinas writes: "it can be inferred with necessity that the soul of the brute perishes with the body."² He also quotes

the following text from *On the Teaching of the Church* "We declare that man alone has a subsistent soul, that is, a soul having life of itself; and that the soul of brute animals perishes along with their bodies."³ Again, proposition 20 of the Condemnation of 1277 states that it is anathema to say that natural law prohibits the eating of irrational animals.⁴ Of course, the condemnation was carried out by the Bishop of Paris and subsequently has been questioned, at least insofar as it touches upon the teachings of Aquinas, but bishops are part of the institutional church and have teaching authority. To say that the tradition has not declared the teaching anathema, then, is not to say that the teaching is not rejected by the tradition. Both silence and the teachings of various theologians and the tradition support the view that it is anathema.

Lewis' response to the argument from tradition is to emphasize the silence of tradition and to argue that, in this case, the dearth of explicit condemnatory opinion within the Christian tradition can be explained by the fact that tradition only speaks on issues that are important to the salvation of human beings. Since the immortality of the animals is not relevant to human salvation, one would expect tradition to be relatively silent on the matter.(pp 129)⁵ He also argues that any explicit arguments against animal immortality can be traced to two factors. The first concerns philosophical difficulties surrounding the question of animal immortality: merely sentient beings cannot exist without their bodies, and immortality would not be meaningful to a merely sentient being. The second factor and perhaps the more important one is the Church's wish to preserve a strong distinction between animals and humans, a distinction which is both moral and metaphysical.(pp 140)

III

Let us turn, then, to the second of these factors and examine the reasons that Lewis believed underlay the Church's rejection of the immortality of the animal soul. First, as Lewis mentions, attributing souls to animals may obscure the distinction between human beings and other animals as sharp in the spiritual dimension as it is hazy and problematic in the biological. Historically, the distinction between human beings and animals has been based on consciousness and rationality, or on the possession of an immortal soul; and the immortality of the soul has been linked to theoretical reasoning. For this reason, the church has had a stake in maintaining that animals are incapable of theoretical reasoning and that their souls perish with their bodies. As Lewis argues in *The Problem of Pain*, *Abolition of Man*, and "Vivisection," however, contemporary science shows that on purely natural grounds,

there is no basis for a strong distinction between human beings and the other higher animals. Human beings evolved from the animals. All the capacities human beings have are possessed by other animals in at least a rudimentary form, including the ability to feel significant pain, the ability to solve problems, and self-awareness. In this way, human beings can be reduced to the status of animals. (Viv 227) As is obvious, this conclusion is unacceptable from a Christian perspective. The best thing to do might be to turn the argument on its head: instead, argue that such considerations show that the status of animals should be elevated. Since the ability to feel pleasure and pain is sometimes taken to be the ground of moral obligation, it can be, and has been, argued that animals are objects of moral concern. And since self-consciousness and rationality are the natural basis for the value of human beings, *sine* theological considerations, self-conscious animals are equally valuable from the natural perspective. Even this move is problematic from Lewis' perspective, however, since he believes, and the Church has always taught, that however hard it may be to specify the reasons for the distinction, human beings are objectively more valuable than other animals. (Viv 226, pp 43)

And scripture does support a distinction between human beings and other animals. To sample just a sprinkling of scriptural evidence: God tells us that a human being is more valuable than a sparrow (Mt 10:29-31); it is for the salvation of humankind that God died on the cross; and human beings have been given special status as stewards over creation. (Gn 1:28-30) Since there is no strong biological basis for the distinction between human beings and other animals, the only remaining distinction between animals and humans seems to be the possession of an immortal soul. Theologians argue that because only human beings have an immortal soul, only they have a good that transcends flourishing in this life. This good serves as the basis for the difference in moral value and in moral consideration.

Although it may appear at this point that, if the claim that human beings are more valuable and more deserving of moral consideration is not mere prejudice, then it must rest on the uniqueness and immortality of the human soul, Lewis believes there is a way to preserve the distinction between human beings and animals without denying the immortality of the animal soul.

