

# Consideration of the Idea of Reverence for the Lives of Animals in the Philosophical Discourse in the Pre-modern Age

## 2. On animals' souls: Leibniz and the sentience of animals

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**Abstract:** Arguments developed in the previous discussion suggested the importance of 'reverence for life' in animal ethics. In the pre-modern age, natural science developed dramatically through experimental activities, and philosophers regarded reasoning, understanding, and the human mind as representing the most refined essence of human nature. Views on animals were not sophisticated, and cruel recreation using animals was commonly practiced. In that age, Leibniz, who opposed Descartes' ideas, asserted the existence of monads or souls in animals. He did not regard animals as machine-like, inorganic living things. He described perceptions and souls that comprised the energy of life and proposed that these made animals what they were as living things.

David Hume was a philosopher who recognized animals' reason. He treated the issue of the relation between animals and humans earlier than utilitarian ideas of animal ethics of the 19th century. Hume clearly confirmed the sentience of animals and their rational essence in his discourses.

Although the idea of animals' souls did not spread, it was associated with the concept of animals' sentience, which became an important aspect of animal ethics in a later age. The recognition of the sentience of animals is essential to the idea of reverence for the lives of animals.

**Keywords:** Leibniz, soul of animal, sentience, David Hume, reverence for life

### 1 Introduction

In the previous work, the author discussed ideas about animals that were presented in philosophical discourses in the pre-modern age. Descartes, Pascal, and Spinoza each contended that animals had no souls, ability to reason, or emotions. John Locke (1632–1704) also had no regard for animals. It is thought that during that age, animals were regarded as simply being useful utilities for most people; domesticated animals, such as dogs and cats, were considered tools or food sources, and not objects of affection. However, other views existed. Hieronymus Rorarius (1485–1556), for

example, stated that animals made better use of reason than humans did. During the same age, Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) recognized intellectual understanding in animals; he thought that reasoning and understanding were not only human attributes, and that humans were not completely superior to animals. These views were rather rare. Humans made use of animals for agricultural labor, agricultural products, and activities such as hunting, guarding property, eradicating rodents, and transportation. In eastern and western Europe, the general views on animals were affected by the religious ideas of Christianity. People were influenced by the teachings of the Bible. It was natural that philosophers like René Descartes (1596–1650) thought that animals had no reason for their existence and merely served as objects for human benefit. Most of the commoners and poor

people were not expected to give affection toward animals in Europe. Although Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) suggested the existence of souls and perceptions in animals in his philosophy, his ideas on animals were not established. Indeed, his ideas were still influenced by theology and fixed concepts of the pre-modern age in Europe. Leibniz who was surely the standard bearer of philosophy in the Baroque age suggested slightly different views on animals.

Since Leibniz's philosophical ideas in general are based on metaphysical thinking, his ideas on animals are not scientifically clear and may be considered to be concepts that are based on obscurely subjective considerations. Nevertheless, he thought that animals were not mere machines as Descartes had claimed in his theory. The existence of souls, perceptions and respect for life are recognized in his philosophical discourses. Such ideas may have led to the idea of reverence for the lives of animals in later ages. Moreover, the English philosopher David Hume (1711–1776) (who thought that animals had the ability to reason) believed in animals' emotions and sentience through his considerations on the morals of sentimentalism. It is necessary to consider views on animals in the philosophical discourses of thinkers such as Hume and Leibniz. The recognition of animal souls, emotions, or perceptions can lead to the idea of the sentience of animals. The main purpose of this paper is to clarify the implications of Leibniz's ideas on animals' souls, and to link his concepts with the idea of reverence for the lives of animals. David Hume's views on animals are also examined.

## 2 How people viewed animals in the pre-modern age

In Europe (or Christian societies), animals were generally regarded as living things created by God. Domesticated animals were especially valuable resources for human life and sustenance; they were essentially considered as simply being useful assets. On the other hand, wild animals and other non-domesticated species were known to be rather difficult to deal with, and their ecology was not well understood by people. Domesticated cows were bred for their milk and for traction, sheep were bred for their wool, and cats were introduced to eradicate the mice and rats that were eating

stored crops. In those days, cats were allowed to live inside human homes because they would control the unwanted rodent population. They were considered a convenient species that would eradicate disease-transmitting vermin. Cats are thought to be a partially self-domesticated species. While they were treated with affection in some regions such as Egypt, they suffered a tormented existence in Europe<sup>1</sup>. In large areas in Europe in the Middle Ages, people treated cats as evil spirits.

Although in some instances cats were treated as practical and useful animals, they were often abused as objects for venting frustration; that is, owners and other people would take their anger out on cats. In addition, cats and other animals (e.g., dogs, bears, badgers, and bulls) were used as in blood sports such as 'baiting.' Until the modern age, at least before the concept of the welfare of animals appeared, people hardly expressed any affection for animals.

When cats were regarded as evil beings or witch-like entities, especially in Europe, they became the target of animal abuse. A witch was a symbol of a heretic, particularly in Christian European areas. For example, one of the most famous events concerning cats was the 'Kattenstoet' (Festival of the Cats) in Belgium, which is well-known as a kind of expression of consolation for cats who had been abused or killed. In this sense, the Kattenstoet festival is a symbol of redemption for the killing of small animals. Citizens of the Belgian city of Ypres killed many cats by throwing them from the bell tower. The origin of this activity is not clear, but throwing and killing the cats was thought to drive away evil spirits. 'Cat-burning' was another cruel abuse which is thought have been conducted from the Middle Ages to the period prior to the 1800s. These hideous and what we would now regard as criminal customs occurred from the medieval ages to the pre-modern periods.

