

Towards an animal spirituality: An evaluation of the contributions of Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer

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— *Adieu, dit le renard. Voici mon secret. Il est très simple: on ne voit bien qu'avec le coeur. L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux.*
— *L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux, répéta le petit prince, afin de se souvenir.*

(Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. *Oeuvres* (Pléiade), 1959, 474)

ABSTRACT

While throughout the ages prominent thinkers have denounced for various reasons mistreatment and killing of animals for food or sacrifice, the dominant western view has been that only rational beings merit moral respect and value. Augustine developed, from Aristotle's thought of a hierarchy of souls as well as from the Stoic concept of animals' irrationality, the idea that animals share no fellowship with humans and thus are to be excluded from moral consideration. In Aquinas' thinking the difference between rationality and irrationality became the difference between immortal and mortal souls. This view furthered the development of an instrumental view of animals. The perception that lower species are created to benefit the higher species has become a dominant part of western Christian thought.

The main aim of this study is to investigate whether a respectful attitude towards animals, as lived by Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer, has a mystical basis (following the model of Evelyn Underhill), and subsequently to consider whether and how mystical qualities as lived by Francis and Schweitzer may contribute to an animal spirituality. In this thesis I explore the moral valuation of animals in the Christian biblical and spiritual tradition, and further present the outcome of this exploration as an alternative to an anthropocentric tradition and as a contribution to contemporary protectionist approaches.

Franciscan sources and Schweitzer's oeuvre have been examined while applying Underhill's concept of various characteristics and stages of the mystic way. I conclude that both Francis and Schweitzer in their own unique ways qualify to be categorized as 'mystics'. Not through rationality, but through experience and feeling, both have achieved real contact with other beings and attained to the Mystery of life. Through their purified view they have been able to perceive animals in a non-instrumental way and through their mystical experiences of union they have sensed the common ontological basis and kinship between humans and animals—our interdependency, utility, aesthetic value and theophany.

On the basis of scrutiny of biblical texts which touch upon the relations of humans and animals with God I observe that an animal-inclusive moral concern, as demonstrated by Francis and Schweitzer, finds biblical support. Each creature, as created and animated by God's *rûah* ('Spirit') is transparent to God's glory and therefore able to reveal something of the Creator.

The Bible proclaims animals as God's property, with their own relation with their Creator, not as created to satisfy human wants and wishes. A non-instrumental understanding of animals, as found in biblical texts and as realized by Francis' and Schweitzer's awe for life, has ethical implications for human-animal relations. Francis' and Schweitzer's views call us to question our use of animals as our property, therewith sacrificing animal interests for our own.

A spirituality in which animals are contemplated as God's creatures, with their own worth and their own relation to God, may lead to a different attitude towards animals. To the various elucidated positions in the contemporary animal debate, with its emphasis on rights and reason, Francis and Schweitzer may contribute through their example of an approach calling for empathy, sympathy and compassion as an alternative point of departure.

Key words:

Francis of Assisi, Nature-Mysticism, Albert Schweitzer, Ethical Mysticism, Reverence for Life, Animal Spirituality, Animal Ethics

PREFACE

We ... are where we are today not because once upon a time we read a book that convinced us that there was a flaw in the thinking underlying the way that we, collectively, treat nonhuman animals, but because in each of us there took place something like a conversion experience, which, being educated people who place a premium on rationality, we then proceeded to seek backing for in the writings of thinkers and philosophers. Our conversion experience as often as not centred on some other mute appeal of the kind that Levinas calls the look, in which the existential autonomy of the Other became irrefutable - irrefutable by any means, including rational argument (Coetzee, 2009a: 89).

The Western intellectual tradition may provide a reasoned backing (such as John Coetzee refers to), where this tradition has profound theological resources for rendering moral respect and worth to animals, notably in spirituality. It has been encouraging to find an abundance of positive views on animals, as the Christian tradition indicates that the significance and worth of other creatures cannot be determined solely by their relationship with human beings. The way humans collectively treat animals has increasingly been criticised over the last decades, as can be witnessed by a growing number of publications. To the culture-critical issues of *race*, *class* and *gender*, has been added *species* in analogy. Speciesism, understood as the differential treatment based exclusively on species without considering morally relevant characteristics is increasingly being challenged (Vugts, 2015: 5-9).

The contemporary animal discourse provides philosophical arguments for the moral status of animals. In this study I investigate five contemporary thinkers who have made significant contributions to animal protectionism by way of systematic theories. Their work provides a contextual background on which to advance further discussion, by indicating limitations of utilitarian and rights theories for the abolition of animal exploitation. The study aims to provide a biblical perspective for an advancement of the moral status of animals and brings in two spiritual resources, Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer, whose special relations with animals have fascinated me since my youth.

Why Francis of Assisi? How could a thirteenth-century monk have meaning for today? Why would a twenty-first century Jesuit elected Pope choose as his namesake Francis of Assisi? The question 'Why Francis?' is not only a recent one; it has been in fact an eight centuries old one. When, returning from contemplation in the woods, Brother Masseo asked Francis: 'Why you? Why you? Why you? [...] The whole world seems to be coming after you, and everyone is seeking to see you, to hear you and to obey you: you are not a handsome man; you are not a man of great knowledge or wisdom; you are not of noble birth! Why does the whole world come to you?'... Francis replied, after having 'stood for a long period of time with his mind directed toward God': 'You want to know why me? [...] why the whole world comes after me? I know this from those most holy eyes of God Who everywhere sees the good and the bad. Those blessed and most holy eyes have not seen among the bad a greater sinner than me or one

more unqualified and more vile. And therefore, to perform this miraculous deed which he intends to perform, he did not find in the world a more vile creature, so he chose me [...] in order to show that the sublimity of virtue comes from God and not from a creature ... (*Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius* 10.2-8 [Fontes, 2109-2110; Armstrong, 2001: 458-459]). An answer for today to the question posed above may lie in the perception of Francis' personality as a human being boundless in all respects, boundless into the absurd in his strength as well as in his tenderness.

Why Albert Schweitzer? Someone who was, after all, a brilliant early 20th century theologian with an auspicious start of an academic career, only to decide against all odds on a career switch as a tropical doctor and who, when not on leave via ocean steamer to Europe, mainly communicated with the Western academic world via letters written at night after hospital duties in the Central African bush; someone who had to pledge solemnly to the responsible mission organization before being associated as a doctor with an isolated mission hospital near the equator, that he would—because of his perceived heterodox Christian convictions—only engage in curing the local population, not in preaching to them. Here Karl Barth, who early on had qualified Schweitzer's engagement in the African bush as 'hefty justification by works' (*saftige Werkgerechtigkeit*) (Schweitzer, 2006: 67), may provide some answer. Barth did pay tribute to Schweitzer late in his academic career during his last lecture semester in Basel, by posing the question (reflecting on possible threats to theology, with reference to Prov. 10:19): 'Could theology not be a "luxury occupation" (*Luxusbeschäftigung*), with which we could be perceived as escaping from the living God? Could not ... a problematic theologian such as Albert Schweitzer have chosen the better part, and with him just any who have attempted here and there without theological reflection to heal wounds, to feed the hungry, to quench the thirsty, to provide a home to orphans?' (Barth, 1962: 155)

The circumstances under which this thesis has been written were less than ideal, since research was undertaken parallel to my actual medical occupation, mainly during postings in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Without the help of my family, who sent me needed sources via 'the electronic highway', this thesis could not have been completed within this amount of time.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Assisi Compilation
1C	First book of Celano (Vita Prima)
2C	Second book of Celano (Vita Secunda)
3C	Third book of Celano
D	Deuteronomistic source
ER	Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata)
J	Yahwistic source
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
L3C	Legend of the Three Companions
LMj	Legenda major (of Bonaventure)
LMn	Legenda minor (of Bonaventure)
LR	Later Rule (Regula Bullata)
LXX- G	Septuagint: Greek translation of the Old Testament
MP	Mirror of Perfection
MT	Masoretic Text (authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBC	Oxford Bible Commentary
P	The Priestly work
Strong H (with number)	Strong's Hebrew word numbering according to the <i>Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary-Index to the Old Testament</i> (Strong, 2001: 1465-1583).
Strong G (with number)	Strong's Greek word numbering according to the <i>Greek Dictionary-Index to the New Testament</i> (Strong, 2001: 1585-1654).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this study I intend to show how ethical concern for animals is an integral part of a human person's spirituality. By spirituality, I mean a sense of connection to a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself, which may include an emotional experience of awe and reverence. 'Animal spirituality' is a concept which is being linked here to the so-called 'ecological spirituality' (Devall, 1985; McDaniel, 1990). I understand 'animal spirituality' as a human sense of connection to a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself that is experienced in the encounter with animals and is explicitly focused on in the contemplation of faith.

In Christian ethics, moral concern has been focused primarily on human relations. Considered as irrational beings, animals have traditionally not been included in Christian ethical discourse (cf. Sorabji, 1995: 201-203; Kemmerer, 2006: 217-228). Since an immortal soul has been considered to be a prerequisite for receiving justice (Rollin, 1992: 28-29), animals have been regarded as part of the inferior creation. In this way, the difficult question for a Christian theodicy in relation to the suffering of morally innocent animals could simultaneously be circumvented (Kolakowski, 1982: 54-55). There has been a tendency, throughout the western Christian tradition, with its overemphasis on human history at the expense of natural history, on God's transcendence at the expense of God's immanence and on human salvation at the expense of cosmic salvation, to deny a moral standing to animals. The problem is also cosmological in nature. Western Christian dualism distinguished between a higher spiritual realm (sphere of the soul) and a lower material realm (sphere of the body). Since animals purportedly do not possess a soul and thus do not participate in the spiritual realm, it was inferred that animals are not worthy of moral consideration.

1.1 Background to the problem statement

This section highlights some influential Western philosophical positions in the debate concerning the moral status of animals through history. Since the contemporary discussion on animal rights builds upon historic perceptions, such an overview places contemporary moral concern for animals in a historic context.

1.1.1 Classical and Late Antiquity

Any representation of insights of early Greek authors is limited by the meagreness of inherited original works. Reliable Classical sources, especially pre-Socratic, are scant. Apart from Plato,

Aristotle and to an extent Theophrastus, Greek authors have come to us only in the form of quotations, excerpts and paraphrases in writings of other authors, and often in a biased form. At the same time it is justifiable to start with the earliest Classical thinkers, because the Greek tradition is continued in Christian philosophy (Guthrie, 1962: XIII-XIV; 24-25).

Of **Pythagoras** (born circa 570 B.C.) no text fragments have been transmitted. Only Plato reports about his life and philosophy. The life of the Pythagorean school of thought was ordered towards following God and communion with God (Haussleiter, 1935: 127). In the Pythagorean system, salvation of the soul was sought not only by religious means, but also through philosophy. While human beings were seen as divided and mortal, the essential part of human beings, the soul, was immortal, ‘a fragment of the divine, universal soul that was cut off and imprisoned in a mortal body’ (Edwards, 1967: 7/38). The human task, therefore, was ‘to purify the soul, preparing it for a return to the universal soul of which it was a part. Until then, since it was still contaminated by the body, it must tread the wheel of reincarnation, entering a new body of man or animal after the death of its previous tenement’ (Edwards, 1967: 7/38). The Pythagorean philosophy was based on a notion of kinship of all living beings (Dierauer, 1977: 18-24; Haussleiter, 1935: 105; Edwards, 1967: 7/37-38). Pythagoras condemned killing of animals for food and sacrifice on the basis of sentient beings’ possession of the same immortal souls (which may transmigrate from humans into animals and plants), on the basis of the suffering that mistreatment causes on them, and because justice to animals, as related beings, was part of the way to a virtuous life (Sorabji, 1995: 131; 173; Haussleiter, 1935: 99-111; 131; 133; 143; Cavalieri, 2006: 56). Diogenes Laertius (8: 13) adds health concerns (for body and mind) as the real reason for Pythagoras’ vegetarianism (see also Dombrowski, 1984: 41-44).

Empedocles (c.495-c.435 BC), a follower of Pythagoras, also believed in the transmigration of souls, which could reincarnate in humans, animals or plants, as all life was seen as linked in a chain (Diels & Kranz, 1974: I/358-359; Cavalieri, 2006: 55; Dierauer, 1977: 18-24; Haussleiter, 1935: 157-158). Only fragments of his work have survived through later authors. He mentioned a Golden Age when people sacrificed myrrh, incense and honey and ‘no altar was wetted with the blood of bulls’. He maintained that there existed ‘a universal precept’, applicable to everyone, not to kill ‘that which has life’ (as reported by Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.13). He rejected harming or killing of animals for food as criminal and unjust; his basis was the common breath pervading us and our kinship with them (Sorabji, 1995: 119, 131; Cavalieri, 2006: 55; Dierauer, 1977: 43-45). Reincarnation implied that we are killing our kin (Diels & Kranz, 1974, I: 367; Haussleiter, 1935: 160). For Empedocles, meat-eating equaled cannibalism (Sorabji, 1995: 177).

The fifth century in ancient Greece saw a gradual change in the view of the origin of life and of society. An evolutionary view of culture came to replace paradisiacal cosmogonic beliefs of the Golden Age. Humanity and the world were seen as having come into existence by a driving force which in the last instance depended upon elementary realities—an atomist's outlook. The

intellectual theory of an atomic structure of matter has its roots here. The human person's cultural achievements were seen as resulting from the need for survival as displayed in the animal world (Guthrie, 1965: II/389-392, 471-476). The fifth century BC produced great intellectuals such as Socrates and Plato. In modern philosophy it is contested whether **Socrates** (c. 470-399 BC) was an actual historical person or a fictional character. The statements ascribed to him and accounts by ancient commentators provide no evidence that Socrates was a vegetarian or that he condemned animal sacrifice (Edwards, 1967: 7/484-485; Haussleiter, 1935: 164-166).

Plato (c. 427-347/8 B.C.) adopted the main (Pythagorean) doctrines of the immortality and the transmigration of the soul and philosophy as assimilation to the divine (Dierauer, 1977: 75-76; Haussleiter, 1935: 191). He held that animals' souls contained a reasoning part and he believed that animals are reincarnated human beings, hence supposing that humans existed before animals (Sorabji, 1995: 10; Dierauer, 1977: 71-80). Though Plato also considered plants as living beings, he did not mention a transmigration of souls into plants (Haussleiter, 1935: 191). He recommended a vegetarian diet for the citizens of his ideal state, because he believed that such a diet would lead to a happy, healthy, and long life (*Politeia* II, 372b-d; X, 600b). The reason, therefore, was not motivated by concern for animals.