Rather than argue against the immortality of animals, Lewis argues that some animals may be conscious and that there is good reason to think that there is a linkage between consciousness and immortality. As I will show in the next section, Lewis believes that the reason God preserves a being after it dies is that good is achieved by doing so; namely that the goodness of the being will be preserved and that a continued existence will be of genuine benefit to the being in question. His own model of the immortality of the animal soul accounts for the priority of human beings by recognizing that animals are dependent upon

human beings both for their perfection in this life and for their continued existence in the next. Understanding animal immortality within the context of the stewardship relationship thus preserves the distinction between animals and human beings while leaving room for animal immortality. The only questions, then, are whether animals are the sorts of beings that can attain immortality and what that immortality would be like.

The remaining objections to animal immortality focus not on the threat to our unique status as human beings but on whether animals could have immortal souls. The objections are distinctly philosophical, and depend on certain theories of the relationship between the soul and body. It is argued that animals are not the sort of beings that could survive the death of bodies and that even if they could, immortality could be of no genuine benefit to an animal.

Can an animal survive the death of its body? Traditionally, philosophers have argued that, if the soul is to survive the death of the body, it must engage in an activity or activities that are possible without the body, and such an activity or activities must have no natural terminus. Nutrition, reproduction, growth, sensation, and motility all require bodily organs. Moreover such activities have a natural terminus. Eating, for example, ends with satiety. According to the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, both of which influenced Christian theology, all activities except thinking require bodily organs for their exercise. Hence, only thought could be free from the need for a body. Some forms of thought, though, have a natural terminus. Just as there is a natural terminus to bodily activities, so there is a natural terminus to the thought about such matters. After a certain point there is no reason to continue reflecting on or deliberating about them. Hence, practical reason, which in conjunction with virtues like temperance and generosity, elevates practical activity to human activity is not sufficient: for immortality. For both Plato and Aristotle, the only activity that meets both criteria is theoretical reasoning. Most animals, it may be claimed, engage in no activities that are independent of their bodies, and even those that may be conscious and possess reason, possess only practical reason. So, animals either could not exist without their bodies or, if they could, they engaged in no activities that could be meaningfully engaged in after the death of their bodies.

Lewis appeals to the doctrine of the bodily resurrection to resolve the first part of the objection, since the bodies of animals may be resurrected just as human bodies are resurrected. He resolves the second part of the objection by arguing that there are activities other than theoretical reasoning that could ~e meaningfully engaged in after death. Such an activity, he argues, must go beyond the experiencing of mere bodily pleasure. (PP ~37) In more strictly ethical terms, the animal must be able to flourish. But rather than tying flourishing to theoretical reasoning, as the ancients and medievals do, Lewis ties it to activities involving consciousness and personality. Foremost

among the activities he has in mind are those involved in creating and maintaining community.

Any being with sense organs has sentience, the ability to sense its environment and to react to that environment with pleasure and pain responses.⁶ But in a merely sentient animal, all that there is a stream of perceptions and responses to them. Unlike a human being, which possesses a self standing apart from the stream of perceptions and persisting through time, a sentient animal possesses no self, nothing whereby it can unify the stream of perceptions or assess it. (In Kantian terms, there is no transcendental unity of apperception for animals.) Thus, a sentient animal cannot recognize itself as the same animal from moment to moment. Without consciousness there is no basis for memory, hence a sentient animal does not remember what happened a moment ago, nor can it look forward to a future state.(pp 131-3) Such an animal does not experience itself as the same self over time. It can have no future goals, and the only good it can achieve is pleasurable sensation. Since sentient animals have no long term goals and no recognition of themselves over time, immortality could be of no benefit to them .

With the emergence of even rudimentary consciousness and memory comes the possibility of a good beyond momentary pleasure. The conscious animal can remember past experiences and look forward to future goals. Its continued existence is meaningful to it. A conscious animal can both enjoy its existence and desire the attainment of goals. Most significantly, an animal that possesses conscious memories and can project itself into the future in at least limited ways can learn from its environment and make some limited choices. It can develop a personality. This is especially true of conscious animals that are in contact with other beings that possess personality, since community fosters the development of the self.

V

The fourth objection to animal immortality is related to the last, namely that no genuine good could be achieved by animal immortality, and so attributing immortality to animals is mere sentimentalism. One version of this argument is based on the claim that we may be attributing a soul to animals because animals seem to feel pain, and a good God would surely redress the injustice of pain being suffered by any of His creatures. But attributing pain to beasts may be anthropomorphic sentimentalism.