Goose pulling (goose neck tearing) was a type of blood sport practiced in parts of Europe and North America from the 17th century to the 19th century<sup>2</sup>. As geese had been reared in Europe since ancient times, people made use of their meat, eggs, and feathers. A flightless species, geese were regarded in Europe as common livestock, similar to chickens and rabbits, and as a poultry breed that could be treated in an uncaring manner. However, the 'sport' of goose

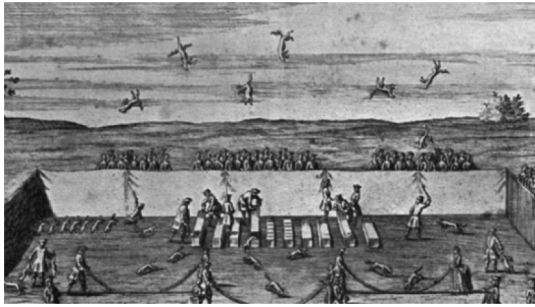


Fig. 1 Fox tossing

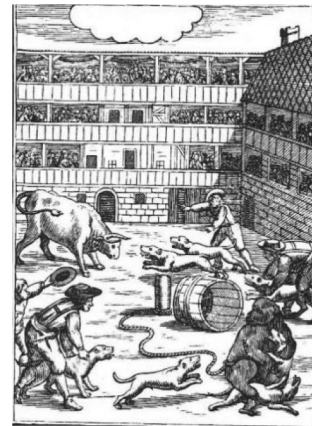


Fig. 2 Bull-baiting and bear-baiting

pulling was a cruel and hideous recreation. A man riding on horseback attempted to grab a goose which was suspended from a tree in the air in order to pull its head off. Although this custom remains in parts of Europe, a dead goose or an imitation is now used. The use of domesticated animals for human use—meat, hides, bones, and even recreation—were blessings of domestication supported by the beliefs of Christianity.

“Fox tossing” was another bloody sport conducted by aristocrats between the 17th and 18th centuries in parts of Europe (Fig. 1). Captured wild animals such as foxes, hares, wildcats, or badgers were released in an enclosed ground or courtyard. The participants in this game used a sling, holding both ends. When an animal crossed the sling on the ground, the participants used the sling to toss it high in the air. It is reported that Augustus II (the King of Poland) and Leopold I (the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire) took part in the game. Inevitably, most of the animals that were tossed in the air were seriously injured or died. After the game, any critically injured animals that remained were killed by clubbing. This type of blood sport was perfectly normal recreation at the time as torturing animals to death was considered fun. Because the lives of such animals that were not used as livestock or for food were not held in any regard, wild animals such as foxes and badgers were used extensively for this sport. The individuals who enjoyed these games may have completely lacked a consciousness of morality in regards to animal life.

As for cruel ‘games’ such as cockfighting, dogfighting,

rat-baiting, bear-baiting, and bull-baiting (Fig. 2), the purpose of these activities by people in the pre-modern age was solely recreation, although it could be considered a diversion for peoples’ feelings and frustration. Nevertheless, these activities make it clear that a concept of reverence for life hardly existed in the minds of people in those ages. Most people who lived in the pre-modern age were not likely to have had a sophisticated sense of morals, and they might have been indifferent to the lives of animals, because domesticated animals bred by small-scale farmers and ranchers were basically resources for food and clothing. The purpose of having pigs, sheep and poultry was primarily the use of their flesh, wool, and feathers. Wild animals such as foxes, bears, wild boars, and badgers were considered nothing but animal pests that damaged crops and preyed on poultry<sup>3</sup>. Domesticated dogs were kept mainly as sheep herders or for hunting. Human cruelty toward animals (including using them for recreation) was sometimes a diversion from daily life, or merely a sordid pleasure to be gained by being violent toward an animal that could not retaliate. Of course, such ‘sports’ using animals are not tolerated in the 21st century. Animal abuse and cruelty are strictly prohibited in criminal codes and by social mores. One definition of animal cruelty is as follows:

Animal cruelty is behavior performed repetitively and proactively by an individual with the deliberate intention of causing harm (i.e., pain, suffering, distress, and/or death) to an animal with the under-



Fig. 3 *Madonna with a Multitude of Animals* (c.1503)

standing that the animal is motivated to avoid that harm. Included in this definition are both physical harm and psychological harm. (*Gullone*: 91)

However, it was in the nature of things that such animal cruelty was performed daily in human societies in Europe. The sense of morality and ethical values regarding animals were not yet developed completely and would not be fully developed until later, e.g., in the 20th century<sup>4</sup>. However, we can see various expressions of animals in paintings and art from earlier centuries; for example, Albrecht Dürer left some works that included animals. He was very interested in living things and made detailed drawings of insects, crustaceans, and mammals.

In *Madonna with a Multitude of Animals*, Dürer depicted a snail, butterflies, a white stork, a fox, sheep, goats, a dog and other species (Fig. 3). It is thought that his purpose in creating this work was to highlight the expression of the Madonna at the center of the canvas, a symbol of Christianity, who gives deep affection to every living creature. In *Affendanz*, the painter tried to convey an interesting expression; the monkeys, some even with musical instruments, enjoy dancing (Fig. 4). They seem very relaxed, ideally described, and personified. (It is necessary to use caution when interpreting this work as Dürer did not necessarily depict these animals with affection)<sup>5</sup>. Animals have appeared in many art works, but most of them were presented as objects of expression



Fig. 4 *Affendanz—Monkey dance* (1523)

that served to represent motifs within these works. Dürer's purpose was to describe all of the animals he selected with exacting and realistic details. Dürer himself was, of course, interested in those living things; he illustrated a stag beetle, a crab, a walrus, lions, and rabbits with exceptional painting technique. The mandibles of arthropods, the feathers of birds, and individual hairs of mammals depicted by Dürer are the very image of them. Dürer was a rare painter who relentlessly pursued the accurate descriptions of animals. His paintings of living things almost suggest that some animals had some version of a soul, not unlike humans. The animals relaxing around the Madonna seem to reflect his deep understanding of animals.