Xenocrates (head of the Older Academy of Plato from 339-314 BC) maintained that through a vegetarian diet humans would be purified. Xenocrates appears to have been a vegetarian himself and a defender of animals (Dierauer, 1977: 99; Haussleiter, 1935: 200-201). In his view there exists a kinship between all living beings; he also held the non-rational soul to be immortal (Sorabji, 1995: 178). He maintained that animals have knowledge of God as we hear of worshipping elephants and tigers (Xenocrates fr. 21 Heinze in Sorabji, 1995: 90; 209; Dierauer, 1977: 99; Haussleiter, 1935: 199).

Aristotle (384-322 BC) undermined Pythagoras' arguments of animals' identical souls and suffering due to mistreatment, and instead justified the killing of animals for food or sacrifice. Aristotle held that the soul was not an immortal or separate part of the body, but came into existence when the body was formed and ceased to exist when the body perished. Different kinds of bodies had different souls. For Aristotle, there is not only a gradual, but an essential difference between the human and animal soul (Dierauer, 1977: 109-115; 124; 121-128; Haussleiter, 1935: 234); he assumed a hierarchy of beings, based upon the kind of soul they possess: plants with vegetative souls, animals with sensitive souls and human beings with rational souls. According to Aristotle, it was a universal law that the lower existed to serve the higher; thus animals existed to serve humans (Aristotle, *Politics* I: 8). Aristotle argued that it was natural for humans to rule over animals, just as it was natural for the soul to rule over the body and of the rational element to rule over the passionate element (Aristotle, *Politics* I: 5). He denied that humans had ethical duties to animals because moral responsibility arose out of a

fellowship, which was based on shared interests with members from the community, consisting of other rational beings (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII: 1).

Theophrastus (322-287 BC), although the successor as head of Aristotle's school, diverged from Aristotle. Large parts of his treatise *On Piety* have been preserved by Porphyry (Diogenes Laertius, 1991: I/500-501; Sorabji, 1995: 175). Theophrastus was concerned with justice to animals, providing a major case against the sacrifice of animals and explicitly condemning the eating of meat (Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* II. 12, 22, 24). Like Empedocles, Theophrastus presented animal sacrifice as a decline from earlier practice and stated that killing animals for *sacrifice* was not a *holy* act 'as the name implies' because it injures animals, through depriving them of life (Porph. *Abst.* II. 9, 12). Furthermore, he held that because animals are 'the property of the gods' we should abstain from animals in sacrifices' (Porph. *Abst.* II. 13). For Theophrastus, meat-eating resulted from cannibalism and human sacrifice (Porph. *Abst.* I. 23, 24) and was thus considered equally unnatural. Contrary to his teacher Aristotle, Theophrastus held that animals are akin to humans (*oikeios*), so it is unjust to kill them (Porph. *Abst.* II. 22; Sorabji, 1995: 119, 177). He also maintained that humans can have friendship with non-human animals (Porph. *Abst.* II. 22), herewith contradicting Aristotle's claim that there can be no friendship, and hence no relation of justice towards animals, because 'there is nothing common to the two parties' (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII: 11). Instead, Theophrastus' starting point is the concept of kinship between humans and animals, not only in body elements, but also in souls (Dierauer, 1977: 170-177). The difference between human and animal souls is one of degree, not of kind (Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*: 58; Dierauer, 1977: 166-167; Haussleiter, 1935: 238). The belief in reincarnation as a ground for kinship (as used by Pythagoras and Empedocles) was not used by Theophrastus.

The **Stoics** elaborated on Aristotle's denial of rationality to animals and a restriction of friendship to human beings only (Haussleiter, 1935: 245-246; Sorabji, 1995: 20, 52). Though Stoics ascribed a soul to animals, they insisted on human reason as the condition for receiving justice, which became rooted in the Christian tradition of the Latin West (Haussleiter, 1935: 246; Sorabji, 1995: 198). According to Stoic philosophers, only rational beings could be held responsible for their behavior, and moral duties, therefore, only existed to members of the community of rational beings (Haussleiter, 1935: 248-249; Phelps, 2007: 35-36). Some Stoics were vegetarians for ascetic reasons, not from a concern for animals (Dierauer, 1977: 238-240); Haussleiter, 1935: 245, 262; Sorabji, 1995: 125). Stoics generally held that animals existed for humans (Haussleiter, 1935: 248).

Plutarch (c. AD 45-125) advocated Pythagoras' condemnation of meat-eating and maintained that animals can experience pain and fear and therefore can be treated unjustly. In his treatise *On the Eating of Flesh* he stated, 'for the sake of some little mouthful of flesh, we deprive a soul of the sun and light and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to

enjoy' (Plutarch, *On the Eating of Flesh* I. 4). He also stated the possible transmigration of souls and physical and mental health as reasons to abstain from killing animals (Plutarch, *On the Eating of Flesh* I. 5; Haussleiter, 1935: 228). In another essay Plutarch argued that animals are very intelligent and rational beings, and therefore deserve justice (Plutarch, *On the Intelligence of Animals*: 3, 4, 6). For Plutarch, like Empedocles and Theophrastus before him, the sacrificing and eating of animals characterized 'men becoming negligent of sanctity' (Porph. *Abst.* II. 27) and was caused by 'famine, or some other unfortunate circumstance', 'pestilence and war' and 'scarcity of fruits' (Theophrastus ap. Porph. *Abst.* II. 9, 12, 27).

Porphyry (A.D. 232-309) was a student of Plotinus (c. AD 205-260), the founder of Neo-Platonism, and was a transmitter of his thought (Edwards, 1967: 7/351-352). He wrote a four-book treatise with the title *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, which was a plea for vegetarianism, based on the work of Theophrastus, Plutarch and others. Plotinus and Porphyry used arguments of Pythagoras, condemning meat-eating and animal sacrifice. Porphyry's motives for a vegetarian, ascetic lifestyle were on the one side spiritual and religious (directed at purity and ascent to God), and on the other hand ethical (concern for justice for animals as kindred beings) (Porph. *Abst.* I. 54, 57; II. 45, 51). He disputed Aristotle's claim concerning the qualitative difference between the souls of animals and those of humans (Porph. *Abst.* III. 26).

1.1.2 Judaeo-Christian Tradition

Some of the early Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215), Tertullian (c. 160 - c. 240) and the Desert Fathers were vegetarian for ascetic reasons as well as out of compassion for animals (Phelps, 2007: 53). **Origen** (AD 185-284) maintained that all beings, rational and irrational, participate in God the Father (Origen, *De Principiis* 3.6). He held to what would later become known as universal salvation. His notion of universal salvation included animals on the premise that souls are also present in animals (Vermes, 2012: 222).

John Chrysostom (AD 347-407) praises the animal creation in his *Homily on Genesis*, claiming that creatures lead us to the knowledge of God: '... it was not simply for our use that everything was created by him, but ... that the power of their Creator might be proclaimed' (Chrysostom, *Homily on Genesis* 7.12).

Lactantius (AD 240/250-320), a convert to Christianity before 303 (Grant, 1980: 246), maintained that animals possess reason, converse and smile and that humans differed from animals 'in religion only; for the other things, even those which are supposed to be peculiar to man, are found in the other animals also' (Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* III. 10). Humans were 'given an upright posture, to look at the heavens, solely 'on account of religion' (Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* III. 10). He furthermore held that reason had been given to humans because of

the soul's immortality, and not immortality because of our reason (as Aquinas would maintain later) (Lactantius, *De Opificio Dei* II. 9).

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430), the most prominent theologian of the ancient Latin Church, accepted Aristotle's cosmological hierarchy and embedded it in a Christian interpretation. Augustine also adopted the Stoic view on animals, with its emphasis on the irrationality of animals, and inferred that because animals had no reason, they did not belong in the human community and therefore human beings had no direct moral duties to animals; their life and death is subordinate to human needs:

if, when we say, Thou shalt not kill, we do not understand this of the plants, since they have no sensation, nor of the irrational animals that fly, swim, walk, or creep, since they are dissociated from us by their want of reason, and are therefore by the just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive for our own uses; if so, then it remains that we understand that commandment simply of man (Augustine, *City of God* I. 20).

Although Augustine was aware that animals could feel pain, this did not lead in Augustine's perspective to the formulation of duties towards them: 'For we see and hear by their cries that animals die with pain, although man disregards this in a beast, with which, as not having a rational soul, we have no community of rights' (Augustine, *De Moribus Manichaeorum* 2.17: 59). Augustine's statements on killing of animals can be considered as directed against the vegetarianism of the Manichaeic movement. Before Augustine converted to Catholicism, he had been a follower of Manichaeism; allusions in *De Moribus Manichaeorum* and *Confessiones* show intimate knowledge of the Manichaeic daily 'sacred meal' ritual and related dietary prescriptions, amongst which was abstinence from meat (Oort van, 2002: 26-28). After his conversion on his thirtieth birthday, Augustine resumed eating meat and attacked abstinence from meat 'as a prideful rejection of God's gifts' (Phelps, 2007: 54). Augustine's adoption of Aristotle's hierarchy of souls and of the Stoic view of rationality as being a condition for receiving moral concern has deeply influenced the Christian Latin speaking Church. While, under the early Church Fathers, there was still a debate concerning moral attitudes to animals, this debate lost impetus as a result of Augustine's enduring influence in later centuries (Sorabji, 1995: 198; 202).

Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225-1274), the most influential medieval philosopher of the Catholic Church, managed to absorb Aristotle's philosophy into a western Christian doctrine (Phelps, 2007: 56). He utilized Aristotle's concept of natural hierarchy, especially the idea that the 'lower' creation existed to serve the 'higher'. In relation to the question whether it was lawful to kill any living thing he concluded:

There is no sin in using a thing for the purpose for which it is. Now the order of things is such that the imperfect are for the perfect ... It is not unlawful if man uses plants for

the good of animals, and animals for the good of man as the Philosopher [Aristotle] states (*Polit.I.3*) (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae quest. 64.1).

Aquinas' view of the status of animals was that they were irrational (lacking reason or mind), that they existed to serve humans (by virtue of the natural order of things and by divine providence) and that they had no moral status in themselves, except as human property (Linzey, 1995: 13-14). For Aquinas animals, as irrational beings, had no fellowship with humans, and therefore were not included as neighbours in the Christian command 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. Christians had no obligation to show concern for the wellbeing of animals. According to Aquinas the purpose of passages in the Bible referring to the compassionate treatment of animals was that cruelty to animals might lead to cruelty to humans:

..... if any statements are found in Sacred Scripture prohibiting the commission of an act of cruelty against brute animals, for instance, that one should not kill a bird accompanied by her young (Deut. 22:6), this is said either to turn the mind of man away from cruelty which might be used on other men, lest a person through practicing cruelty on brutes might go on to do the same to men (Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles (III)*, Part II, ch. CXII, 13).

Aquinas accepted Aristotle's hierarchy of different types of souls and quoted with approval the above mentioned quotation from Augustine's *City of God* (I. 20) concerning the killing of animals (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II. 64.1). Aquinas, adopting the idea of 'natural order' found in Aristotle, held that the 'imperfect are for the use of the perfect', so that 'it is in keeping with the order of nature, that man should be master over animals' (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II. 64. 1). The risk of this approach was that it potentially gave human beings absolute rights over creation. In *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas argued that

... we refute the error of those who claim that it is a sin for man to kill brute animals. For animals are ordered to man's use in the natural course of things, according to divine providence. Consequently, man uses them without any injustice, either by killing them or by employing them in any other way (Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles (III)*, Part II, ch. CXII, 12).

Aquinas, with reference to Aristotle, stated that intellectual understanding is the only operation of the soul which was carried out without a corporal organ, and inferred that the souls of animals, therefore, were not immortal like the souls of humans:

.... no operation of the sensitive part of the soul can be performed without the body. In the souls of brute animals, however, there is no operation superior to those of the sensitive part, since they neither understand nor reason. ... The souls of brutes, then, are incapable of any operation that does not involve the body. Now, since every substance is possessed of some operation, the soul of a brute animal will be unable to exist apart from its body, so that it perishes along with the body (Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (II), ch. LXXXII, 2).

While in Augustine the immortality of the human soul presupposed rationality, Aquinas went further: through the putative irrationality of animals the difference between animals and humans became a gap, because this constituted the difference between mortal and immortal souls (Sorabji: 1995: 201-202). Aquinas' view of animals prevailed from the thirteenth till the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when new sensibilities and strong humanitarian movements emerged, inclusive of concern for animals, and the Thomist view became seriously challenged by Humphry Primatt and others (Thomas, 1983: 173-191).

1.1.3 Pre-enlightenment and Enlightenment

René Descartes (1596-1650) maintained, in line with the tradition of Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, that only human beings have rational souls. According to Descartes, the mind is immaterial and completely distinct from the body. Body and mind can exist and function independently. The mind is by definition immortal and survives the death of the body. Descartes developed this thought even further: he made the rational soul not only the residence of intelligence, but also of sentience and consciousness. Thus, the absence of a rational soul in animals implies the absence of sentience and a subjective self. Descartes reduced animals to mere natural 'automata', upon which physiologists could experiment without considering morality (Spencer, 1993: 201- 203; Linzey and Cohn-Sherbok, 1997: 8-9). Cartesianism, with its view on animals as devoid of rationality, sentience and self-consciousness, justified the human exploitation of animals (Thomas, 1996: 34, 36). With **Auguste Comte** (1798–1859), who held that only scientific knowledge is valid knowledge, instrumentalist thought reached its culmination.

Growing resistance against animal exploitation (1500-1900). Keith Thomas' *Man and the Natural World* illustrates how the idea of exploitation of the earth for human advantage became sharply challenged in England between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries. A growing number of people perceived material progress in this era as accompanied by exploitation of nature and non-human life and found the prevailing exploitation of animals increasingly difficult to reconcile with their moral sensibilities (Spencer, 1993: 233-239; Thomas, 1983: 173-181). Although anthropocentrism was still the prevailing outlook, non-anthropocentric sensibilities became more widely spread.

David Hume (1711-1776), skeptic of the (in his view) biased conception of reason by philosophers like Descartes, emphasized the role of experience in knowledge of things, and the role of feelings in ethics rather than abstract moral rules. He asserted that humanity required gentle use of all creatures (Thomas, 1983: 176).

Darwin's publication *The Descent of Man* (1871), posed more sharply the questions of the mortality of animals' souls and the immortality of human souls (Thomas, 1983: 141, 169). From 1800 onwards, the Enlightenment was overtaken by Romanticism, with emphasis on emotion and feelings rather than on reason. In the changing climate of the nineteenth century, charitable organizations for a wide variety of concerns, including animal welfare, emerged.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), generally considered the founder of utilitarianism, held the principle that 'good' is that action which creates the highest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain for all those affected, and 'evil' is that action that creates the highest amount of pain and the least amount of pleasure. He included in his utilitarian calculations animals for reason of sentience (Bentham, 1996: 283). This new thinking implied that intelligence or moral capacity no longer mattered, and were replaced by feelings.