Lewis answers this objection by appealing to a distinction between sentience and consciousness. Much, if: not all, animal life may be sentient but not conscious. As we have seen, the experience of a sentient creature is a disconnected series of sense perceptions. It is likely that, although merely sentient animals respond to painful and pleasurable stimuli, they are unable to *experience* pain in a full sense of the term, since they have no self-awareness. If they do experience pain, they do so only as a series of instantaneous disagreeable sensations, and such pains are not

frightening, and hence of little consequence. Pains of this sort, therefore, do not constitute suffering.(pp 131-3) Further, as we have seen, even if animals experienced pain, in the full sense indicated, and such pain were significant, immortality would still be of no benefit to a sentient animal. Recognition of a self, as a self, by that same self would be missing. Hence, as Lewis says, a newt resurrected to eternal life would not recognize itself as the same newt.(pp 137) Justice certainly does not demand, as compensation for earlier, unpleasant perceptions, the continuation of a life that consists of nothing more than an unconnected series of perceptions. As Lewis puts it, to ascribe an after-life to merely sentient beings as compensation for damages incurred is a clumsy assessment of the Divine Goodness. It is basically to think that, somehow, "God trod on the animals' tails in the dark and then did the best he could about it."(pp 140)

As far as merely sentient beings are concerned, then, either there is no real experience of pain and thus no injustice that needs to be redressed or if there is genuine suffering, the continuation of life could be of no real benefit to a sentient animal. The inevitable conclusion is that the Church is right to condemn the view that merely sentient creatures, those moved only by sense and appetite, could be immortal. All that having been acknowledged, Lewis is unwilling to deny immortality to ail beasts. Some, he thinks, and particularly the higher animals, may be conscious, or may be able to become conscious and achieve personality. A conscious animal, in the sense in question here, can feel significant pain and can suffer. Thus, there is a genuine injustice to be redressed in their case. Further, continued existence would be of benefit to an animal aware of itself over time.

VI

A final argument against animal immortality is based on the notion of intrinsic value and inherent goodness. Although we may become attached to animals just as we may become attached to other objects, a favorite sweater or a Teddy bear, animals, like other objects, are not unique, except in their relationship to the person who happens to value them. One newt is very much the same as any other newt. But, in fact, one of the principal purpose of immortality is to preserve beings of unique value or goodness. Hence, it makes no sense to preserve the beasts.

Again, Lewis believes that this objection can be answered if we invoke a distinction between consciousness and sentience. Consciousness is the basis of personality and thereby of uniqueness. Without it, one newt is, indeed, very much the same as another. Though the species may be unique, without consciousness the individual animal is not. Those animals that possess or can achieve consciousness may survive their bodily deaths, while the merely sentient cannot. Even more strongly, if species are unique, Lewis suggests, then God may resurrect the species rather than individual animals. The species "Lion" rather than lions may achieve immortality.

For Lewis, then, any viable theory of animal immortality will have to account for two facts. First, if an animal is going to be resurrected, there must be something of value that will be preserved by the resurrection, and the views on biblical stewardship and the redemption of nature, and both influenced his speculations on animal immortality, Examining them, therefore, will help make Lewis' views on animal immortality clearer.

In the higher animals, we find a capacity for pain and pleasure, a well developed brain capable of reasoning, rudimentary emotions — in short, all the prerequisites for consciousness and self-awareness. And just as there are now animals that possess these characteristics and are not yet conscious, so too there may have been a long period in which human-like creatures existed but had not yet become conscious. When these primitive *homo sapiens* attained consciousness, they became human and attained a degree of value and goodness beyond that of every other animal, because with consciousness comes will, or the ability to choose. (Mir ch.15-6, Per 102) But, the will of these beings was not yet at odds with itself. Thus, in the pre-lapsarian state, the consciousness of human beings involved a mastery over themselves, their appetites, their need for sleep, and even the length of their lives. As a natural extension of such self-control, the beasts came under the dominance of human beings, for in human beings, beasts apprehend as much of the divine splendor as their natures allow. (pp 78) That is, through human beings other animals were able to achieve at least rudimentary personality and consciousness.