Most of the people in Dürer's age could likely not afford to pay attention to the true nature of living things. Animals were simply used and unfortunately, in many cases, abused. In the present day, such cruel activities are not accepted and are prohibited not only by laws and ethical regulations, but more so by the common humane sense prevalent in modern society. It is an argument often posed by veterinary animal ethics, as stated below, that animal abuse be considered in relation to human crimes.

Of significance is the finding that cruelty to animals was significantly associated with all assessed antisocial behaviors. Specifically, strong associations were found between animal cruelty and lifetime alcohol use

disorders; conduct, anti-social, obsessive-compulsive, and histrionic personality disorders; pathological gambling; and a family history of antisocial behavior<sup>6</sup>. (*Gullone*: 132)

We can infer that the abuse of animals arose from the various aspects of unsophisticated, coarse and frivolous human nature which led to the bullying of weaker beings, i.e., animals. The main factor underlying such bullying is regarding animals as beings that do not have minds, or sentient souls. In the ages mentioned above, people tended to think that only humans had rational souls and faculties of reason. Such a lack of understanding led to the position that animals were machine-like brutes, and thus treating animals thoughtlessly and cruelly was deemed acceptable. Descartes' ideas on animals, i.e., that animals are machines and have no sentience and perceptions similar to those of humans, might have affected the general consensus about the place of animals' in the world. If people had no conscience about living things, they could treat animals poorly without feeling guilty about doing so. Thoughtless morality and a lack of ethical consideration for living things among humans led to cruelty towards animals in those ages. A lack of recognition that animals were sentient beings was apparent or at least potentially existed in people's minds.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, a contemporary of Descartes, stated his own views on animals in his works, which frequently described animals' souls. Leibniz claimed that animals certainly had souls. This is examined in more detail in the next section. The idea of reverence for all life could be said to be based on the recognition of the sentience of animals. The idea that life is irreplaceable is supported by the accumulating evidence that animals have emotions and, perceptions, and can feel things as humans do, which may lead to the interpretation that animals are living things with souls. But what did Leibniz consider to be the essence of animals, and what did the souls of animals mean within his theory?

### 3 Leibniz's ideas on animal's souls

In the previous essay, the author noted that G.W. Leibniz

had proposed the idea of animals' souls, and that animals were thus not mere machines<sup>7</sup>. It is worthwhile to recognize philosophers' ideas on animals' souls or sentience in their discourses. An additional important point is that the idea of reverence for the lives of animals is essential to the idea of animal ethics. Compared to the ideas espoused by Descartes, Leibniz appears to have had more humane ideas about animals. Although it seems that Leibniz felt that animals as well as humans have souls, the souls of animals as described in his discourse are not seen as direct counterparts of the emotional sentience and mind of humans. He thought human reason and mind were, first of all, more important and indeed the essence of humans. His philosophical ideas on animals are explained in detail in his *Monadology* and other short works and letters. It is necessary to examine his ideas in conjunction with the philosophical discourses. His ideas on animals clearly manifested opposition to those proposed by Descartes.

The Cartesians have failed badly, since they took no account of the perceptions that we do not apperceive. This is also what made them believe that minds alone are monads and that there no animal souls or other entelechies<sup>8</sup>. (*Monadology*: 69)

We also see that nature has given heightened perceptions to animals, from the care she has taken to furnish them organs that collect several rays of light or several waves of air, in order to make them more effectual by bringing them together. There is something similar to this in odor, taste, and touch, and perhaps in many other senses which are unknown to us. (*Monadology*: 71)

Leibniz clearly opposed Descartes' proposition that organs of animals were operated like machines and that animals had neither souls nor 'entelechies'. The 'Monads' described by Leibniz are the true atoms of nature and, in brief, the elements of things (*Monadology*: 3). The phrase "Monads are the element of things" suggests a decisive implication of the essence of what Leibniz argued in this essay. 'Monads' are the true primary energy and power of creation and as such are responsible for the generation of

all life on Earth. However, Leibniz's knowledge of animals' reproduction was insufficient; he did not know enough about the development of life in vertebrates or invertebrates.

But today, when exact inquiries on plants, insects, and animals have shown us that organic bodies in nature are never produced from chaos or putrefaction, but always through seeds in which there is, no doubt, some preformation, it has been judged that, not only the organic body was already there before conception, but there was also a soul in this body; in brief, the animal itself was there, and through conception this animal was merely prepared for a great transformation, in order to become an animal of another kind. ...Those animals some of which are raised by conception to the level of the larger animals, can be called spermatoc. (*Monadology*: 74–75)

The microscope was invented during the age in which Leibniz lived (the 17th century and early 18th century), leading to great progress in the study of biology<sup>9</sup>. However, the precise mechanisms underlying animals' reproduction were not fully understood by the people of that time; indeed many details remain to be clarified today. It was generally thought that God's providence or the elements of nature had priority over scientific evidence. Of course, many of the wider aspects of the reproduction of organisms were understood, and it was clear to all that some animals surely had keen senses that were superior to those of humans (e.g., the excellent olfactory sense of dogs and the highly evolved vision of birds such as hawks). The fact that animals have their own senses and perceptions is an important point. Like Leibniz, John Locke (who regarded animals as mere beasts with no faculty of reason) explained animal senses in his discourse.