Humphry Primatt's *Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and the Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals* (1776) may be considered as an early systematic theological justification for the protection of animals. For Primatt, a Church of England clergyman, the issue was not to what kind of species a being belonged, but whether it could feel pain. 'Pain is pain, whether it be inflicted on man or on beast, and the creature that suffers it, whether man or beast, being sensible of the misery of it whilst it lasts, suffers evil' (Primatt, 1776: 7-8). 'Now, as pain is what we are all averse to, our own sensibility of pain should teach us to commiserate it in others, to alleviate it if possible, but never wantonly or unmeritedly to inflict it' (Primatt, 1776: 14). Primatt pleaded that 'our love and mercy are not to be confined to humans only, but are to be extended to every object of the love and mercy of God the universal Parent' (Primatt, 1776: iii-iv). Primatt considered animals as God's property and as they are included in God's Covenant with 'all flesh that is upon the earth', humans have the Christian duty to show their superior status by mercy and compassion (Primatt, 1776: 47, 77, 134-135, 312-320). Primatt concluded his dissertation with the statement; 'We may pretend to what religion we please, but cruelty is atheism. We may make our boast of Christianity; but cruelty is infidelity. We may trust to our orthodoxy; but cruelty is the worst of heresies' (Primatt, 1776: 321-322).

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German Enlightenment philosopher, tried to resolve the conflicting opinions between the rationalist and the empirical positions by explicating the relation between reason and experience. Furthermore, in his moral philosophy he held that the value of consequences is irrelevant to the determination of what we ought to do. Kant also called the principle of moral feeling 'null and void' as he held that from the feeling of a sensation that might be different in every creature, no generally valid law could be derived (Kant, 2001: 242-243). He maintained that there was one supreme principle of morality, '*the categorical imperative*'. Kant maintained that the moral community consisted only of moral agents, that is, individuals capable of moral choice and therefore of bearing moral obligations and duties; moral agents had direct duties only to moral agents. As a consequence of his moral

theory, only rational moral agents were to be respected as ends in themselves, while animals could be used as means; non-rational beings had ‘only a relative’ value and thus were no ends in themselves. Because those had no independent value, human beings had no direct obligation to treat them in the way humans had to treat rational beings (moral agents) that were ends in themselves. If man had duties to non-rational beings, then those duties had to be indirect duties to humanity (Kant, 2001: 212). Though Kant morally condemned cruelty to animals, it was not because animals had moral standing in his view, but because cruel treatment of animals might lead to cruel treatment of humans (Kant, 2001: 212).

From this brief historical overview of Western philosophy and theology it appears that where the notions of kinship and the transmigration of souls are present, a positive attitude towards animals is expressed through a denunciation of mistreatment and the killing of animals for food or sacrifice. In contrast, the tradition that emphasized the distinctive divide between animals and human beings used those differences to legitimize the differential treatment of animals. The emphasis upon the irrationality of animals by the major thinkers Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas has negatively affected the status of animals as worthy of humane treatment in western Christian theology.

1.1.4 Contemporary discourse

The contemporary discourse provides philosophical arguments for the moral status of animals. This study does not attempt to present a comprehensive review of contemporary animal protectionist theorists but is limited to an investigation of five significant theoretical contributions to animal protectionism.

1.1.4.1 Peter Singer: Utilitarian protectionism

Animal Liberation (1975) by Singer takes the utilitarian position as formulated by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) as a starting point: ‘the question is not, Can they [animals] *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?’ (Bentham, 1996: 283). Sentience (the capacity for suffering) is thus not just a characteristic like, for example, rationality, or the capacity for language, but sentience constitutes ‘the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration’ of his or her interests (Singer, 1990: 7).

Because of philosophical consistency, sentience, as ‘a prerequisite for having interests’ (the interest not to suffer or to avoid pain), requires Singer to include animals in a utilitarian moral theory, as animals can feel pleasure and undergo pain (Singer, 1990: 7-8). Equal consideration of interests and sentience classifies Singer’s position as ‘preference utilitarianism’, which ‘holds

that we should do what, on balance, furthers the preferences of those affected' (Singer, 2011: 13). Preference utilitarianism 'judges actions, not by their tendency to maximize pleasure or minimize pain, but by the extent to which they accord with the preferences of any being affected by the action or its consequences' (Singer, 2002: 133). Sentient animals, that is, animals with a central nervous system, prefer not to suffer, and these preferences have to be taken into account in moral considerations (Singer, 2011: 12). Singer establishes preferences through interests, and thus every sentient creature has the right to have its interests (in not being harmed) considered equally against the interests of another sentient creature. Interests are here a morally relevant and not a species-bound criterion (Singer, 1990: 9-10). In this decision ethics does not demand that we 'eliminate personal relationships and partial affections, but it does demand that, when we act, we assess the moral claims of those affected by our actions with some degree of independence from our feelings for them' (Singer, 2011:69). What matters on Singer's utilitarian scale is the intensity and duration of suffering, not whether such pain or suffering is felt by humans or animals (Singer, 1990: 17). On such a scale, 'the wrongness of killing ... is so much more complicated than the wrongness of inflicting suffering' (Singer, 1990: 228). While self-awareness is irrelevant to the question of inflicting pain (since pain is pain), it is relevant to the question of taking life (Singer, 1990: 20; 2011: 71).

The life of a self-aware being, capable of abstract thought, of planning for the future ... is more valuable than the life of a being without these capacities... The evil of pain is, in itself, unaffected by the other characteristics of the being who feels the pain; the value of life is affected by these other characteristics (Singer, 1990: 20-21).

Though both humans and animals have an interest in how they are treated, only humans have a conscious preference for life and thus an interest in staying alive. The destruction of life as a means to an end, for example, to save a number of lives by an experiment that would take only one life, is also admissible in Singer's view (Singer, 1990: 85).

1.1.4.2 Tom Regan: Rights view

The Case for Animal Rights (1983) by Regan proposes a systematic animal rights theory, taking a deontological approach. Regan rejects utilitarianism as being counterintuitive; he rejects, for example, the view that killing is not an evil to the animal if the death is painless and unsuspected in advance (Regan, 2004: 238-239); he equally rejects an 'indirect duty concept' concerning animals, as proposed by Kant, because such a concept is built on 'an impoverished understanding of what animals are' (Regan, 2004: 193). The 'harm principle', stating that 'we have a direct prima facie duty not to harm individuals' (Regan, 2004: 187), either moral agents or moral patients (Regan, 2004: 189), can stand the test against relevant criteria for evaluating moral principles, such as consistency, adequate scope, precision, and conformity with our reflective intuitions (Regan, 2004: 191-193).

Regan maintains that normal mammals aged one year or more have ‘a welfare’, which is necessary for animals to be considered ‘subjects-of-a-life’. Animals or humans, who qualify as subjects-of-a-life, possess equal inherent value. In Regan’s rights view inherent value is not based on experiences or talents: inherent value is not comparable with and ‘not reducible to the intrinsic values of an individual’s experiences’ (Regan, 2004: 235). His theory is based on the inherent value of certain individuals (mammals one year or above). For Regan, if individuals are of value, they have ‘value in their own right’ (Regan, 2004: 236), while, in the utilitarian view, the criterion of moral consideration is an aggregate of pleasure or pain, in which the individuals of that aggregate are just ‘receptacles’ of units of pleasure or pain (Regan, 2004: 205-206). In Regan’s view all those individuals who have inherent value, have inherent value equally (Regan, 2004: 240). For reasons of philosophical consistency and impartiality, both moral patients and moral agents have inherent value (Regan, 2004: 239-240). ‘Inherent value is thus a *categorical* concept. One either has it, or one does not... Moreover, all those who have it, have it equally’ (Regan, 2004: 240-241). Regan, therefore, rejects a ‘perfectionist’ view whereby individuals who are more talented have comparatively higher value, since this would justify exploitation of the those with less virtues or excellences by those with more virtues (Regan, 2004: 233-235, 237, 240).

Normal mammals one year or older have a ‘psychophysical identity over time’ and ‘preference autonomy’, that is, they have ‘desires, beliefs and the ability to act in pursuit of their goals’. Animals live well relative to the degree to which wants, desires and preferences are fulfilled (Regan, 2004: 116).

Bringing about a premature death is harm according to the Rights View because death ‘forecloses *all* possibilities of finding satisfaction’ (Regan, 2004: 100). Even a painless, purposeful death is a great harm to the deceased, if it is untimely (Regan, 2004: 103). Only if death is induced by the least painful means available and in the best interest of the one killed (e.g., in the case of intense, untreatable suffering), and is motivated by concern for the interests of the animal killed, may it be qualified as ‘euthanasia’ (Regan, 2004: 110).

Though both animals and humans have preference and welfare interests, Regan maintains that the sources for satisfaction are ‘more numerous and varied’ for human beings (Regan, 2004: 119), but both animals and humans can be benefited or harmed in similar ways. Therefore, for reasons of impartiality and consistency, we have a *prima facie* direct duty not to harm moral agents and moral patients (Regan, 2004: 193-194).

For Regan simply *being-alive*, although a necessary condition, is not a sufficient condition for having inherent value (which would imply direct duties to plants) (Regan, 2004: 242). Regan postulates ‘subject-of-a-life’ as the morally relevant criterion that provides an individual equal inherent value and moral standing.

[I]ndividuals are subject-of-a-life if they have beliefs and desires; perception, memory, and a sense of the future, including their own future; an emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference and welfare interests; the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychophysical identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them, logically independently of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else's interests (Regan, 2004: 243).

Normal mammals aged one year or more qualify, but newborn and severely retarded humans are excluded. Because this runs against our reflective intuitions, Regan suggests 'subject-of-a-life' as a 'sufficient, not as a necessary condition' for equal inherent value' (Regan, 2004: 246).

Regan's 'respect principle', based on inherent value, requires avoidance of harm, as well as the prima facie duty to assist victims of injustice. Regan's 'harm principle' demands that a 'subject-of-a-life' never be treated '*merely as means* to securing the best aggregate consequences'; 'subjects-of-a-life' are to be treated in ways that show respect for their inherent value (Regan, 2004: 249). In cases of conflicting interests, Regan prioritizes interests of human beings because of superior cognitive capacities, which grant humans greater opportunities for future satisfaction than animals (Regan, 2004: 324). Even if one million dogs have to be sacrificed to save four human beings, this would be justified, because death forecloses more numerous opportunities for future satisfaction for the human beings than for the dogs, and thus death of a human being would constitute a greater prima facie loss and thus harm than the death of even a million dogs (Regan, 2004: 324-325). However, Regan does not provide a method for measuring future satisfaction.

1.1.4.3 Gary Francione: abolition of animal exploitation

Francione criticizes both Singer and Regan because of their theoretical appeal to cognitive capacities in order to possess inherent moral worth. Francione develops an alternative approach, where sentience alone, as the capacity to experience pain or pleasure, constitutes a sufficient criterion for full membership in the moral community; no other cognitive characteristic is necessary (Francione, 2008: 130-131). In Francione's view, all sentient beings have a fundamental interest in avoiding pain and in continued existence. The proposition is that sentience is a means to the end of continued existence (Francione, 2010: 15). Like humans, animals have a fundamental interest not to be treated as means to somebody's end. There is no reason to withhold this right from animals. The implication is that we have to abolish the institutional exploitation of animals (Francione: 2004: 190). Francione and other abolitionists consider the use of animals for human ends as a fundamental violation of the right of animals not to be property and/or economic commodity (Francione, 2004: 219; 2008: 37-44; 2010: 27). Francione, therefore, rejects animal welfarism that seeks to regulate our exploitation of animals to make it more 'humane' (Francione, 2004: 45-46, 146, 219). Animal welfarists accept the use of animals to satisfy human desires, as long as they are treated well. He holds that animal

welfare regulations perpetuate animal exploitation, as these regulations allow people to feel less guilty about animal exploitation (Francione, 2010: 84-85). Francione stresses the importance of veganism as incremental abolition of animal exploitation. Though abolition may not happen in the short or medium term, veganism is a way to apply the principle of abolition to the life of an individual (Francione, 2010: 85).

1.1.4.4 Paul Taylor: environmental and protectionist ethics

Taylor's *Respect for Nature* (1986) provides an environmental protectionist position that also values and protects individual animals and plants. In *Respect for Nature* Taylor distinguishes between environmental ethics and the ethics of bio-culture (Taylor, 1986: 10-11, 53). Environmental ethics is concerned with the moral relations between humans and the natural world (Taylor, 1986: 3), while bio-cultural ethics 'is concerned with the human treatment of animals and plants in artificially created environments that are completely under human control', such as domestic animals (Taylor, 1986: 53). Bio-cultural ethics lies outside the scope of Taylor's theory of environmental ethics (Taylor, 1986: 53).

Taylor also makes a distinction between 'inherent value' and 'inherent worth'. '(T)he inherent value of anything is relative to and dependent upon someone's valuing it' (Taylor, 1986: 74), while, if 'a living thing has inherent worth, then it possesses such worth regardless of any instrumental or inherent *value* it may have and without reference to the good of any other being' (Taylor, 1986: 75). Each entity that has a 'good of one's own' has inherent worth and is 'deserving of moral concern and consideration' and requires that 'all moral agents have a prima facie duty to promote or preserve the entity's good as an end in itself' (Taylor, 1986: 75).

Taylor's theory attributes inherent worth to natural teleological entities. An organism is conceived as 'a teleological centre of life, striving to preserve itself and realize its good in its own unique way'. Teleology entails 'goal-oriented internal functioning and external activities' directed towards the maintenance of an organism's existence (Taylor, 1986: 121-122).

His moral theory ascribes inherent worth to 'any wild creature just in virtue of its being a member of a biotic community of a natural ecosystem', implying that each wild animal or plant merits equal consideration by moral agents and should never be treated as just a means to human ends (Taylor, 1986: 78-79). Moral agents have to express a moral attitude of respect for nature (Taylor, 1986: 80).

Taylor considers most humans to be moral agents, who can be held morally accountable (Taylor, 1986: 14), while a moral subject is 'any being that can be treated rightly or wrongly and towards whom moral agents can have duties and responsibilities' (Taylor, 1986: 17). While the category of moral subjects includes moral agents, it encompasses more than moral agents.

Taylor (1986: 33) asserts that ‘persons’ are rational beings ‘that give direction to their lives on the basis of their own values’. In his view, animals (or plants) do not fulfil the necessary set of criteria for ‘personhood’, and therefore only human beings have moral rights (Taylor, 1986: 33, 254-255).