Although Lewis discusses stewardship and the correct relationship between human beings and other animals elsewhere, his most extended discussion of the ideal stewardship experienced in the pre-lapsarian state occurs in *Perelandra*. *Perelandra* is a world very similar to pre-lapsarian Earth. Like primitive *homo sapiens*, the king and queen of that world are in direct communion with God and His will. As a result, they have control over their own desires and needs and have total authority over their world. What is the relationship between this sovereign lord and lady and their beasts? The queen says that, "I teach the beasts they will never be better than I." (Per 83) There is, and she believes there is, an objective hierarchy of being. It is not proper to treat the lower as superior or equal to the higher, according to her. For to do so is idolatry. On the other hand, it is not proper to treat beasts as though they possessed no intrinsic value or goodness. The villain of the book, Weston, objectifies animals and uses them for his own purposes without regard for their value. His destruction of animals for trivial reasons, like decoration, or for some perverse pleasure, like the joy of inflicting pain, are the ultimate expression of evil in this world. (Per 108-9, 134-5) The queen of *Perelandra*, on the other hand, recognizes the goodness and value of animals. Rather than reducing them to automata, "by taking seriously the inferiority of her [animal] admirers [she] made them somehow less inferior — raised them from the status of pets to that

of slaves." (Per. 65) What does Lewis mean here? A slave, though lower in status than a master because of his or her inability to govern his- or her self is nonetheless conscious, possessed of a personality, the embodiment of a good beyond the experience of pleasure, and deserving of more respect and care than should be extended to a mere beast. By expecting her beasts to act well, the queen helps them to attain personality. Though she cannot make her animals fully human any more than Christ can make human beings fully divine, she can raise them to a new level of consciousness and make, "the nobler of the beasts so wise that they will become *hnanu* and speak." (Per 211)

Even when they attain consciousness, this consciousness will not be, and cannot be, equal to the queen's. Hence, in return for their care, such animals should and do serve the king and queen. (Per 203) It is possible, Lewis speculates, that one of the original reasons God gave human beings sovereignty was that they ennoble the beasts. Stewardship may have that, as well as other reasons, behind it.

Such speculations are interesting, but human beings are, in fact, fallen, and it is pertinent to ask what our relationship to beasts should be in our current state. Lewis argues that if, in fact, human beings were created to be masters of the Earth, it is tame animals, those subject to the rule of human beings, and not wild animals which are in their natural state. And, it is, partly for that reason, that tame animals that serve as the model for our understanding of stewardship and of animal immortality. Like the queen of *Perelandra*, human beings are to recognize the goodness of creation without elevating it to the status of an idol or failing to recognize the difference between animals and ourselves. The appropriate relationship between human beings and animals is that of a good master and his dog. In such a relationship, the primary aim is the good of the master. The dog is taken care of in order that the master may love it and in order that it may serve the master. Nonetheless, the dog is not to be sacrificed to the master. Rather, if the master is to love the dog, it must also love the master, and if the dog is to serve the master, the master must also serve it. Because the master loves the dog, he interferes with it and its behavior to make it more lovable. He eliminates its foul odor, house trains it, and teaches it not to steal. Indeed, the tame dog is far better off than the wild dog, for it lives longer, is healthier, and receives more comforts than it would in the wild. (pp' ~39-40) Its better condition is, of course direct result of its master's love and expectations. More than this, the tame dog achieves a level of personal development it would not in the wild. We do not and, indeed, cannot love the beasts as sub-personal; we always love them as if they have, in fact, (3) personality. And in loving an animal as though it were personal, we enable it to develop toward consciousness. (F1 49) Thus, even in our post-lapsarian state, human beings have the ability to raise animals to the level of consciousness and to develop personality in them. (PP 43) Even now, our dogs and cats can thus be tainted with the

love of our households.(S1 104) If animals do not receive the whole of their personality from humans, human beings are at least largely responsible for the development of rudimentary personality present in the beasts. And, as the animal receives its personality from man, so too it receives its immortality.