*Perception*, I believe, is, in some degree, *in all sorts of Animals*; though in some, possibly, the Avenues, provided by Nature for the reception of Sensations are so few, and the Perception, they are received with, so obscure and dull, that it comes extremely short of the quickness and variety of Sensations, which is in

other Animals; but yet it is sufficient for, and wisely adapted to, the state and condition of that sort of Animals, who are thus made. (Locke: 148)

I think, I may be positive in, that the power of *Abstracting* is not at all in them (Beasts); and the having of general *Ideas*, is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt Man and Brutes; and is an Excellency which the Faculties of Brutes do by no means attain to. For it is evident, we observe no foot-steps in them, of making use of general signs for universal *Ideas*; from which we have reason to imagine, that they have not the faculty of abstracting, or making general *Ideas*, since that have no use of Words, or any other general Signs...It seems as evident to me, that they do some of them in certain Instances reason, as that they have sense; but it is only in particular *Ideas*, just as they receiv'd them from their Senses. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, and have not (I think) the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of *Abstraction*. (Locke: 159–160)

According to Locke's discourses in 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding', some animals certainly have excellent senses and perception. However, they, as brutes, cannot have the faculty of abstraction, meaning that because of animals' lack of language, they cannot think and cannot imagine things based on reason; only humans have the ability of understanding and reason. As Locke's original intention was to claim the superior ability of human reasoning and understanding in the context of epistemology, it is natural that in his view the position of animals was quite lower than that of humans. The terms used by Locke, "beasts" or "brutes," indicate his impressions of animals; those living things that are inferior to humans. Similar views on animals can be observed in the discourses of Pascal and Spinoza. These philosophers uniformly thought that animals were not sentient beings, although they recognized animals' keen perceptions and reasoning-like faculties, though these were considered inferior to those of humans. Compared to the ideas of Pascal and Spinoza, Leibniz's viewpoint on animals was in a rather delicate position. Although Leibniz approved of the idea of animals' souls, he did not recognize

a faculty of rational reasoning nor a mind in animals.

But the knowledge of eternal and necessary truths is what distinguishes us from simple animals and furnishes us with reason and the sciences, by raising us to a knowledge of ourselves and of God. And that is what we call the rational soul, or in ourselves.

(*Monadology*: 29)

On the other hand, Leibniz also thought that humans certainly have ‘reason’ and ‘rational souls’ which can distinguish them from animals. In this context, humans were placed in a higher class of organisms, which is similar to the discourses of other philosophers.

As for minds or rational souls, I find, at bottom, what we just said holds for all living beings and animals, namely that animals and souls begin only with the world and do not end any more than the world does. However, rational animals have this peculiarity, that their little spermatic animals, as long as they only remain in this state, have only ordinary or sensitive souls. But that as soon as the Elect among them, so to speak, attain human nature by actual conception, their sensitive souls are elevated to the rank of reason and to the prerogative of minds. (*Monadology*: 82)

For Leibniz, the concepts of ‘rational souls,’ ‘sensitive souls,’ and ‘minds’ are categorized in the ‘prerogative of minds’ of humans. He placed importance on minds and rational souls which were innate to only humans. As he suggests, the human mind is the most proximal to divinity: ‘...each mind being like a little divinity in its own realm... That is what makes minds capable of entering into a kind of society with God’ (*Monadology*: 83–84). Leibniz’s ideas on morality are based on the virtues of the collection of all minds, through which God creates a perfectly moral world<sup>10</sup>. It is also necessary to recognize the slight difference between minds and souls in Leibniz’s philosophical discourses. Prior to *Monadology*, in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz claims that the human mind is proximal to perfection, which is a great virtue in God’s creation. Although Leibniz

thought of the human mind as excellent, he referred to the immortality of the ‘soul.’

Now, nothing gives us a stronger understanding of immortality than the independence and extent of the soul in question here, which shelters it absolutely from all external things, since the soul alone makes up its whole world and is sufficient to itself with God. ...Assuming that the bodies that make up an *unum per se*, as does man, are substances, that they have substantial forms, and that animals have souls, we must admit that these souls and these substantial forms cannot entirely perish, no more than atoms or the ultimate parts of matter can, on the view of other philosophers. ...They (souls) express the whole universe, although more imperfectly than minds do. But the principal difference is that they do not know what they are nor what they do, and consequently, since they do not reflect on themselves, they cannot discover necessary and universal truths. (*Discourse on Metaphysics*: 32–34)

These metaphysical discourses suggest that animals properly have souls, yet the souls are more imperfect than minds. Nevertheless, beings with souls are immortal entities and can express their existence with God. Moreover, souls that cannot reflect on themselves could find universal truths of the world. Only humans with ‘rational souls’ and ‘minds’ can reflect on themselves, because “the intelligent soul, knowing that it is and having the ability to utter the word ‘I’”. Leibniz’s ideas on souls and minds surely draw the line between humans and animals, because only humans, the intelligent souls, can reflect on themselves and confirm the existence of self through the use of language.

Indeed, minds are the most perfectible substances, and their perfections are peculiar in that they interfere with each other the least, or rather they aid one another the most, for only the most virtuous can be the most perfect friends. (*Discourse on Metaphysics*: 36)

Like other philosophers of the same age, Leibniz surely held the human mind, rational soul, and reasoning in high esteem. However, he repeatedly pursued the implication of the “souls of animals” in his discourses. Other philosophers thought nothing of animals, regarding them as mere brutes, beasts, or machines, because they thought animals had neither emotion nor souls. Human reason and understanding which were decisively and intendedly separated from nature were emphasized. Yet, Leibniz thought animals surely had souls, sharp senses and memories. Animal souls, in his discourses, are a key point in his views on animals. The souls of animals are not mysteriously spiritual things, but rather close to the essential energy of life of organisms, or the ‘monad’ or ‘entelechy’ in Leibniz’s theory. For example, Leibniz suggested that “The body belonging to a monad (which is the entelechy or soul of that body) together with an entelechy constitutes what may be called a living being, and together with a soul constitutes what is called an animal”. (*Monadology*: 63) Moreover, he mentioned the following in ‘In Principles of Nature and Grace, based on Reason’ (1714).