He holds that the use of the language of moral rights is not necessary for the protection of nonhuman entities, because according to the theory of environmental ethics of Respect for Nature ‘wild animals and plants have inherent worth, [and hence] the duties we have toward them are owed to them as their due’ (although legal rights could still be ascribed to them) (Taylor, 1986: 254).

Taylor maintains that the formal conditions for human ethics and environmental ethics are the same—they are general in form, universally applicable, applied disinterestedly, normative, and override all non-moral norms (Taylor, 1986: 25-27). However, the normative content for human ethics and environmental ethics are different—such as ‘respect for persons’ for the former, ‘respect for nature’ for the latter (Taylor, 1986: 41). Furthermore, he asserts that there exists a structural symmetry between human ethics and environmental ethics as each theory has three main components: a belief system, an ultimate moral attitude of respect and a system of moral rules and standards (Taylor, 1986: 41-44). These three components are interrelated in the same way in human ethics and in environmental ethics: ‘The belief-system supports and makes intelligible the adopting of the attitude, and the rules and standards give concrete expression to that attitude in practical life’ (Taylor, 1986: 44).

Taylor’s theory of environmental ethics is based on a ‘bio-centric outlook’ and attitude, and on a set of rules in which this bio-centric outlook leads to a bio-centric attitude and from there to ‘the four rules and five principles of environmental ethics’ (see below) (Taylor, 1986: 41-47).

The basic beliefs of Taylor’s bio-centric outlook are: a. Humans, like other living things, are members of the Earth’s Community of Life (Taylor, 1986: 101); b. The natural world is understood as a system of interdependence in which humans, along with other species, are integral elements (Taylor, 1986: 116); c. Individual organisms are defined as ‘teleological centres of life’ (Taylor, 1986: 119); d. Humans are not regarded as superior (Taylor, 1986: 129). From the perspective of a biocentric outlook, humans are considered as biological creatures and as only one species of animal life. This bio-centric perspective also reveals ‘the significance of our ecological situation’, discloses other organisms as teleological centres of life and exposes the ethical obligation ‘to give equal consideration to the good of every entity, human and non-human’ (Taylor, 1986: 156-158).

Taylor’s bio-centric outlook ‘underlies, supports, and makes intelligible the attitude of respect for nature’ (Taylor, 1986: 167). The attitude of respect for nature is expressed in a human’s character, when he has developed ‘permanent dispositions’ that enable him to act consistently with the four basic ethical rules of duty: non-maleficence, non-interference, fidelity, and

restitutive justice (Taylor, 1986: 198-199). Virtues are important in Taylor's theory because these 'permanent dispositions' make it possible for a moral agent to comply with the four rules and practically express an attitude of respect for nature (Taylor, 1986: 199). The general virtue of moral concern is constituted by virtues of benevolence and compassion, sympathy and care (Taylor, 1986: 202-203). Moral agents with an attitude of respect for nature are guided by the four basic ethical rules of duty, with each rule having corresponding special virtues: non-maleficence: considerateness; non-interference: regard and impartiality; fidelity: trustworthiness; restitutive justice: fairness and equity (Taylor, 1986: 206-213).

In situations of conflict between humans and wildlife, Taylor introduces five priority principles to be considered, assigning the same inherent worth to all parties in the application of the four ethical rules (Taylor, 1986: 262-263): a) Self-defence; b) Proportionality (greater weight is to be given to basic than to non-basic interests, no matter what species, as in the case of the fur trade, for example); c) Minimum wrong (non-basic human interests which are compatible with respect for nature are allowed, for example, building highways, even though they cause harm to ecosystems, because these activities are central to humans 'as the type of creatures that we are'; such activities should involve fewer wrongs or violations of duties than any alternative [Taylor, 1986: 282-283]); d) Distributive justice (like permanent habitat location, common conservation); and e) Restitutive justice (needed to restore the balance of justice) (Taylor, 1986: 263-306).

1.1.4.5 Andrew Linzey: Protectionist Christian Theology

Andrew Linzey, while acknowledging the influence of secular thinkers like Singer and Regan, holds a different, theological perspective on rights, animals and creation (Linzey, 2009a: 55). Linzey's *Animal Rights: A Christian Perspective* (1976) contains a critique of the traditional criteria for awarding rights (like personhood, rationality, possession of a soul), as these criteria exclude animals (and are also unsatisfactory from the marginal cases, such as new-born children or the mentally handicapped). *Animal Theology* (1995) provides theological arguments for an ethical notion of the place of animals in the world (Linzey, 1995: viii).

In the following, I present Linzey's position in relation to rights (Regan), to equality (Singer) and to eco-theology.

1.1.4.5.1 Rights

Linzey agrees with the historic rights language of justice for the following reasons: 'rights language ... concretely reverses years of scholastic neglect, and rejects precisely the Thomist view of animals as morally without status' (Linzey, 1995: 26); to acknowledge that animals have rights 'is to accept that they can be wronged' (Linzey, 1987: 97) 'in analogous terms to the wrong that may be inflicted upon human beings' (Linzey, 1995: 27); rights language has the

advantage, that ‘it helps us to articulate more adequately *God’s own interest* in the lives of other sentient creatures. Animal rights, properly understood, are ‘*theos-rights*’—God’s own rights, not something owned, won or granted by one creature to another’ (Linzey, 2009a: 57).

Linzey holds that animals are not merely a secondary issue in theological thinking:

According to *theos-rights* what we do to animals is not simply a matter of taste or convenience or philanthropy. When we speak of animal rights we conceptualize what is objectively owed to animals as a matter of justice by virtue of their Creator’s rights. Animals can be wronged because their Creator can be wronged in his creation (Linzey, 1987: 97).

The recent philosophical discussion of animals has not entered seriously into a theological comprehension of animals (Linzey, 1995: viii). Although rights language provides markers for our minimum obligations to animals (Linzey, 1995: 41), rights language has, from a theological perspective, its limitations, since it does not provide a positive interpretation of the place of animals in God’s creation: Christian ethics is not only about delineating the lower boundary but also about promoting the good. In fighting for the enhancement of the lives of animals Christians are in need of a vocabulary of generosity, love, and protection, since no single concept can express our moral obligations to animals (Linzey, 2009a: 56-57).

1.1.4.5.2 Equality

Peter Singer urges us in his ethical considerations to extend the basic principle of equality to other species. The basis for equal moral consideration between humans and animals is provided by sentience (the capacity to suffer or experience happiness). However, within Christian tradition the hardly challenged assumption of human superiority prevails: only humans are considered ‘ends in themselves’ (Linzey, 1995: 28-30). The theological basis for the claim of this human superiority and special status must instead be found in God and God’s attitude towards creation; that attitude is one of generosity, ‘of the higher sacrificing itself for the lower’ (Linzey, 1995: 30-32). Generosity should serve as ‘the paradigm for the exercise of human dominion over the animal world’ (Linzey, 1995: 32). ‘[I]t is the sheer vulnerability and powerlessness of animals, and correspondingly our absolute power over them which strengthens and compels the response of moral generosity’ (Linzey, 1995: 32). Linzey opts for the *Generosity* paradigm rather than the *Equality* Paradigm proposed by Singer, because the *Equality* Paradigm is only concerned with setting minimum boundaries and does not acknowledge the full scope of our obligations to animals, which goes beyond the demand for equality (Linzey 1995: 38-39). In *Why Animal Suffering Matters* Linzey (2009b: 9-29) considers the traditionally most used putative differences between animals and humans, which have been used to justify the differential, morally inferior treatment of animals. Linzey (2009b: 12) holds that those differences are not morally relevant and that the arguments that emanate from those differences imply the ethical duty to be considerate: their powerlessness and our power

strengthens the case for special moral solicitude based on the Generosity Paradigm (Linzey, 2009b: 40-42, 167).

Linzey holds that animal suffering matters theologically, because there is a mirror-image of Christ in the suffering of vulnerable, innocent and defenseless beings. Given the close correspondence between the two kinds of suffering, 'there should be a common revulsion at the infliction of suffering on all innocent and vulnerable beings' (Linzey, 2009b: 39-40).

1.1.4.5.3 Eco-theology

Linzey's most substantial critique of eco-theology is that eco-theologians, in their effort to re-value animals and creation by 'sacralizing' them, hamper a proper understanding of God as Creator and Redeemer (Linzey, 2009a: 53). The attempt to 'sacralize' nature is explicable as an opposition against merciless exploitation, but this approach obscures the work of God as Redeemer. 'Process theologians see the world as 'part of' God; ... what happens in and to the universe happens in and to God' (McDaniel, 1990: 51). Linzey holds that if God is to such an extent identified with the world, it is difficult to understand how God could be the Redeemer either for animals or for humans. Furthermore, a God who is so 'compromised by immanence' cannot command 'responsible stewardship' (Linzey, 2009a: 37).

Another aspect of Linzey's criticism is that the perspectives of eco-theologians (like McDaniel) are unable to provide a theological case against the human killing of other sentient creatures. From a process perspective, 'things happen in the universe which God does not will, but which are nevertheless part of God's life' (McDaniel, 1998: 166). What matters is the 'system', 'nature as a whole', 'creation as God made it'. Animal protectionists are blamed for not accepting the natural world as it is (Linzey, 2009a: 34-35). The opposing perception, held by historic theology, regards nature not 'as a whole', but rather as 'un-whole,' as 'tragic, incomplete, divided against itself, even fallen (as expressed by St. Paul in Romans 8: 14-24) in his writing on the creation in bondage, suffering in travail, awaiting its deliverance by the redeemed children of God' (Linzey, 2009a: 35).

The different perspectives of ecologists and animal protectionists inevitably lead to conflicting practical implications, especially when relating to the ethics of killing and vegetarianism, to attitudes toward suffering, and to human management of the environment. These disagreements not only relate to the value of individual sentient beings, but also 'concern much deeper issues about how humans should understand themselves in the world of creation' (Linzey, 2009a: 43).

1.2 Problem statement

Following the thought of Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer, I want to argue, against the outlined anthropocentric and contemporary protectionist approaches, by explicating the

alternative of a mystical notion of nature (Sorrell, 1988: 89-92) and of life (Martin, 2007: 8). A mystical approach will enable us to develop a Christian spirituality that truly includes and embraces animals as part of God's creation.

Over the last decades a number of philosophers and theologians have made valuable contributions to the debate on human-animal relations and have proved themselves influential defenders of responsibility and concern for animals. Among these are Peter Singer's utilitarian protectionism (Singer, 1990, 2006), Tom Regan's rights view (Regan, 2004), Gary Francione's abolitionist approach (2004, 2008, 2010), Paul Taylor's bio-protectionism (Taylor, 1986) and Andrew Linzey's Christian protectionism (Linzey, 1987, 1995, 2000, 2009).

Scholastic theologians hold the view that animals do not possess an immortal soul and exist to serve humans by virtue of their nature and rank in the natural order. Such an instrumentalist perspective has thus excluded animals from any meaningful ethical discourse, thereby obscuring the possibility of a real encounter and experience of the Creator in them. Humans thus have no direct moral obligations towards animals.

In the Christian tradition alternative approaches towards animals do exist. In this study, I explore the views and attitudes of Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer, and ask whether their respective approaches have a mystical basis (Underhill, 2008: 70-94, 167-451). I furthermore consider whether certain mystical qualities found with Francis and Schweitzer could feed into a new spirituality. I explore the problem of moral valuation of animals in the Christian biblical and spiritual tradition. I will then present the outcome of this exploration as an alternative to an anthropocentric tradition and as a contribution to contemporary protectionist positions.

It is my premise that the respective convictions of Francis of Assisi (Sorrell, 1988; Boff, 2007) and Albert Schweitzer (1923; Meyer and Bergel, 2002) may represent an alternative to current life-styles that encompass exploitation of animals. I argue that their example and spirituality may offer humankind a way out of the estrangement from nature as manifested in environmental degradation and animal exploitation.

This thesis seeks to elaborate a spirituality that includes animals as created and loved by God. Animal spirituality is about enlarging within people a sense of kinship with all living beings. As a consequence, ethics has to be conceptually widened to include other creatures.

The central question of this work is: what has been the basis of the attitude of inclusive concern for animals as shared by Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer and does such animal inclusive concern and spirituality find biblical support? What are for our time the ethical implications of Francis' and Schweitzers view on animals and how can their views contribute to animal

spirituality and to contemporary animal discourse? The central question serves as a point of departure for the following considerations:

- How will an analysis of the mystical qualities of Francis of Assisi's basic premises enhance our understanding of the relevance of those qualities for contemporary spirituality?
- How will an analysis of the mystical qualities of Albert Schweitzer's basic premises enhance our understanding of the relevance of those qualities for contemporary spirituality?
- Can an animal inclusive concern and spirituality as demonstrated by Francis and Schweitzer, find support in the Christian biblical tradition?
- What are the ethical implications of a new spirituality emanating from the above findings?
- Which values have the contributions of Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer to add to animal spirituality and to contemporary animal discourse?

The aim of this thesis is to determine whether a mystical experience exists at the basis of Francis of Assisi's and Albert Schweitzer's extraordinary and respectful approaches towards animals; to find out whether such inclusive concern finds biblical support; to determine different dimensions of appreciation of creatures, as opportunities for a new, more inclusive spirituality (animal spirituality); to determine the ethical implications of this new spirituality; to enumerate Francis' and Schweitzer's contributions to animal spirituality and to contemporary animal discourse.

The objectives of this study must be seen in their relationship to the aim. Therefore I intend to approach the subject from the following angles:

- To analyse the mystical qualities of Francis of Assisi's basic premises, in order to grasp the possible relevance of those qualities for contemporary spirituality;
- To analyse the mystical qualities of Albert Schweitzer's basic premises, in order to grasp the possible relevance of those qualities for contemporary spirituality;
- To determine whether such inclusive concern and spirituality as demonstrated by Francis and Schweitzer can find support in the Scriptures;
- To assess the ethical implications of a new spirituality emanating from the findings above; and
- To enumerate and assess the possible contributions of Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer to animal spirituality and to contemporary animal discourse.

The central theoretical argument of this study is that Francis of Assisi's and Albert Schweitzer's attitudes of inclusive concern for animals have been based on mystical experiences that enabled

both of them to recognize animals as mystery, and as reflecting at least some qualities of a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself.