How is the model of stewardship translated into a model of animal immortality? Lewis discusses this in *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, *Great Divorce* and *Problem of Pain*. God, Lewis tells us, "descends into human spirit and human spirit so descends into nature...everything hangs together and the total reality, both natural and supernatural, in which we are living is more multifarious and subtly harmonious than we had expected."(Mir. 111) If, indeed, animals fell when the angels fell (Lewis accepts archaeological evidence of the carnivorous nature of animals before the advent of human beings, and concludes that the fall of animal nature must have preceded that of human beings), animal nature may have fallen back into vegetative nature in the same way that human nature fell back into animal nature. Just as human nature is resurrected in Christ, so animal nature may be resurrected in human beings. Christ redeemed human nature in this world, and it is in Christ that human beings are resurrected to eternal life. Similarly, in this life, human beings are able to raise animals from their sub-conscious state and help them to achieve a good beyond pleasure, and in the next life animals can be resurrected to eternal life through their masters. Thus, even in heaven it will make no sense to speak of animals as existing on their own.(pp 139-40, MC 170) In *The Great Divorce* we see the great of heaven attended by the animals they have ennobled, and sharing with them their personality. "Every beast and bird that came near her had its place in her love. In her they became themselves. And now the abundance of life she has in Christ from the Father flows over into them."(GDiv 108).

A dog thus does not exist independently in the after-life. It exists as part of a household. And, if one were to ask where the soul of the dog resides, the answer is that it is where it has always been, in the master of the house.(pp 140, MC 170) The fact that it is not merely life but individuated life which becomes immortal. makes this claim of Lewis' an especially pointed and revealing one.

Animal immortality is, then, a natural extension of the biblical conception of stewardship as Lewis interprets it. Furthermore, there is scriptural evidence for such an extension. Concerning to world to come. Paul writes:

Indeed the whole created world eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. Creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but by him who once subjected it; yet not without hope, because the world itself will be freed from the slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the sons of God.(Rm 8:19-21)

This passage could be taken to imply both that creation and hence animals will participate in the life to come and that their participation will be mediated by human beings.

In another context, Isaiah ii speaks of the reign of Christ, in which even the beasts are reconciled to one another. Perhaps the passage is metaphor, but perhaps the metaphor itself represents a profound reality. The Kingdom of God may be such that in it all creatures, even the beasts, dwell in peace before God.(PP 143, GDiv. 108)

VIII

Although animal immortality is both in keeping with Lewis' model of stewardship and with scripture, there are several significant problems with the theory Lewis argues for. They are problems Lewis himself recognizes. The first is the limited application of the theory. Most animals are wild and many others are in laboratories or bad homes. None of these animals is in relationship to a good master; hence, none can attain immortality as part of a household. Nor does Lewis make house pets of wild animals. As we learn in *That Hideous Strength*, animals retain their natures. Immortality, Lewis stressed, is the fruit of consciousness and personality. It is probable that in laboratories and in the wild few animals achieve consciousness. That wild animals somehow become a self, and consequently gain an immortality, is a realistic possibility only in relation to humanity at large.(pp 14i) He also says that resurrection in a good household is but one example of the general principles which could be used for animal immortality. Lewis does not mean it to be the sole possibility.(PA 167) But what of the dog which Mrs. Fidget spoiled and which is bad through no fault of its own?(FL 74-5) Is such an animal sent to hell because of its bad household? That would seem far too harsh a fate since it was not responsible for its state.

Or does it cease to exist as do those animals which fail to achieve personality? This problem points to the second strong disanalogy between Christ's relationship to human beings and the relationship human beings may have to animals. In our post-lapsarian state, we are not in harmony with and do not understand the good of the animals nor God's purpose in creating them, even in a good household. Moreover, human beings did not create animals but are instead co-creatures with them. Human beings, then, unable to save themselves, are poor saviors for the rest of creation. Why would God provide such a poor means of salvation for the animals?