Each monad, together with a particular body, makes up a living substance. Thus, there is not only life everywhere, joined to limbs or organs, but there are also infinite degrees of life in the monads, some dominating more or less over others...Such a living thing is called an *animal*, as its monad is called a *soul*. And when this soul is raised to the level of *reason*, it is something more sublime, and it is counted among the minds...(*Principles of Nature and Grace, based on Reason*: 208)

What Leibniz implied in the discourse is that the monad is the absolute element of life (which is endowed by God), and the soul (which is similar to the monad) contains perceptions, reflection, and memories. However, if souls are sublimated to reason, animals become more sophisticated beings, closer to humans. Although we can see the explicit boundary between animals and humans, an honest pursuit of the implications of animals’ essence can be recognized in the discourse. Leibniz stated his negation of Descartes’ idea on

animals as machines.

Cartesians have failed, disregarding the perceptions that we do not apperceive, in the same way that people disregard imperceptible bodies. This is also what leads the same Cartesians to believe that only minds are monads, that there are no souls in beasts, still less other *principles of life*. (*Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason*: 208)

In this context, Leibniz criticized Descartes’ line of thought on animals which regards them as “beasts” without souls. It is certain that Leibniz admired human minds and reasoning as superior to those of any other organic beings; only human minds and reasoning can be close to God’s absolute perfection. However, Leibniz described monads that can be a part of the life of every organic being, and he proposed that monads dwell in animals as a type of soul and principle of life. The recognition of the existence of monads, souls and principles of life of animals could lead to an understanding of animals as more sentient beings, because like humans, animals can feel and perceive everything around them. In *Monadology*, Leibniz’ most significant discourse emphasizes the souls of animals as follows.

From this, we see that there is a world of creatures, of living beings, of animals, of entelechies, of souls in the least part of matter. Each portion of matter can be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pond full of fish. But each branch of a plant, each limb of an animal, each drop of its humors, is still another such garden or pond. (*Monadology*: 66–67)

Thus we see that each living body has a dominant entelechy, which in the animal is the soul; but the limbs of this living body are full of other living beings, plants, animals, each of which also has its entelechy, or its dominant soul. (*Monadology*: 70)

All organisms harbor entelechy, or monads that are the source of the energy of life. This discourse suggests that organic matter is filled with life, indicating Leibniz’s basic idea on nature, as if he considered nature as a more



synthesized and sophisticated world of organisms. Based on the opportunistic view of organisms, Leibniz imagined the world of organisms with souls. He may have intended to suggest that all organisms, rather than merely be considered as machines without soul or as inorganic matter, are absolutely the organic constituents which exist harmoniously, establishing mutual relationships in nature; that is, he indicated that all creatures are under the grace of God, and that animals have “heightened perceptions.” Animal’s heightened perceptions and senses are evident in Leibniz’s explicit view on animals. In this context, ‘souls’ which are accompanied by memory are above the monad or entelechy in rank, implying that animals deserve a type of respect.

If we wish to call a *soul* everything that has perceptions and *appetites* in the general sense I have just explained, then all simple substances or created monads can be called souls. But, since sensation is something more than a simple perception, I think that the general name of monad and entelechy is sufficient for simple substances which only have perceptions, and that we should only call those substances *souls* where perception is more distinct and accompanied by memory. (*Monadology*: 19)

Leibniz recognized that animals had memory and sensation. “Memory provides a kind of sequence in souls.” (*Monadology*: 26) Therefore, he surely thought that animals with souls had distinct sensations and perceptions, and react based on memory. Sensation, in a sense, is equivalent to perception. Perception, or sentience, is an important concept in the consideration of animal welfare and animal ethics in later ages<sup>11</sup>.

The idea of reverence for life is based on a recognition of the emotions and sentience of animals. The recognition of sentience in animals is an especially important essence<sup>12</sup>. Leibniz was a philosopher of the pre-modern Baroque age, and his philosophy on this issue was developed through his metaphysical considerations; his ideas on animals were not based on biological, ecological, or zoological analyses. As long as he considered the human mind and reason as being closest to God, and recognized distinct differences between

animals and humans, his ideas on animals cannot help but be attributable to insufficiently ethical considerations. On the other hand, his thoughts on animals’ souls, (the idea of entelechy and monad in organisms) clearly hinted at his belief in the sentience of animals. If “dominant entelechy and dominant souls” are present in animals, animals have certain abilities of sensation and perception, and memories. Organisms based on those ideas can be thought to be sentient beings.

Opposing Descartes’ ideas about animals, Leibniz developed his own position on the souls of animals and the nature of living things. Although his thoughts are not biologically accurate (especially regarding reproduction and other matters), he tried to understand nature and living things from more synthesized and, in a sense, theologically ecological perspectives. His discourses are presented not only in *Monadology*. Additional discourses on animals and further characteristics of his philosophy on animals are provided in his letters.

Leibniz wrote many letters to individuals to whom he was personally close, and his emphasis on the souls of animals appears repeatedly. For example, Leibniz explained the essence of souls and the monad to Rudolf Christian Wagner (who had been Leibniz’s secretary) in a letter written in June, 1710<sup>13</sup>. The contents plainly provide a clue to the ideas of *Monadology*. In the letter, Leibniz described the essence of the souls of animals.