Francis of Assisi's praise of creation (in his *Canticle*) reveals different elements of appreciation of creatures—ontological, fraternal, sacramental, symbolic, aesthetic, interdependent (Sorrell, 1988). Albert Schweitzer's life and work reveal feelings of sympathy, compassion, solidarity, utility and gratitude for other creatures. My hypothesis is that these elements of appreciation for other life stem from Francis' mystical experience of nature and Schweitzer's ethical mystical experience; this hypothesis is to be substantiated in this dissertation. Subsequently, the thesis explores whether such inclusive concern for animals and spirituality, as expounded by Francis and Schweitzer, can find biblical support.. Thereafter, I will present the resulting ethical implications and the contributions both mystics may offer to animal spirituality and to contemporary animal discourse.

The Christian background is one that finds most sympathy with a broad framework of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran doctrinal traditions. This being the case, I recognise a duty to afford due respect to resources that have been provided by those outside of such parameters in order, as far as is possible, to reach conclusions that might otherwise be open to charges of unwarranted bias. The methodology I propose to employ in this theological study includes:

- An identification, analysis and critical discussion of the literary output by and on Francis of Assisi from the viewpoint of Francis' spiritual appreciation of animal life. The characteristics of mystical experiences and the stages of the mystic way as developed by Evelyn Underhill (1911) will be used (Chapter 2).
- An identification, analysis and critical discussion of the literary output by and on Albert Schweitzer from the viewpoint of Schweitzer's spiritual appreciation of animal life. The characteristics of mystical experiences and the stages of the mystic way as developed by Evelyn Underhill (1911) will be used (Chapter 3).
- An exegesis of the relevant biblical accounts. Biblical texts are first read from a position as believer in a world characterized by instrumental use of animals; via the lexicon biblical texts will be selected that may exhibit a favourable view on animals, in order to bring in the 'relevance' of those biblical sources; next, via the use of biblical commentaries, I investigate what the Bible states about the position of animals in creation (Chapter 4).
- A consideration of ethical implications of the above findings based on a character-centred and virtue-oriented ethics. Virtue ethics maintains that moral considerations depend on a deeper reality that is intimately connected to our inner disposition, character and understanding of the *telos* of human life. Ethics thus entails more than mere choice (Chapter 5).

- From the foregoing analysis and discussion of biblical material and of the texts of and on Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer, valid deductions will be made concerning specific contributions of Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer to animal spirituality and to contemporary animal discourse (Chapter 6).

In the next chapter I will first provide a general introduction on mysticism and present some contemporary debated issues concerning the character and essence of mysticism. This introduction provides a preamble for Chapters 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 2

FROM MYSTICISM TO A NEW SPIRITUALITY: FRANCIS OF ASSISI

2.1 Introduction

In what follows I present the current situation (1), explain why there is need for a new spirituality (2), and present definitions of mysticism, nature-mysticism and ethical mysticism as used throughout the research (3). Next I will discuss some undecided issues in the scientific debate from the beginning of the 20th century until today. These issues concern the character and essence of mysticism, such as characteristics of mystical experiences (i.e., criteria to distinguish between ‘genuine’ and ‘non-genuine’ mystical experiences) (4), the mystic way (5), whether mystical experiences have a common core (6), and finally, whether mystical claims may be accepted as valid cognitive claims (7).

In sections 2.2 and 3.4 respectively, I will apply these characteristics and the stages of the mystic way to Francis’ and Schweitzer’s life and work, and try to discern to what extent their different dimensions of appreciation of creatures can be seen as opportunities for a new, more inclusive spirituality (animal spirituality).

2.1.1 The current situation: anthropocentrism and deep longing for harmony

In the Christian tradition there has been a tendency to negate the moral status of animals through a traditional emphasis on human history to the detriment of natural history, through underscoring God’s transcendence to the detriment of God’s immanence, and through emphasizing human salvation to the detriment of cosmic salvation. In the first chapter it was argued that under the influence of the thought of Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, each thinker with his emphasis on rationality, an instrumental view of animals has developed. Our attitude to animals and nature at large is one of domination and exploitation. This anthropocentric vision has caused a divide between human and non-human creatures and between human beings and nature at large.

The desire of the soul for union, or in more secular language, the need for self-fulfillment and meaning, is present in all of us, as elaborated by Carl Jung (1875-1961), Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941), Alvin Plantinga (born 1932) and others. Jung, founder of analytical psychology and his school, considered religiosity as ‘one of the essential features of [human] life’ (Jung, 1965: 10-11). Underhill agrees: ‘Broadly speaking, I understand it [mysticism] to be the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order’ (Underhill: 2008: xiv).

2.1.2 Why is there need for a new spirituality?

As stated in the first chapter, by *spirituality* I mean a sense of connection to a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself, which may include an emotional experience of awe and reverence. Traditional spirituality has been concerned with (the experience of) the relation to God and the resulting attitude of concern toward human beings. However, confronted with a contemporary situation of appalling exploitation of animals (bio-industry, destruction of thousands of millions of healthy animals for disease control measures and for medical and non-medical experiments), one feels compelled to ask the most basic questions: What is the place of human beings in relation to other beings and what is the relation of God to other beings as revealed in the Holy Scriptures?

I hold that in the current context of animal exploitation, it is necessary to look for a new spirituality, which shows compassion and care not only for human beings, but which also includes solidarity with the weakest, with those who have no voice and are denied rights. We cannot find wholeness and peace while excluding other creatures and being indifferent in the face of prevailing injustice towards other creatures. There is need for a spirituality that revolts against the concrete experience of suffering of animals for human self-interest as conflicting with God's plan with creation. Such a new spirituality requires a change in perspective, namely from the perception of animals as commodities for human use, to the insight that, from the perspective of their Creator, animals are worth something in their own right.

The term 'animal spirituality' has -to my knowledge- been used once, and with a different meaning, by Susan Holak in her article *Ritual blessings with companion animals* (2008). Her contribution focuses on recurring ritual blessing events of animals as a form of human-animal shared experience that shows a belief in animal spirituality. The meaning of 'animal spirituality' in such a context differs from the way I have defined and used this term throughout, namely as a *human* sense of connection to a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself that is experienced in the encounter with animals and is explicitly focused on in the contemplation of faith. There exist furthermore a number of articles on spirituality *and* animals, i.e. about animals having spiritual experiences, which is a subject outside the topic of this thesis.

2.1.3 Definitions of mystical experience, nature-mysticism and ethical mysticism

In line with my definition of spirituality, I understand a *mystical experience* as 'an overwhelming experience of union with a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself, which has a tremendous and lasting impact on one's life'. For my research, two types of mysticism are of particular relevance: nature-mysticism and ethical mysticism.

Nature mysticism is closely connected with some of Francis' mystical experiences, though Francis himself never uses the term *natura* to refer to the world (Cunningham, 1976: 55; Sorrell, 1988: 7) but speaks in more specific terms, for example in the *Canticum Fratris Solis* in Umbrian dialect, of 'cun tucte le tue creature' (with all your creatures), 'sora nostra matre terra' (our sister mother earth), 'in celu' (in heaven) (Fontes, 39-40), referring to the Vulgate translation of the Bible.

Edward Armstrong, in his work *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic*, defines 'nature mysticism' as 'the degree to which a religious mystic's experience of enlightenment or exaltation is inspired by or dependent upon his attitude toward nature and the extent to which he regards nature as a manifestation of the divine' (Armstrong, 1973: 16). Though this definition centres on the role of nature in the experience, it does not clearly distinguish an experience of mystical union from experiences of 'mere' exaltation. However, Sorrell describes nature-mysticism thus:

A nature mystical experience is one which arises when a positive conception of the beauty and worth of creation and its intimate relationship with a spiritual force of some sort catalyzes profound personal reactions of wonder or exhilaration. In the face of an overwhelming encounter with the sublimity of the natural world ... the mystic progresses directly toward a vision of, contact with, or participation with, that spiritual force (Sorrell, 1988: 82).

In Sorrell's description the overwhelming experience of nature leads to the experience of some sort of contact or participation with the spiritual Reality. This definition therefore approaches my understanding and definition of mystical experience, and will be used in this research.

Ethical mysticism is a term used by Albert Schweitzer. He defines mysticism as 'the realization of spiritual union with infinite Being' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 7). For Schweitzer, God-mysticism, as union with the infinite creative will of God, cannot be realized because it is passive. Only in active devotion to other (suffering) life, in need of our care—in an attitude of reverence for life—, mystical union with the primal Source of being may be achieved. I therefore define ethical mysticism as 'the experience of union with the World-Spirit in active devotion—in an attitude of reverence for life—to other life, in need of devotion' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 194-195). Thus understood, this definition is congruent with my definition of mystical experience as experience of 'union with a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself', while adding active devotion as the way to this union.

2.1.4 Characteristics of mystical experiences

The 20th century saw the publication of a number of studies on the character and essence of 'mystical experience' and the epistemological basis of 'mystical knowledge'. Neo-scholastics considered the mystical experience primarily as an 'intensification of faith' brought about by God's grace. For example, Jacques Maritain described the knowledge aspect in the mystical experience as 'affective understanding' of God (Baers, 2003: 145-153) and Anselm Stolz (1900-

1942), elaborated on the issue of the primacy of the cognitive or the affective element in the mystical experience (Baers, 2003: 153-164). Furthermore, William James, in his work *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902) profoundly influenced the thinking about the relation between mysticism and psychology. James approached mysticism for the first time from an existential point of view as a phenomenon different from and not reducible to other psychological phenomena. In his chapter on mysticism (Gifford Lecture XVI and XVII) he discerned four marks, distinguishing the mystical experience from other types of religious experience (James, 1985: 379-429):

1. Ineffability: Mystical experiences are related more to feelings than to intellectual matters. Because those feelings are particularly difficult to communicate and therefore, when expressed, appear, for example, as paradoxes, whereby the mystic intends to communicate what is inaccessible for the outsider (James, 1985: 380).
2. Noetic quality: Although in *Varieties* the factor 'feeling' plays a dominant role in the testimonies, the noetic element is also an essential quality for the validity of the mystical experience. The mystical experience is also a source of knowledge for the one who undergoes this experience (James, 1985: 380-381).
3. Transiency: Mystical states are mostly of short duration, though this does not diminish the power of its action and its authority on the life of the mystic (James, 1985: 381).
4. Passivity: Mystical autobiographies may report that a mystic feels 'grasped and held by a superior power'. Mystical experience is a gift of God's grace (James: 1985: 381-382).

In his empirical approach, James holds that the mystical experience has both an emotional and a noetic aspect. Though mystical 'knowledge' is fundamentally different from a philosophical or scientific conscious modality, both have nonetheless the same value.

Like James, Evelyn Underhill, in *Mysticism, The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (1911), uses a phenomenological approach, studying mystical texts from both the Christian and non-Christian traditions. Not being satisfied with the four above-mentioned characteristics as developed by James, she provides the following five characteristics of mysticism (Underhill, 2008: 70-94):

1. 'True mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical. It is an organic life-process, a something which the whole self does; not merely have reasoned about the mystical experiences of others' (Underhill, 2008: 81, 83).
2. 'Its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual... Though he [the mystic] does not, as his enemies declare, neglect his duty to the many, his heart is always set upon the changeless One' (Underhill, 2008: 81).

3. 'This One is for the mystic, not merely the Reality of all that is, but also a living and personal Object of Love' (Underhill, 2008: 81).

4. 'Living union with this One—which is the term of his adventure- is a definite state or form of enhanced life' And is arrived at by an arduous psychological and spiritual process—the so called mystic way—entailing the complete remaking of character and the liberation of a new, or rather latent, form of consciousness'. During the mystical process, the opposition between the Absolute and the 'self' is gradually abolished in the mystic consciousness (Underhill, 2008: 81, 82).

5. 'True Mysticism is never self-seeking'. The motive is not the desire for transcendental satisfaction, but the passion for true love (Underhill, 2008: 92).

2.1.5 The mystic way

Francis has generally been considered a mystic, and Helene Nolthenius has applied the different stages of the mystic way to Francis' life (Nolthenius, 1988: 220-233). Theologians have not been unanimous about the qualification 'mystic' when it comes to Albert Schweitzer. It has been suggested that Schweitzer's ethical mysticism was merely based upon philosophical speculation, not on mystical experiences of his own. Sections 2.2 and 3.4 apply the characteristics and phases of the mystic way to Francis' and Schweitzer's life and work respectively. This discussion may shed a light on the 'veracity' of Schweitzer's claim to the mystical 'knowledge' that 'good is enhancing life, evil is destruction of life' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 239-240).

This section briefly enumerates the various stages of the mystic way.

The writings of Pseudo-Dionysius have become known in the West as the *Via Mystica* of *purificatio-illuminatio-perfectio*, by which the Christian mystics try to reach God. These writings have influenced thinkers on mysticism since the end of the fifth century, especially through his writing *De mystica theologia* (Steggink, 2003: 31-33).

The modern authority Underhill has described the phases of the mystic way according to the following classification:

1. 'The awakening of the Self to consciousness of Divine Reality. This experience is usually abrupt and well-marked, is accompanied by intense feeling of joy and exaltation' (Underhill, 2008: 169, 176-197).

2. Purification: 'The Self, aware for the first time of Divine beauty, realizes by contrast its own finiteness and imperfection, which attempts to eliminate by discipline and mortification all that stands in the way of its progress towards union with God' (Underhill, 2008: 169, 198-231).

3. Illumination: the joyful consciousness of the Transcendent Order returns in an enhanced form (Underhill, 2008: 169), but not true union with it (Underhill, 2008: 233). In the history of mysticism an inward- and an outward-looking form of illumination have been discerned (Underhill, 2008: 240). In the inward-looking form there is the soul's progressive apprehension of Divine Reality, of the Presence of God, omnipresent in the universe; the mystic's perception of 'harmony with the Infinite' (Underhill, 2008: 242). In the external form, 'the self perceives an added significance and reality in all natural things, in the phenomenal world' (Underhill, 2008: 240); while in the inward-looking form the basic experience is 'All creatures in God', or 'the whole universe as seen and known in God' (Underhill, 2008: 264), the basic experience in the external type is 'God in all creatures, God as seen and known in the whole universe' (Underhill, 2008: 264).
4. Dark Night of the Soul: 'the final and complete purification of the Self... The consciousness which had, in Illumination, sunned itself in the sense of the Divine Presence, now suffers under an equally intense sense of the Divine Absence. The purifying process is extended to the very centre of I-hood, the will' (Underhill, 2008:169-170, 380-412).
5. Union: 'In this state the Absolute Life is not merely perceived and enjoyed by the Self, as in Illumination: but is *one* with it'. This stage is characterized by peaceful joy and by enhanced powers (Underhill, 2008: 170, 413-443).