But there is an answer. Quite simply, it is that our relationships and our actions have genuine consequences for the salvation of ourselves and others. This is true of all human beings. Consider the reluctance of the early Church to allow believers to divorce unbelieving spouses. The hope expressed was that the unbeliever might come to believe through the believing spouse.(I Cor.7:12-16) It is now less popular to emphasize the role others play in the salvation of an individual, but it is a Biblical theme Lewis not only knows but believes in. His conception of salvation is, like so many others, essentially communitarian. In *That Hideous Strength*, the wife of Mark, one of the main characters, plays a significant role in his salvation, and God

uses the Dennistons, the Dimbles, the Director, and others to save Jane, another central figure. Christians do not live in isolation but in communities and the actions of each individual have genuine consequences for the world and for others as well as for themselves. In the same book, Merlin reveals that Mark and Jane's decision not to have children is responsible for the world's losing a child that would have been a great leader. God leaves it to us to do the things He has entrusted us to do.

The human role in animal immortality thus stems from these two sources. To merit resurrection, an animal must first achieve consciousness but, even when consciousness, it is not able to comprehend nearly as much of the divine as humans. Christ cannot, then, "go to" the animals. It is not that he cannot make himself small enough. Christ can make himself small enough to fit into hell itself. (GDiv 123-4) Rather, it is because a message of immortality makes no sense to the sub-conscious. It is through the presence of conscious beings that animals begin to grow toward consciousness and personality. To help them do it well is our task. For each person is given tasks to perform, tasks they are responsible for, and each member of a community has a genuine effect on all the others. What we do or fail to do affects how others grow. Obviously, others are free to respond in a positive or negative manner, and obviously God can work for the salvation of each through whatever circumstances arise. Nonetheless, we do influence how the story of salvation unfolds. There is a real sense in which God has chosen to rely on us for the redemption of nature.

VI

Lewis' second suggestion about animal immortality, one which he develops in much less detail, reflects his Platonic leanings and his belief that although individual animals are not unique if they are not conscious, species are unique and therefore valuable. According to Lewis, the merely sentient animal may gain immortality as a corporate self. Rather than this lion being immortal, "Lioness" itself would be preserved, indeed immortal.

In what sense is a species unique? They are aesthetically valuable, certainly, but their value goes beyond physical beauty. They also possess a quasi-spiritual, symbolic, and emotional value that human beings recognize in them. To the lamb we attribute innocence, to the lion royalty. When we attribute personality to animal types, there is a natural basis for doing so, for we are seeing something real. (PP 141)

Of course, as Lewis points out, some change must occur in sentient species before they can be resurrected even in the form of a corporate self. The lion as we experience it is mere "carnivorous sentience" and the survival of such a being not only would be without meaning, but would be, if anything, a torment to the lion. A carnivore cannot eat hay like an ox. The solution to this difficulty is, Lewis believes, that the carnivorous aspect of animal nature is the result of the fall. Currently, we do not see animals

themselves but rather animals in their fallen state. Animals must be resurrected into their unfallen nature. Claw and tooth are a clumsy post-lapsarian rendering of the awe-inspiring nature of *LION*. The raised lion would lose these while retaining and indeed regaining its true nature. A resurrected lion will not be like a large domestic cat, but when it no longer possesses tooth and claw, the lion will nonetheless remain awesome. In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis' reflections are interrupted by the play of two lions. Though they obviously mean him no harm, he finds their company disquieting and moves away. (GDiv 37) Thus, Lewis argues, the lion will never, in fact, lie down with the lamb. To have lions cavort with lambs is to have neither lions nor lambs.

The resurrection of all the individuals of a species within the form of the species serves to preserve the uniqueness of the species without resurrecting merely sentient animals for whom immortality could have no meaning. Yet, even the forms of animals as they now appear are not fit objects for immortality. To preserve animals, distortions due to the fall Distorted features include the carnivorous nature of must first be remedied. some animals and the fecundity of others. There is a parallel here; just as an individual animal would be perfected by the development of consciousness and personality, so too a species form is perfected through its resurrection to a pre-lapsarian state.


VII:

As we have seen, one of the main objections to animal immortality is that there is a genuine difference between human beings and other animals. The immortality of the human soul has often been supposed to be the essence of that distinction. Lewis accepts the distinction between humans and other animals, but argues that a genuine and important difference between humans and animals can be preserved if we recognize that animals are dependent upon human beings for their perfection in this life and for their continued existence in the next.