The active principle, the primitive entelechy is truly the principle of life which is endowed with power of the perceptions, and is immortal. This principle is the very soul that I find in animals... Souls are regarded as a more sophisticated kind of life, or sensuous life. In this case, souls are not only the ability of the perceptions, but that of sense, that is, memory and attention are added to the perceptions. In a sense, as can be compatible to that human’s minds are more sophisticated souls. ... Therefore, as human’s minds are rational souls, souls imply sensuous life; life is the principle of the perceptions. (On Monad–Letter to Wagner)

Leibniz thus indicates that he regards souls as a sophisticated aspect of organisms and that souls are truly recognized in animals, and although humans are far more sophisticated, he never describes animals as beings that have no sense or memories. (If this had been the accepted view in the pre-modern age in Europe, cruelty toward animals would not have been tolerated. In reality, they were not treated as sentient beings.) Sentient beings feel pain, fear, uneasiness, and sorrow. Leibniz wrote the following at the end of his letter.

To people who never recognize that animals have souls nor have ideas of organicity in materials, I can not assert that those people have sufficient knowledge of the dignity of God. (On Monad—Letter to Wagner)

Leibniz's perspective on animals was expounded mainly in his *Monadology* and *Principles of Nature and Grace*. The idea of souls of animals is a fundamental principle of all organic lives in Leibniz's philosophical discourses, and the soul represents what an animal or other living thing is in the universe in Leibniz's world view. Souls (which are almost equivalent to entelechy and the monad) are the form of sophisticated life in nature. An animal's soul, endowed by the grace of God, has its own principle of life and fully developed perceptions and senses. It is likely that compared to Descartes and other philosophers of the age, Leibniz considered animals to be more sophisticated organisms. Animals with souls could perceive things, as sentient beings. Although Leibniz did not reach the recognition accorded to animals in later ages, namely that their sentience implies a more highly sophisticated sensitivity and emotional level, the description of souls of animals in his discourses hints at a belief that those souls could be linked to sentience, which is an important essence for the feelings of pain, discomfort, anxiety, pleasure and relief. Several decades later, David Hume suggested that animals were more sensitive than had hitherto been assumed. Hume, as a part of the next generation following Leibniz, presented a clue to animal ethics.

#### 4 Animals as sentient beings

Today, it is more common and natural to think that all animals (companion, domesticated, and wild animals) should be treated with care<sup>14</sup>. Since the 19th century, animals have finally begun to be protected by regulations. In addition, laws have been enacted that are associated with the protection of animals and the guidance of ethics (there are of course significant differences among geographic regions). Regulations concerning cruelty to animals vary among regions, countries, religions, cultures, regions, and in the minds of people. The fundamental concept is the ethical consideration of weaker living beings that should be protected from abuse and cruelty inflicted by humans<sup>15</sup>. With regard to wild animals, more and more species have become threatened or even extinct with the destruction of animal habitats and other negative developments instigated by humans, and thus many species are now protected by regulations and are benefitting from improvements in preserved areas. In the modern era, animals have become vulnerable and are regarded as being in a weak position in the scheme of things. Accelerated progress in urban and suburban areas and the development of land worldwide have placed both wild species and industrial domestic animals in an artificially controlled state. Cruel activities using animals (such as fox-tossing and bull-baiting) have almost (but not completely) become a part of history. Humans' viewpoints about animal welfare have progressed, in part due to the raising of mainly domesticated animals.

Industries thrived and overwhelmed some countries in Europe, but in England the earliest ideas based in utilitarianism began to be used to establish a system for protecting the welfare of animals. This trend reflects the change in human consciousness about animals, regarding living species as sentient beings like humans. The recognition that animals are sentient beings or have emotions like humans at that time is important<sup>16</sup>. For example, the idea of sentience of animals was realized in the work of the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham: animals feel pain like humans do. Until then, most people seemed to have hardly paid attention to such an idea. Although Leibniz had proposed that animals certainly had souls and perceptions, this concept did not

develop into a more sophisticated recognition of animals until decades later.

David Hume wrote *A Treatise of Human Nature* in 1739, about 30 years after the *Monadology* by Leibniz. Hume described the essential aspects of human nature, morality, and ethics, analyzing his philosophical views in detail. There are some discourses in which Hume referred to animals' characters along with arguments on human nature and morals. In the *Treatise*, as he pursued the essential nature of the human condition, he tried at the same time to define some essential traits of animals. Hume's statement that "beasts are endow'd with thought and reason as well as men" is very frequently referred to in arguments on animal ethics. Angus Taylor suggested that "Hume believes that morality arises on the basis of the passions, or feelings, including natural sympathy for others" (*Animals and Ethics*: 46). Taylor contended that "Hume excludes animals from moral community" because "animals are beyond the pale of justice because they have no power to make felt their objections to the way we treat them. As a successor of empiricism by John Locke, Hume was more cynical and a strictly skeptical philosopher"<sup>17</sup>. Basically, Hume's philosophy on human nature is made up of cynicism and skeptical analysis. "The half of mankind dye before they are rational creatures" (*Of the Immortality of the Soul*: 596). This is because Hume thought that most humans could not learn and accumulate virtues and morals through the course of their lives (and furthermore he thought that most people could not learn morals through experience).

David Hume is thought to be little influenced by Leibniz. He developed his philosophy based on moral sense and an empirical analysis of human essence. Similar to Locke's recognition, Hume thought the definitive difference between animals and humans concerns 'reason': "Men are superior to beasts principally by the superiority of their reason" (*Of the Immortality of the Soul*: 389). However, Hume frequently recognized animal's sensitivity and sentience in his logic. He defended animals which had high sensory abilities and perception, and he regarded them as sentient beings. "Animals undoubtedly feel, think, love, hate, will, and even reason, tho' in a more imperfect manner than man. Are their souls also immaterial and immortal?" (*Of the Immortality of*

*the Soul*: 593) These logical discourses are somewhat similar to those of Leibniz. Both Hume and Leibniz recognized the difference between animals and humans concerning 'reason' and 'minds,' but they admired the souls and perceptions of animals. For example, Hume points out the following on the pride and humility of animals:

We must first show the correspondence of passions in men and animals, and afterwards compare the causes, which produce these passions. 'Tis plain, that almost in every species of creatures, but especially of the nobler kins, there are many evident marks of pride and humility. The very port and gait of a swan, or turkey, or peacock show the high idea he has entertain'd of himself, and his contempt of all others. ... The vanity and emulation of nightingales in singing have been commonly remark'd; as likewise that of horses in swiftness, of hounds in sagacity and smell, of the bull and cock in strength, and of every other animal in his particular excellency.... All these are evident proofs, that pride and humility are not merely human passions, but extend themselves over the whole animal creation. (*Of the Pride and Humility of Animals*: 211)

Hume understood the behaviors and emotions presented by a swan, peacock, horse, hound and others. Although his ideas of animals were based on his intuition and sentiments rather than science, it is apparent that Hume recognized the existence of emotional essence in animals.