2.1.6 Do mystical experiences have a common core?

In the essentialist view as represented by William James and Underhill, for example, all world religions are based on a single divine foundation of religious knowledge. In a mystical experience, culturally and historically determined influences are put aside and an immediate contact takes place, which is only *after* the direct contact interpreted in the language and belief of the specific religion. Therefore, mysticism's 'core characteristics' are universal. This position has been contested by Steven Katz and others in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (1978) and *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* (1983), arguing that 'there is no pure experience', because every experience is mediated by the formative influence of the particular cultural context and religious tradition (the 'pre-mystical consciousness') in which the experience takes place (Smart, 1978: 26). This contextual hypothesis of the 'constructivists' has received broad support, until the publication of Robert Forman's *The Problem of Pure Consciousness* (1990). These 'new essentialists' agree with the 'constructivist hypothesis' of Katz *cum suis* but they indicate that at the same time there do exist *also* mystical experiences which are not influenced by the 'pre-mystical consciousness'. As Rothberg states:

Many mystical traditions involve the deconstruction ... of the structures of ordinary experience and social context and, hence, can arguably be seen as leading to less conditioned knowledge (Rothberg, 1990: 168).

In such mystical experiences of the deconstruction type, called 'pure consciousness events', all concepts like 'the *a priori* structures of the understanding' are characteristically left behind, the so called 'forgetting' in the mystical process (Forman, 1990: 39). This type of mystical experience may occur in different traditions (for example, in Meister Eckhart's mysticism 'forgetting' plays an important role) (Rothberg, 1990: 184). The Encyclopaedia of Mysticism speaks of a 'revival' of the essentialist view on mysticism (Baers, 2003: 192). Therefore, it can reasonably be argued that it is still legitimate today to apply the characteristics and stages of the mystic way, as described by Underhill, to Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical development. I hold that Schweitzer's mystical experience is of a type that does leave 'the *a priori* structures of the understanding' behind, given his emphasis on resignation concerning knowledge and his reference to the *docta ignorantia* (learned ignorance) of the learned man. Even in Francis, there is a direct, unreflective joy in nature, and as such Francis' nature-mystical experiences might be less conditioned than Katz and constructivists would argue.

2.1.7 May mystical claims be accepted as valid cognitive claims?

Another issue, debated since William James, is the epistemological basis of what is considered mystical 'knowledge' (Baers, 2003: 141), and whether mystical experiences give 'veridical insights' (Rothberg, 1990: 164, 187) as true knowledge into reality. James (and the non-constructivist position) holds that mystical experiences are usually and rightly completely authoritative for the one who experiences them (James, 1985: 422-424) but not necessarily for outsiders (James, 1985: 424-427). Many non-constructivists argue that a mystical experience is in itself a justification of mystical claims (since there is a 'common core' and since the mystics cannot all in the same way be deceived (Rothberg, 1990: 168). The constructivist position (Katz *cum suis*) however, holds that though mystical claims might be valid, there is no philosophical way to prove or reject the veracity of mystical experience (Katz, 1978: 22-23).

Contemporary philosophers and constructivists hold that mystical claims are to be reinterpreted first as 'naturalistic and interpretive claims' (with causal regularities and understanding of the meaning respectively) in order to allow for consideration of their potential validity (Mavrodes, 1978: 235-258; Rothberg, 1990: 187). Rothberg holds that this assumption does not seriously consider that other forms of knowledge could be derived from mystical experiences (Rothberg, 1990: 187), and thus excludes *a priori* the possibility that mystical claims might provide valid knowledge (distinct from naturalistic or interpretive knowledge). Though Rothberg agrees that many claims in mystical tradition are naturalistic or interpretive, this is not the case in mystical claims related to 'pure consciousness experiences' and to the 'deconstruction type' of experiences (Rothberg, 1990: 190). Constructivists thus exclude this type of knowledge on

epistemological grounds (Rothberg, 1990: 191). The form of knowledge in the pure consciousness and deconstruction type of experiences is completely different from the naturalistic and interpretive form of knowledge. In a 'pure consciousness event' and in a deconstruction type of mystical experience' the way of knowing is not primarily expressed in linguistically mediated forms (i.e., in explanations and interpretations): knowledge here is fundamentally a 'way of being' (Rothberg, 1990: 192). I hold that this type of knowledge and experience may be applicable to Albert Schweitzer (elaborated in Chapter 3), and also possibly to Francis, who did not speak about mystical experiences and of whom his hagiographer Celano testifies that he was 'not so much praying as becoming totally prayer' (2C 95.5 [Fontes, 531; Armstrong, 2004, 228]). For Katz and other constructivists any contemplative knowledge is mediated or constructed and therefore, 'implicitly reducible to naturalistic interpretive knowledge' and thus excludes *a priori* the other mentioned forms of knowledge, and consequently the validity of the other forms of knowledge (Rothberg, 1990: 193).

I conclude with two remarks:

1. As mentioned, Underhill, Jung and others agree that all humans are religious by nature, striving towards harmony with the transcendental order. Underhill holds that all people who have awakened to 'consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense' will move through a series of stages, at a lower level but analogous to the way the great mystics progress on their journey towards union with God (Underhill, 2008: 445). I therefore feel justified to apply Underhill's stages of the mystic way (as defined above) not only to Francis', but also to Schweitzer's life and work, within the limits of the preserved sources.
2. Underhill maintains that the full spiritual consciousness of the true mystic is able to perceive Reality under two modes: on the one hand he/she may perceive in every manifestation of life a heightened significance, hidden from other humans; on the other hand, he/she may also apprehend the Absolute, Pure Being, the utterly Transcendent, or may testify of his experience of 'passive union with God'. Thus, Underhill stresses that a limited dualism, a 'two-step philosophy,' is the only type of metaphysic adequate to the facts of mystical experience (Underhill, 2008: 35- 36, 43, 90, 194).

2.2 Nature-mysticism of Francis of Assisi

In this section, concerning the nature-mysticism of Francis of Assisi, I contend as follows: first, an introduction to the sources and to Francis' nature-mysticism; second, a description of the origin and principal characteristics of Francis' nature-mysticism; third, an overview of Francis' theological understanding; fourth, an application of Underhill's characteristics and the stages of the mystic way; and fifth, the position of animals in Francis' nature-mysticism.

Justification for the application of Underhill's characteristics and stages, touched upon in the introduction, are two-fold: 1. Underhill maintains that each person who awakes to 'consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense' will move through an analogue sequence of stages like the great mystics on their journey towards union with God (Underhill, 2008: 445; Underhill 2008(2): 13-14). 2. Underhill is still regarded as an authority in the current debate between the 'essentialist' and the 'constructivist' position, where the essentialist view on mysticism is still holding ground (Baers, 2003: 192).

2.2.1 Introduction to the sources

This section is based on Francis' own writings (autographic and dictated) and early documents, mainly by his early biographers/hagiographers Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure of Bagnoregia. Since I am interested in Francis' perspectives as a mystic, I read the early sources from that perspective (taking into account the sources' circumstances of composition, their purpose and literary genre) in order to delineate a possible mystic path.

While a substantial amount of writing has been lost, between 28 and 31 texts of Francis of Assisi (1181/2-1226) have come to us, in a variety of genres, such as letters, admonitions, rules, prayers and dictated writings (Armstrong and Brady, 1982: 7). Frequently the texts have been dictated, as Francis himself or his early biographers mention explicitly. Different classifications have been proposed: alphabetical, chronological, and stylistic, each classification entailing its own difficulties, such as a precise definition of genre, dating, and a lack of a uniform use of titles. Menesto and Brufani's *Fontes Franciscani* incorporates both the writings by Francis according to Kajetan Esser's critical edition *Die Opuscula des Hl. Franziskus von Assisi: Neue textkritische Edition* (1976) in alphabetical order, as well as the first modern critical edition of works on Francis by the Friars of Quaracchi, *Analecta Franciscana sive Chronica Aliaque Varia Documenta ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum* in chronological order. The (with *Fontes* corresponding) three-volume translation *Francis of Assisi* by Armstrong, Hellmann and Short (1999-2001) follows a historical sequence. For my purpose (the delineation of the mystical path of Francis) a chronological reading might be useful to reveal some insights into Francis' personal and spiritual development and to relate this to the outer circumstances of his life. As far as the dating of the preserved texts allows—in about two thirds of cases—I discuss these texts in chronological order.

The dated works referred to are: *Oratio ante Crucifixum* (1205/1206); *Epistola ad fideles* (1209-1215); *Regula non bullata* (1209/1210-1221); *Regula bullata* (1223); *Laudes Dei altissimi* (1224); *Canticum fratris solis vel Laudes creaturarum* (1225); *Epistola toti ordini missa* (1225-1226); *Testamentum* (1226). For the (slightly differing) dating, see the chronologies in Esser, 1973: 299-340; Menestò e Brufani, 1995: 19-22; Le Goff, 1999: 11-14; Desbonnets et Vorreux, 2002: 1359-1362.

Besides Francis' own writings, there exist a number of early testimonies which are considered crucial for understanding Francis of Assisi and for the early history of the movement he founded.

Thomas of Celano (1185/1190-1260) joined the Franciscan Brothers in 1215; most likely he was among 'some literate men and nobles [who] gladly joined him' (1C 57.1 [Fontes, 331; Armstrong, 2004: 71]). In 1229 he wrote upon the request of Pope Gregory IX *The Life of Saint Francis* (formerly called *Vita Prima* or 1 Celano, here indicated as 1C), as preparation for Francis' canonization. Thomas also prepared readings of Francis' life for liturgical celebration: *Legenda ad Usum Chori* (*The Legend for Use in the Choir*) (1230), which is in essence a shortened version of *The Life of Saint Francis*. In 1243 (or 1244) the newly elected General Minister of the Franciscan Order, Crescentius of Iesi, requested the collection of all available information about Francis and the early fraternity, and he mandated Thomas of Celano to describe these memories in his personal style. This initiative culminated in 1247 in *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (formerly called *Vita Secunda* or 2 Celano, here indicated as 2C), mainly describing Francis' practice of virtues, of which two redactions exist (Freeman, 2006: 28-29). Finally, the successor of Crescentius, John of Parma, requested Thomas to write a systematic collection of all the circulating narratives of miracles that occurred during and after Francis' life. In 1252, Thomas completed *The Treatise on the Miracles of Saint Francis* (or 3 Celano, here indicated as 3C) (Armstrong, 1999: 171-179; Freeman, 2006: 11-36).

Celano, drawing in his writings from the accounts of earlier Christian saints, places Francis in the tradition of the Church, while at the same time illustrating the newness of his example as an alternative way of living amidst the power struggle of that same Church. As for his material, Thomas includes historical and biographical information based on his own experience with Francis and based on the information of 'trustworthy and esteemed witnesses' (1C Prologue, 1.1 [Fontes, 272; Armstrong, 2004: 20]). In its composition Thomas follows the typical scheme of the medieval *vitae* as described by Boyer (1981: 31-33), announcing Francis to the world as a model of conversion (Freeman, 2006: 16-21; Armstrong, 1999: 178). Though the narration of historical events is not his primary intention, he nevertheless places Francis in existing places where he interacts with real historical persons. In this respect Thomas's narration differs from typical medieval hagiography, where temporal and spatial matters remain insignificant and saints are presented as 'copies of a common prototype' (Boyer, 1981: 29). Also in contrast to typical medieval hagiography, Thomas provides a psychological and physical portrait (1C 83.1-11 [Fontes, 358-9; Armstrong, 2004: 92-3]).

Another noteworthy early document is *The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty* (*Sacrum commercium beati Francisci cum domina Paupertate*). This 'mysterious' (Armstrong, 1999: 523) 'highly polemical' (Cusato, 2009: 18) early document pleads for a return to an ideal of poverty and humility, as advocated by the early Franciscan fraternity and as

set out already in the *Early Rule (Regula non bullata* of 1221) and the *Testament*. This document was most likely written between 1237 and 1239 by an unknown author, perhaps by Caesar of Speyer (Cusato (2009: 18), possibly as a response to Gregory IX's papal decree *Quo elongati* of 1230, which declared that Francis' *Testament* was 'commendable but not binding' (Armstrong, 1999: 525), thereby eliciting a controversy about the practice of poverty as the Order's foundation, and aggravating the tension within the Order between those friars observing a life of strict poverty and those preferring a more institutionalized form of life by stressing the usefulness of the Order to the Church and to people (Armstrong, 1999: 523-528). Most likely, as a response to the mentioned request of Crescentius of Iesi, the *Legend of the Three Companions* (L3C) and the *Legend of Perugia*, also called the *Assisi Compilation* (AC), were compiled. These texts focus on the person of Francis and provide additional information not present in the *Vita Prima* by Thomas. *The Legend of the Three Companions* reflects the contributions of Brothers Leo, Angelo and Rufino, while *the Assisi Compilation* comprises the contribution of 'we who were with him'. Both texts contain information that could only have come from those in close contact with Francis (Armstrong, 2000: 61-65, 113-117).

In 1260, at the Chapter of Narbonne, the friars mandated **Bonaventure of Bagnoregia** (1221-1274) to compile 'one good legend of blessed Francis from all those already in existence'. In 1263 Bonaventure presented two texts: The *Legenda major* (LMj), describing in the first part Francis' life and virtues, and in the second part his miracles. He furthermore, composed the *Legenda minor* (LMn), a shorter text, mainly for liturgical use. For these texts, Bonaventure relied mainly on the *Vitae* by Thomas, and consulted the brothers who were with Francis, like Giles and Leo (Bonaventure, LMj Prologue, 4.1-2 [Fontes, 779; Armstrong, 2000: 528]). Three years later at the Chapter of Paris this *Legend* became by decree the only official *Legend*, and the Franciscan brothers present there at the time requested that all other 'legends of the Blessed Francis' be removed, an instruction which was only partially followed. The reasons for this decision remain unclear, but might be due to the influence of Bonaventure, meanwhile General Minister of the Order, in an effort to reconcile tensions between idealistic and moderate approaches by Franciscan brothers to Francis' ideal (Cousins, 1978: 6-8; Armstrong, 1999: 17-18; Armstrong, 2000: 495-497). Bonaventure's *Legenda* remained the only 'official' portrait of Francis (others presumably having been destroyed), until the surfacing in 1768 of a manuscript of Celano's *Vita*, published by Cornelius Suyskens, and the further discovery of the *Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* in 1803 by Stefano Rinaldi (Armstrong, 1999: 21).