By distinguishing consciousness from sentience, Lewis is able to argue that it makes sense for some animals to be resurrected. Though immortality would be of no benefit to the merely sentient, a conscious animal has a good that goes beyond physical pleasure and an awareness of itself over time. Hence such an animal could benefit from a continued existence. In the case of a conscious animal, its continued existence also serves to preserve something of intrinsic value.

In the case of the merely sentient animal, this latter good can be achieved through the preservation and perfection of the species form. Further, the preservation of the species form rather than the individual animal avoids the absurdities that result from the con-tinence of merely sentient animals.

Immortality, then, is meaningful if it is a genuine good for the being preserved and if it preserves something of

intrinsic value. Moreover, humans are obligate, because they are the kind of beings they are in God's created world, to be stewards over creation. This stewardship involves more than conserving resources for future generations or minimizing the suffering of animals. For human beings are obligated to help animals attain the highest perfection of which they are capable, namely consciousness and personality. The fruit of this perfection is immortality. 

Endnotes

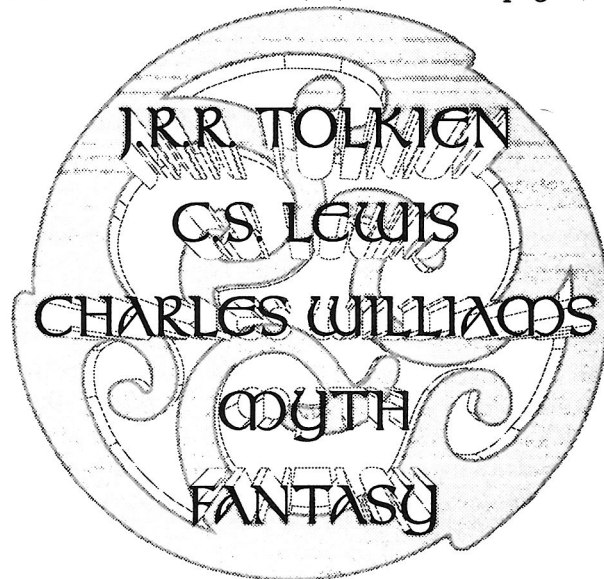
- 1 Bernard Rollin, *Animal Rights and Human Morality* (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY: 1981), p. 6.
- 2 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book II,
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 268.
- 4 Mandonnet, Siger De Brabant et L'Averroisme Latin au XIII Siecle, (Louvain,
- 5 The abbreviations for Lewis' works are as follows:
The Problem of Pain (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: 1962), PP;
God in the Dock (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI: 1970), GD;
 "Pain of Animals", 161-171 in GD, PA;
 "Vivisection", 224-228 in GD, Viv;
The Great Divorce (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: ~946), GDiv;
That Hideous Strength (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: 1948), THS;
Perelandra (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: 1944), Per;
Miracles (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: 1960), Mir;
The Abolition of Man (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: 1947), AM;
The Four Loves (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, NY: 1960), FL;
The Screwtape Letters (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY: 1961), SL.
- 6 A word needs to be said about Lewis' use of the terms sentience and consciousness. At some points, Lewis says that sentient animals have a disconnected series of perceptions with no awareness of themselves over time and no memory. At other times, Lewis speaks of sentient animals as animals with no real awareness of pain. He compares them to comatose patients and says that they never build the letters "apni" into the word "pain." Conscious animals he sometimes characterizes as the same as self-conscious. At other times, he opposes the self-conscious to the merely conscious. In the latter case, the confusion may result from Lewis' belief that there is a gradation in levels of awareness and his belief that part of our obligation is to raise animals up to a higher level of consciousness.
- 7 In some respects this view is similar to Averroes' on the immortality of the human soul and thus provides just as little satisfaction for individual animals as one active intellect does for individual human immortality. One important difference, however, is that individual sentient animals have no self to be raised. As always, Lewis is only willing to raise something of unique value and something whose resurrection makes sense.



MILESTONE: Arwen Joy GoodKnight, born April 21, 1972 when the Society was four and a half years old, was married 25 years later to Kenneth Michaels in Boston on October 11, 1997, close to the 30th anniversary of the Society. All four parents of the bride and groom were present.

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Selected References to "Where Have all the Fairies Gone?," ending on page 21

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