Love in animals, has not for its only object animals of the same species, but extends itself farther, and comprehends almost every sensible and thinking being. A dog naturally loves a man above his own species, and very commonly meets with a return of affection. 'Tis evident, that *sympathy*, or the communication of passions, takes place among animals, no less than among men. Fear, courage and other affections are frequently communicated from one animal to another, without their knowledge of that cause, which produc'd the original passion. Grief

likewise is receiv'd by sympathy; and produces almost all the same consequences, and excites the same emotions as in our species. (*Of the Love and Hatred of Animals*: 255)

The implication presented by these discourses is different from that of the discourses of Leibniz. (There is a gap of several decades between the two philosophers.) Hume's discourses are clearly based on a more subjective understanding and the observation of animals, whereas Leibniz's ideas of animals are expressed by more metaphysical discourses. Hume's recognition of affection, sympathy, and other emotions in animals and the ideas of morality affected much of animal ethics in later years. For instance, Angela Coventry and Avram Hiller wrote the following.

“On Hume's account, moral sentiments for others are based in sympathy. Sympathy is a natural mechanism in human nature by which we “receive by communication” the inclinations and sentiments of others resembling us so that one's idea of another's emotion, when vivid enough, is actually converted into the experience of the emotion itself.” (*Coventry and Hiller*: 172)

The modern-day critic Julia Driver suggests that “the details of Hume's account are distinctive in his theory of a continuum of rational and affective capabilities between animals and human beings. This theory led him to a view of animals that depicted them as having moral status as sensitive but intellectually vulnerable creatures.” (Driver: 166)

Before Hume, Leibniz and Montaigne and others were opposed to Descartes' viewpoint about animals. However, Hume was the first to clearly claim that animals had reason and emotions as humans. Hume's sentimentalism was succeeded by Bentham, and a utilitarian theory of animal ethics has subsequently developed. Hume's philosophical discourses on animals are studied by some critics of animal ethics. It is necessary to examine his ideas of morals and animals in greater detail.

## 5 Conclusion

In the pre-modern age, the views of most people in Europe regarding animals were far from sophisticated. Cruel activities such as fox-tossing, bear-baiting and other hideous games were popular recreation for individuals who enjoyed killing beasts: they simply teased animals and killed them for enjoyment. The philosophers of the pre-modern age focused on the sophistication of human reason and understanding; human intellect and technical knowledge had enabled scientific findings that led to the tremendous development of industry and society. In that sense, human reason and intellect were thought to surpass those of all other organisms, as Descartes deemed that animals had neither reason nor highly sophisticated senses.

Leibniz opposed such ideas and described a new concept in which animals and other living things had their own souls and perceptions. He clearly expounded that animals or all organisms had entelechies or monads which provided them with the fundamental energy to live. He proposed that animals had senses and perceptions or memories which were necessary for them to survive, and he noted that their perceptions were very profound. In terms of souls and perceptions, Leibniz recognized that animals were highly sophisticated beings, and he hinted at his recognition of animals as sentient beings.

Souls and perceptions are essential factors that make organisms what they are as living things on Earth. Leibniz's suggestion that all organisms with souls and entelechies were excellent beings with sentience created by Divine Providence emerged from a logical analysis based on metaphysical arguments. Since Leibniz's ideas on animals were written in the Baroque age, there was a limit to the development of his theory in comparison to the theories of animal ethics developed in later ages. Animals as sentient beings were also explained in the philosophical discourses of David Hume. Hume's ideas were based on empirical arguments and subjective moral values by his own cynical logic. Hume thought animals possessed reason in the same way that humans do, and he recognized them as highly sensitive and emotional beings. Although critics of Humeans have pointed out that Hume's ideas on animals tended to be

more sentimental, his philosophy is important to the later consideration of animal ethics. It is essential for animal ethics to consider that animals are sentient beings above all, and their sensitivity and emotional essence are the same as those of humans. Hume's ideas of animals were succeeded by utilitarianism in England.

In the age of Leibniz, peoples' minds remained unsophisticated, and the metaphysical logic described by Leibniz could not progress to more humane and ethical ideas about animals. However, his concept of animals as living things with immortal souls and perceptions can be evaluated as a potentially important message for ethical arguments today. Animals with souls can be regarded as sentient beings that should be treated with more humane care and compassion. At the least, it can be said that the 'souls' of animals are not mechanical constituents for organisms as Descartes claimed; rather, they contain more emotional and sentimental essence. Leibniz's theory recognizes the possibility of reverence for animals, in association with the conception of animals' souls and perceptions. Leibniz's philosophical discourses on the souls of animals can therefore include precursory aspects which could possibly become a base for a more ethical consideration of animals from the viewpoint of animals as sentient beings.

One of the essential factors which supports the current ideas of animal ethics is the existence of sentience in animals. Modern-day researchers of animal ethics place importance on cognition ability, sentience, and emotion which are thought to be equally shared with those of humans. Leibniz' ideas of 'souls of animals' and Hume's 'sentiments and reason of animals' both present basic and commonly-held humane concepts which arise from the sympathy of people in the present era, and promote understanding of the ideas of reverence for the lives of animals. Recognition of existence of sentience and emotion of animals is important at a fundamental level as a universal concept which contributes to the development of animal ethics.