Bonaventure's *Legenda* does not add new content to existing *vitae*, but presents Francis in a theological way, that is, as an image of Christ crucified. Writing within a context of medieval eschatological expectations and presenting the coming of Francis as a sign of the last days (LMj Prologue, 1; *Collationes in Hexameron*), Bonaventure presents Francis as the *Verbum Incarnatum et Crucifixum*, who bears the signs of the passion in his stigmata (Muscat, 1989: 3-4, 14). In the *Legenda Major* Bonaventure presents Francis' life according to various virtues,

which are presented along the stages of the mystic way: purification, illumination and mystical union (Cousins, 1978: 42-46). In seven visions of the cross, Francis gradually conforms to the crucified Christ (Muscat, 1989: 5). Bonaventure presents the mystery of the Cross as central in Francis' spiritual journey and as resulting from his own (Bonaventure's) mystical experience and theological reflection upon Francis' life (Muscat, 1989: 13; Cousins, 1978: xvii; Armstrong, 2000: 497-498).

Bonaventure starts his description of the ascent through six stages, symbolized by the six wings of the Seraph (Bonaventure, 1953: 7-46). The Franciscan perception of the presence of God in creation is expressed especially in the first two stages, where the physical universe and the soul are seen as mirrors reflecting God and as rungs in a ladder leading to mystical union with God. Bonaventure deviates from Francis' immediacy via a speculative reflection on creatures as *vestigia Dei* (God's traces) (Cousins, 1978: 23-34). From a historical perspective Bonaventure has probably 'saved' in this way the Minor Brothers from annihilation during the Second Council of Lyon (1274) by emphasising their utility for the Church (as most existing mendicant orders became suppressed by this Council) (Cusato, 2009: 25-26). After 1274, however, the resistance of the Spiritual Franciscans to the involvement of friars in ecclesial roles continued.

The *Mirror of Perfection* (MP), dated 1318, written for the brothers by an unknown author, is based on the Assisi Compilation. This treatise is divided in twelve chapters, like Francis' Later Rule, herewith implying that the brothers can find in Francis' life, as in his Rule, the way to perfection (Armstrong, 1999: 19; Armstrong, 2001: 207-212).

Another noteworthy document is *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum ejus* (*The Deeds of Blessed Francis and his Companions*) by Hugolino Boniscampi of Monte Giorgio, based on written and oral Franciscan traditions, written between 1328 and 1343. This corpus of traditions was popularized by translation into Tuscan Italian by an anonymous writer and re-edited as *The Little Flowers* or *Fioretti* (LFI). In these anecdotes Francis is portrayed as a visionary prophet and the conformity between Francis and Christ is highlighted (Armstrong, 1999: 20).

Influential modern studies such as Paul Sabatier's *Vie de Saint François d'Assisi* (1894) and *The Mirror of Perfection* (1898), interpret Francis as a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation, who was forced to conform to the medieval Roman Catholic Church. This view provoked severe criticism in Catholic and Protestant circles and introduced the 'Franciscan Question', which centred on the issue of which texts about Francis can be considered the earliest and most reliable for understanding the 'historical Francis' (Dalarun, 2002: 15; Armstrong, 1999: 22). There were growing tensions between the 'Spirituals' on the one hand (those friars who advocated a rigorous collective and individual poverty and who wanted to keep their distance from the Roman Curie, too much at ease with the material world), and on the other hand the 'Moderates' (those friars who were convinced of the necessary adaptation of the ideal of poverty to the growing Order, so as not to estrange the numerous masses who turned to the

friars, and who considered the Holy-Siège the authentic source of truth and authority). These tensions resulted ultimately in the destruction of written reliable sources for the life of the founder of the Order (Le Goff, 1999: 40).

In the second quarter of last century, the friars of Quaracchi published the tenth volume of the *Analecta Franciscana, sive Chronica Aliaque Varia Documenta ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum*, containing (amongst others) critical editions of the ‘official’ *vitae* of Thomas of Celano. Francis’ modern biographer Raoul Manselli (1984) contributed to the ‘Franciscan Question’ by his ground-breaking publication *Nos Qui Cum Eo Fuimus*, propagating the use of scientific text-critical tools in studying the accounts of Francis’ companions (Armstrong, 1999: 23-24).

For my purpose, I have mainly used the following primary sources: Vita I (1C), Vita II (2C), Legenda Major (LMj), Legenda Minor (LMn), Legend of the Three Companions (L3C), Legend of Perusia/Assisi Compilation (AC), Mirror of Perfection (MP), Earlier Rule (ER) and Later Rule (LR), quoted according to the recent edition *Fontes Franciscani* (1995), and the corresponding translation by Armstrong (1999-2001; 2004). Where relevant, I have consulted the text-critical commentary of Escher (1976), and the French translation of Desbonnets and Vorreux (2002).

2.2.2 Introduction to Francis’ nature-mysticism

The early sources speak of Francis’ high regard and deep love for creatures and of how he entered into what can be designated as nature-mystical experiences:

We who were with him saw him rejoice so much, inwardly and outwardly, in all creatures, that touching and looking at them, *his spirit seemed no longer on earth but in heaven* (MP 118.10 [Fontes, 2043; Armstrong, 2001: 366] my italics).

Another example of a nature-mystical experience is where Francis, holding a bird in his hands, *‘remained in prayer. Returning to himself as if after a long stay in another place, he sweetly told the little bird to return to its original freedom’* (2C 167.4-5 [Fontes, 593; Armstrong, 2004: 273] my italics).

Celano and Bonaventure describe Francis’ immediate pleasure in creatures and his mystical experiences, but they interpret these mainly in terms of the speculative Christian Neo-Platonism in which they were trained (as elaborated by Bonaventure in his *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*). For example: ‘Following the footprints imprinted on creatures, he follows his Beloved everywhere; out of them all he makes for himself a ladder by which he might reach (*perveniat*) the Throne’ (2C 165.6 [Fontes, 590; Armstrong, 2004: 271]).

In medieval hagiography the metaphor of the ladder is often used to present the immanent as a step on the way to the spiritual (Altman, 1975: 1). Celano and Bonaventure, educated in

mystical theology, used this metaphor. In Celano's interpretation, Francis' vision of creatures (animate and inanimate) does not immediately lead him into a mystical experience, but creatures are merely a step on the metaphysical scale towards divine union. A similar use of the metaphor can be found in Bonaventure e.g. LMj 9:1, adding to Celano's text, the words in italics:

In beautiful things he contuited (*contuebatur*) Beauty itself and through the footprints impressed in things he followed his Beloved everywhere, out of them all making for himself a ladder through which he could climb up (*conscenderet*) to lay hold of him who is utterly desirable (LMj 9:1.7 [Fontes, 854; Armstrong, 2000: 596]).

I, however, argue that in the case of Francis, who was not trained in mystical theology, there was an immediate, unreflective joy in creation. Besides Francis' immediate joy, other frequently narrated elements in Francis' nature-mystical experiences are his compassion for animals and the reciprocation of Francis' feelings of love by the animals:

His spirit was moved to so much piety and compassion toward them that he did not want to see when someone did not treat them decently. He used to speak with them with joy, inside and out, as if they were rational creatures, *on which occasions he was frequently rapt in God* (MP 115.14-15 [Fontes, 2040; Armstrong, 2001: 364], my italics).

Celano describes how creatures returned his love: 'All creatures, therefore, strive to return the saint's love and to respond to his kindness with their gratitude' (2C 166.1 [Fontes, 591; Armstrong 2004: 272]). Animals reciprocate Francis' feeling of love; for example, the bird flies away 'expressing its joy with the movement of its body' (2C 167.6 [Fontes, 593; Armstrong 2004: 273]).

The MP also interprets the obedience of creatures as a response to Francis' love:

It is not surprising that fire and other creatures obeyed and showed him reverence because, as we who were with him very often saw, how much he loved them, and how much delight he took in them (MP 115.13-14 (Sabatier edition) [Fontes, 2040; Armstrong, 2001: 364]).

The narratives about Francis' encounters with animals show a direct, unreflective relation and pleasure, enjoyed both by Francis and the animals. This delight in nature is like an inward impetus: there is an interaction between Francis and the animals at a level transcending the here and now, elevating Francis directly to an ineffable experience of mystical union with the divine (Sorrell, 1988: 82). In the encounter between Francis and the creature we may see a glimpse of a paradisiacal harmony between humans and animals. Similarly Celano writes: 'Finally, he used to call all creatures by the name of 'brother' and 'sister' *and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the heart of creatures*' (1C 80; 81.5 [Fontes, 357; Armstrong, 2004: 91], my italics). Celano's observation finds its equivalence in Underhill's description of what follows after the 'mystical awakening':

Strange contacts, unknown to those who only lead the life of sense, are set up between his being and the being of all other things. In this remaking of his consciousness which follows upon the 'mystical awakening,' the deep and primal life which he shares with all creation has been roused from its sleep. Hence the barrier between human and non-

human life, which makes man a stranger on earth as well as in heaven, is done away. Life now whispers to his life: all things are his intimates, and respond to his fraternal sympathy (Underhill, 2008: 260).

2.2.3 Origin and principal characteristics of nature-mysticism

2.2.3.1 Origin of nature-mysticism

As mentioned in the introduction, not all of Francis' experiences were nature-mystical in character. For the analysis of the origin of Francis' nature-mystical experiences, Cousins' work (1983: 163-190) is very useful. He defines 'nature-mysticism' in analogy with the 'mysticism of the historical event' (Cousins, 1983: 166). In the 'mysticism of the historical event' 'one recalls a significant event in the past' (e.g., Christ's birth or passion), 'enters into its drama and draws from it spiritual energy, eventually moving beyond the event towards union with God' (Cousins, 1983: 166). Analogically, in nature-mysticism 'our union with nature becomes a mode of God's communication of himself to us through his creation and of our union with him by perceiving his presence in the physical world (Cousins, 1983: 167-168).

Francis enters into a mystical experience when he contemplates God's creatures and deepens his feelings for them. Thus, his mystical experience starts with an intense feeling of immediate delight in and empathy with a creature, in which he discerns God's immanence. From recognition of God's presence and his awe for it, he moves beyond the creature, while drawing 'spiritual energy' from it, towards union with God (Cousins, 1983: 166). In this mystical experience he apprehends God's glory as revealed in creatures. In return, creatures show affection to him. Thus at the origin stands his immediate delight in creatures and feeling of empathy and sympathy for them (and the love they return to him). As will be elaborated in the mystic way, it was only after a long period of purification that Francis is able to perceive God's presence in concrete creation (see section 2.2.5.2).

2.2.3.2 Principal characteristics of nature-mysticism

From the encounter with animals, the following four characteristics of Francis' nature-mystical experiences can be derived:

2.2.3.2.1 Direct, non-reflective

Francis' relation to creation is concrete and immediate: he does not perceive other creatures and creation as foreign, but as something which he himself is part of and participates in. His relation to other creatures is not of a subject-object divide, but of a nearness as subject to subject, in which also inanimate creation has intrinsic worth and is related to as 'brother' or 'sister', thereby expressing familiarity, closeness and solidarity between human and non-human creation. From this direct and joyful relation it appears that Francis loves animals for what they

are in themselves and perceives their intrinsic worth (Werner, 1986: 18-20). Through this direct contact with an animal, Francis is elevated to contact with the divine or to a mystical experience of union. Differing from Celano's and Bonaventure's interpretation, there is no theological or philosophical reflection at play.

2.2.3.2.2 *Reference to the transcendent Creator*

In Francis' experience all creatures, animate and inanimate, are part of creation, and as such all refer to their infinite Origin. He calls all creatures by the name of 'Brother' and 'Sister', expressing a family relation under the same Creator God. Creatures, exactly in their intrinsic worth and through their glory, refer to their 'life-giving reason and cause' (2C165.4 [Fontes, 590; Armstrong, 2004: 271]), thus wearing the *vestigia Dei* (God's traces) and having their own relation with God, separate from their relation with human beings: the transcendent relation of creatures with their life-giving Reason and Cause excludes an anthropocentric view.

All creatures, beautiful as they are, are finite. Francis recognizes this, as he also integrates, in his direct way, the end of life: 'Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape' (*Canticum Fratris Solis 12* [Fontes, 40-41; Armstrong, 1999: 114]). Death is also part of nature, and therewith refers, together with Brother Sun and Sister Moon, paradoxically to their life-giving Reason and Cause.

2.2.3.2.3 *Action-inspiring*

Francis' attitude to creatures is not only one of a deep feeling of direct empathy and compassion towards suffering creatures, halting at contemplating the creature's suffering, but Francis' compassion leads to remedial action, as his biographers consistently narrate. Celano narrates, for example, how Francis saves the life of two little lambs destined for slaughter:

[While travelling, Francis] came across a man on his way to the market. The man was carrying over his shoulder two little lambs bound and ready for sale. When blessed Francis heard the bleating lambs, his innermost heart was touched and, drawing near, he touched them as a mother does with a crying child, showing his compassion. 'Why are you torturing my brother lambs,' he said to the man, 'binding and hanging them this way?' 'I am carrying them to the market to sell them, since I need the money,' he replied. The holy man asked: 'What will happen to them?' 'Those who buy them will kill them and eat them,' he responded. At that, the holy man said: 'No, this must not happen! Here, take my cloak as payment and give me the lambs' (1 C 79.1-6 [Fontes, 354-355; Armstrong, 2004: 89]).

Similarly, Bonaventure narrates: 'He often paid to ransom lambs that were being led to their death' (LMj 8:6.3 [Fontes, 847; Armstrong, 2000: 590]), and he describes how Francis saved the life of a small hare (LMj 8:8.1-3 [Fontes, 849; Armstrong, 2000: 592]). When he saves a lamb, it is because of compassion for the animal itself and not because of the biblical use of the lamb as allegory for Lamb of God.

Francis' tenderness toward animals is an expression of his practical compassion for all creatures. Francis cares not just for a specific animal, as his companions narrate:

We, who were with blessed Francis, and who wrote these things about him, bear witness that we often heard him say: ‘If I ever speak to the emperor, I will beg him, for the love of God and by my entreaties, to enact a written law forbidding anybody to catch our sister larks or do them any harm. Likewise, all majors of cities and lords of castles and villages should be bound to oblige each year on the Nativity of the Lord to scatter wheat and other grain along the roads outside towns and villages, so that all birds, but especially our sister larks, may have something to eat on such a solemn feast (AC 14.2-4 [Fontes, 1492-1493; Armstrong, 2000: 129]).

2.2.3.2.4 Universal

Francis’ attitude of respect and direct delight includes all creatures: humans, animals, and inanimate creatures.

The holy man overflowed with the spirit of charity, bearing within himself a deep sense of concern not only toward other humans in need but also toward mute, brute animals: reptiles, birds, and all other creatures whether sensate or not (1C 77.1 [Fontes, 352; Armstrong, 2004: 88]).