#### Notes

1. Cats were highly prized in ancient Egypt and considered so important that the government restricted the ability of individuals to take cats out of Egypt to other areas.
2. Goose pulling is thought to have originated in Spain. Like chickens, geese are domesticated, and they have been traditionally associated with an attribute of 'stupidity.' In addition, the making of foie gras (the liver of a duck or goose fattened by gavage [forced feeding]) has come to be regarded as an example of animal abuse. In India, hamsha (or hansha) is often identified with the Supreme Spirit, or Brahman in Hinduism; hamsha is thought to refer to the figure of a goose or swan. This word hamsha is cognate with English 'goose.'
- Miura indicates cruel activities to animals in the pre-modern age in Europe in detail. The explanation indicates the historical transition of human activities to animals. Humans exhibited cruel and merciless behavior to both domesticated and wild species.
3. It is a fact that foraging wild animals is a cause of serious damage to vegetation, lands, crops, and various agricultural products worldwide. Deer, wild boars and rodents voraciously consume huge amounts of agricultural resources.
4. The idea of animal welfare was nascent in the early 19th century. In England, regulations on domestic animal welfare were implemented in 1922. However, until the 19th century, cruelty to humans was common in the world. Wartime prisons are historical example; prisoners were cruelly treated in all ages. Those that were not executed were often abused as slaves. Prisoners of war had essentially no protections, and their right to life was not guaranteed until the imposition of international laws in the modern age. It was not until 1864 that the International Committee of the Red Cross provided the first Geneva Convention, which included articles requiring the humane treatment of wounded and sick soldiers who were out of the battle. A Geneva Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of the Land was defined in 1899, providing laws concerning the treatment of wounded soldiers and prisoners of war. However, these treaties and laws were not observed practically at the front lines of wars worldwide. Wars and hot spots in the 20th century have involved cruel activities in the field. Illtreated people in captivity can be compared to animals, as weaker living things. Cruelty to animals and humans is attributed to the malicious minds and nature of humans.
5. Dürer stated that "I have drawn the monkey rather clumsily here." Nevertheless, he seemed to have enjoyed drawing this work.
6. It is suggested that there is a clear relationship between animal abuse and human criminal behavior and antisocial personality. Cruelty to animals is apparently a strong latent factor of pathogenic crimes by humans. It has been indicated that children who abuse small animals often later

became serious criminals. However, in the pre-modern periods, people who abused animals as recreation (e.g., fox-tossing) might not have had serious personal disorders leading to criminal behavior.

7. In the previous essay, the author examined mainly discourses by Descartes, Pascal, and Spinoza, all of whom claimed that animals were merely machine-like creatures that had no faculty of reason, i.e., beasts.
8. This term, 'entelechies' was created by Aristotle. Entelechy is the origin of power which enables things to move.
9. It is certain that Descartes and Francis Bacon developed the basic methods of scientific study and demonstration. Biology, the mechanisms of living things, and medicine were developed by using microscopes, anatomical studies, and experimental animals.  
Leibniz could not explain the mechanism of reproduction of insects or mammals in *Monadology*.
10. This world view reflects optimistic perspectives based on Leibniz's ideas of pre-established harmony.
11. Bentham developed his utilitarian ideas on animals in a later age. The recognition of sensations of pain led to the idea of animal welfare. In England, the regulation of animal husbandry was established in the early 19th century.
12. It is difficult to prove the existence of emotions of animals because it is not possible to measure such emotions quantitatively. Sentience is understood by valuations of the perceptions of animals. With respect to the concept of animal sentience, Morten Tønnessen and Jonatan Beever suggest the importance of this issue in order to develop their argument of biosemiotics.  
"Sentience, commonly understood as the capacity to experience pleasure or pain, has been held up by several philosophers and ethicists as a morally relevant capacity. Sentience-based approaches to moral considerability have their roots in the work of eighteenth-century British jurist and philosopher Jeremy Bentham." (Tønnessen and Beever: 50)
13. The letter to Wagner was written in 1710, in which Leibniz tried to explain the exact existence of souls of animals to Wagner. This letter is a clue to understanding *Monadology*. Leibniz explained similar contents in his letters to Queen Sophie Charlotte of Prussia in 1696 and 1704. Leibniz sincerely explained to her that not only humans had souls and benefit from nature. He indicated that the diversity of nature is beautiful and that souls are perceptions of the universe. These letters show Leibniz's intense claims for the souls of animals. The letter's translation in English is by the author.
14. Experimental animals such as mice, rats, rabbits, guinea pigs and other animals kept in captivity are also protected by regulations. Strict regulations and laws prohibit the

ill-treatment and cruel handling of these animals.

15. There is a case to be made that ethical protection corresponds with religious faith. For example, Zebu cows are strictly protected in India (by Hindu). Hinduism influences the manner of keeping cows, but the recent development of dairy industries are accelerating. In India, Zebu cows are regarded as sacred beings, and they are treated with utmost care. The importance of life and welfare are well explained in the book by Valpey.
16. Aaltola refers to Haidt's comment "emotion is a significant driving force in moral judgement" and develops her argument: "Sentimentalism has clear explanatory power in the context of moral judgement concerning nonhuman animals." (Aaltola: 204)
17. Lock's proposition, i.e., 'No innate Principles in the Mind' is also important in Hume's logic. Justice and faith are not innate, and Man's conscience does not demonstrate an innate morality of humans. Hume certainly applied Lock's ideas to his theory of the morals of humans, and he criticized human's incomplete nature, considering animals' weakness.

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