It was not only Francis’ direct feeling of empathy for and compassion with other living creatures that might lead into a mystical experience. Similarly, his looking at the sun or gazing at the moon or observing the stars (1C 80.4-5 [Fontes, 355-356; Armstrong, 2004: 90]) may lead to an ineffable experience. Francis includes in his respect and awe not only animate but also the inanimate creatures, like brother Sun, sister Moon and the Stars, brother Wind and sister Water, rocks and stones, because he also discerned in these the presence of their Creator:

When the brothers are cutting wood he forbids them to cut down the whole tree, so that it might have hope of sprouting again.... He picks up little worms from the road so they will not be trampled underfoot. That the bees not perish of hunger in the icy winter, he commands that honey and the finest wine should be set out for them (2C 165: 11.14 [Fontes, 590; Armstrong, 2004: 272]).

These narratives testify of Francis’ extraordinary respect for creation and of his feeling of direct and intense affection and love in the interaction with creatures.

2.2.4 Theological understanding of nature-mysticism

Since his experience of the voice of the Crucified in the Church of San Damiano changed his life, Francis wanted to follow Jesus Christ’s footprints (e.g. *Regula non bullata*, XXII. 2 [Fontes, 204; Armstrong, 199:79]). Francis often interpreted and followed Jesus’ words from the New Testament in a literal way. For Francis, the New Testament was more important than the Old Testament, as demonstrated by his biblical quotes: of a total of 196 biblical quotes in the writings of Francis, 32 quotes are from the Old Testament (9 from the Psalms), against 164 from the New Testament (115 from the four Gospels) (Le Goff, 1999: 112). From Francis’ focus on Christ, his relation with the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be understood (Groot Wassink, 1980: 71); for Francis God is Holy, just and loving (*Regula non bullata* XXIII.

1 [Fontes, 209; Armstrong, 1999: 81]), to whose love humans respond with love (*Regula non bullata* XXIII. 8 [Fontes, 210-211; Armstrong 1999: 84]).

Despite the existence of various pantheistic movements in his time, Francis cannot be designated a pantheist. For ease of analysis I define pantheism according to three core qualities: universe and God are considered identical; there is no belief in a personal God; nature is sacred.

First, for Francis, nature wears the *vestigia Dei* and thus reveals His glory; yet all creatures point beyond themselves towards their Creator. In Francis' writings creation or nature is nowhere equated with God. Francis' view on creation and understanding of creatures is based on biblical texts, while showing an absolute obedience to Church doctrine and dogma.

Second, Francis believes in a triune and personal God, as is evident from his writings. For example: 'Fear and honor, praise and bless, give thanks and adore the Lord God Almighty in Trinity and in Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all' (*Regula non bullata*, XXI, 2 [Fontes, 204; Armstrong 1999: 78]). Francis' relation to Christ the Son is an especially personal one: he calls Jesus Christ a Brother, Who laid down His life for His sheep (*Epistola ad fideles (recensio prior)* 1: 13 [Fontes, 74; Armstrong, 1999: 42]).

Third, for Francis, God is immanent in creation (1C 80.10 [Fontes, 356; Armstrong, 2004: 90]), at the same time transcending it. Bonaventure, for example, writes that Francis taught the brothers 'to praise God in all and with all creatures (*et ex omnibus*)' (LMj 4:3.5 [Fontes 805; Armstrong, 2000: 551]).

Celano speaks of Francis' tenderness 'while contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator' (1C 80.3 [Fontes, 355; Armstrong, 2004: 90]). Francis loves nature and creatures for their own beauty and their own worth, but also because he perceives in them the presence and reflection of the Creator. He nowhere equates creatures or creation with God.

Francis' delight in creation is balanced by a severe asceticism. His own texts and the hagiographers testify of a stern asceticism in order to avoid a pre-occupation with temporal things and neglect of their divine origin. Francis' hagiographers depict Francis as representing the qualities of both joy and austerity, and as having achieved pure joy through negation. Francis' own example (according to Esser [1976: 459-461] a 'dictate' by Francis himself) of 'true and perfect joy' is indicative:

I return from Perugia and arrive here in the dead of the night. It's winter time, muddy, and so cold that icicles have formed on the edges of my habit and keep striking my legs and blood flows from such wounds. Freezing, covered with mud and ice, I come to the gate and, after I've knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks: 'Who are you?' 'Brother Francis,' I answer. 'Go away!' he says. 'This is not a decent hour to be wandering about! You may not come in!' When I insist, he replies: 'Go away! You are simple and stupid! Don't come back to us again! There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!' I stand again at the door and say: 'For the love of God, take me in tonight!' And he replies: 'I will not! Go to the Crosiers' place and ask there!' 'I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, true joy, as well as true virtue

and the salvation of my soul, would consist in this.’ (*De vera et perfecta laetitia*, 8-15 [Fontes, 242; Armstrong, 1999: 166-167]).

Francis’ joy for nature, likely influenced by the French troubadours (Sorrell, 1988: 105-106), gradually spiritualized when he started to apprehend the divine presence in creation. I hold that through his severe asceticism he attained a complete purification of the self and a deep joy and appreciation for nature. This will be the subject of the next section (on mysticism).

2.2.4.1 Creation

For Francis, God is Creator of all that is (1C 80.3-10 [Fontes, 355-356; Armstrong, 2004: 90]). In the Earlier Rule he exhorts all people to praise and give thanks to the Creator of all (*Regula non bullata*, XXIII, 11 [Fontes, 211; Armstrong, 1999; 85-86]). From Francis’ love for God results his deep love for His creation and the creatures, as expressed in the *Canticle* (*Canticum Fratris Solis*), composed at the end of his life. The *Canticle* articulates Francis’ deep admiration for creation: God is praised with his creatures, without the slightest expression of anthropocentrism. In the *Canticle*, Francis communicates his vision of a mutual relationship between God and His creation in His creatures (*Canticum Fratris Solis* [Fontes, 39-41; Armstrong, 1999: 113-114]).

2.2.4.2 Covenant

No writings of Francis are transmitted on Genesis 15-17 (the law giving at Sinai) or on Genesis 9: 8-17 (the establishment of the Covenant after the Flood). Francis’ implicit understanding of ‘covenant’ appears to have been his belief in and experience of the universal fraternity of all creatures. During his conversion experience among the lepers (1205), Francis came to the perception that all people are sacred creatures of the one Creator God, brothers and sisters to each other and all gifted with dignity and worth. This view gradually extended in later life to all creatures, and indeed to inanimate creation: Francis then considered the universal fraternity of all creatures as a kind of bond, created by God. All creatures in this bond are included in the same grace of salvation, and because creatures are brothers and sisters to each other and fellow-creatures in a sacred bond created by God, humans have duties to all, under God to Whom we are responsible. In this view, ‘sin’ constitutes whatever breaks the bond of the fraternity of all creatures, such as violence against other creatures (Cusato, 2009: 245). In the *Canticle*, Francis’ vision of the mutual relations between creatures and between creatures and God is expressed by praising both Creator and creatures: ‘Praised be You my Lord, with all Your creatures’ (*Canticum Fratris Solis* 3 [Fontes, 39-40; Armstrong, 1999: 113]). There is not only a bond of fraternity between creatures, but animals also respond to God’s love and offer of grace by joining in praise of Him, in line with Psalm 148, thus expressing that creatures also have their own relation with God.

2.2.4.3 Incarnation

For Francis, Jesus Christ is not only the Brother, whose footprints he wants to follow (*Regula non bullata*, XXII, 1 [Fontes, 204; Armstrong 1999:79]), but He is also the Incarnated Logos, who has redeemed us with ‘His most precious blood’ (*Letter to the Entire Order*, 3 [Fontes, 99; Armstrong, 1999: 116]). Francis writes for his brothers *Officium passionis Domini* [Fontes, 145-163; Armstrong, 1999: 139-157], in which especially Christ’s suffering and the praise of God for creation figure prominently and which contains verses of Psalm 22, an individual lament (Oxford Bible Commentary: 360, 373-374) (‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’) and Psalm 96, an enthronement psalm (OBC: 361, 392-393) ‘O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth’ (NRSV).

In his fellowship of Jesus Francis develops a mysticism of the cross, where the cross becomes the symbol of cosmic salvation (Cusato, 2009: 247). Unfortunately, Cusato relates the ethical implications of this view to human beings only and therefore remains anthropocentric.

2.2.5 The mystic way of Francis

Among the various recent scholarly viewpoints on Francis (e.g., as a saint, a prophet or a founder of an Order), I intend to approach him from the perspective of a nature-mystic. In his preserved writings Francis does not give account of his mystical experiences in the manner of, for example, Teresa of Avilla or John of the Cross. Neither does he reveal his experience on Mount Verna as he tries to hide his stigmata ‘so that human favour would not rob him of the grace given him’ (1C 95.11 [Fontes, 372; Armstrong, 2004: 105]). Though various scholars rank Francis among the mystics (e.g.. Doyle, 1980; Sorrell 1988; R. Armstrong, 1999; Nolthenius, 1988), he is not considered unanimously as a ‘nature-mystic’. Cunningham (1976: 54) for example, argues: ‘That Francis loved the natural world is undeniable; that he was a ‘nature mystic’ is, at the very least, a distortion’. Cunningham considers it part of Christian tradition to see God revealed in Bible and nature (Cunningham, 1976: 55). I maintain, however, that though God is immanent in creation (while at the same time transcending it), not all human beings have the ability to perceive God’s immanence. The early sources describe how Francis, from contact with and delight in animals and nature, entered into nature-mystical experiences and therefore is in my view, best characterised as a nature-mystic.

Next, I will apply the characteristics and stages of the *Via Mystica* in line with Underhill to Francis’ development and life, for which a justification is provided in the introduction.

2.2.5.1 Characteristics of mysticism

First, ‘true mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). In Francis’ life, the practical and the personal aspect can clearly be discerned. He practices what he preaches and lives by example. After Francis’ conversion experience (1205), described in his Testament as the encounter with the lepers, his eyes were opened to the suffering around him, and he ‘left the world’. This does not imply that he was no longer active in the world but that he alternated periods of contemplation, living as a hermit in stern asceticism, with intervals of preaching penance for the salvation of his neighbours (1C 71 [Fontes, 346-347; Armstrong, 2004: 83-84]). Even towards the end of his ailing life, when Francis had already received the stigmata (1C 98.6 [Fontes, 375; Armstrong, 2004: 107]), Celano speaks of Francis’ relentless eagerness to win souls for God:

He so desired the salvation of souls and longed to benefit his neighbours that, even though he could no longer walk on his own, he went through the towns riding on a little donkey (1C 98.3 [Fontes, 374; Armstrong, 2004: 106]), with weakening limbs and dying body (1C 103.2 [Fontes, 380; Armstrong, 2004: 112]).

Francis’ compassion was depicted as active, as he tended to the lepers; when he noticed that creatures were not well treated (MP [Sabatier Edition] 115.13-15 [Fontes, 2040; Armstrong, 2001: 364]) he was moved to action, as in his attempt to secure the release of lambs (1C 79.1-10 [Fontes, 354-355; Armstrong, 2004: 89]).

Concerning the second aspect of this characteristic, whether these ‘insights are known by experience’ (Underhill, 2008: 84) or whether these are theoretical, that is, based on ‘mystical experiences of others’ (Underhill, 2008: 82-83), it may reasonably be argued that Francis’ mystical experiences, as far as these have come to us through the accounts of his life by hagiographers, are his own, as Francis’ biographical details do not contain any formal education in (mystical) theology. On the basis of thorough analysis of the few preserved, partially readable parchment autographs, it has been concluded that ‘Francis’ training in writing proves that he is an *illiteratus*, in other words that his educational level lies somewhere between illiteracy and full and complete literacy’ (Armstrong, 1999: 39).

Second, the aims of mysticism are ‘wholly transcendental and spiritual’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). Celano narrates that Francis

more than anything else desired to be set free and to be with Christ. Thus his chief object of concern was to live free from all things that are in the world, so that his inner serenity would not be disturbed even for a moment by contact with any of its dust (1C 71.2-3 [Fontes, 347; Armstrong, 2004: 83]).

Celano also describes how Francis seeks to know God’s will:

After he had been there [at a place of rest and secret solitude] for some time, through unceasing prayer and frequent contemplation, he reached intimacy with God in an indescribable way. He longed to know what in him and about him was or could be most acceptable to the Eternal King... This was the highest desire that always burned in him as long as he lived (1C 91.4-6 [Fontes, 367; Armstrong, 2004: 101]). This man, having

the spirit of God, was ready to endure any suffering of mind and bear any affliction of the body, if at last he would be given the choice that the will of the heavenly Father might be fulfilled mercifully in him (1C 92.4 [Fontes, 368; Armstrong, 2004: 102]).

Third, the mystic has a personal relation with his or her Object of Love: ‘this One is for the mystic, not merely the Reality of all that is, but also a living and personal Object of Love; never an object of exploration’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). As indicated, Francis’ relation to God the Son is especially personal:

His highest aim, foremost desire, and greatest proposal was to pay heed to the holy gospel in all things and through all things, to follow the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and to retrace His footsteps completely with all vigilance and all zeal, all the desire of his soul and all the fervor of his heart (1C 84.1 [Fontes, 359; Armstrong, 2004: 94]).

Fourth, the achieved state of union is an enduring one: ‘living union with this One, which is the term of his adventure is a definite state or form of enhanced life’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). Celano narrates how Francis, after a long period of illness, starts to see the world differently (1C 3.2-5 [Fontes, 279; Armstrong, 2004: 24-25]) and how he from that day onwards ‘began to regard himself as worthless’ (1C 4.1 [Fontes, 280; Armstrong, 2004: 25]). Francis’ spiritual growth may be followed from his early writings, such as his liturgical sources up to the Sermon to the Birds (1213) and culminating in the *Canticum Fratris Solis* (1225) (*Canticle*), where a hierarchical, vertical level of relations between humans and creatures develops into a horizontal relationship and reciprocity of respect and love (Sorrel, 1988: 66-68).

For Francis *facere poenitentiam* (doing penance) is a renewed way of life or a *forma vitae* by which one is supposed to live his or her whole life (Cusato, 2009: 54).

Fifth, ‘true mysticism is never self-seeking’ (Underhill, 2008: 92), but is the passion for true love. Francis’ love to God and neighbor gradually extends to include all creatures. In the *Canticle*, written in the unification phase, a complete focus on God and fellow creatures can be discerned. The focus of existence is no longer on the ‘I’ and the ‘self’, but fully on the Divine and other creatures.

Having applied Underhill’s characteristics of mysticism to Francis’ life and thought, I will attempt a delineation of Francis’ mystical path, by applying the various stages of the mystic way, in Underhill’s categories, to Francis’ life. For this purpose, I will mainly analyse hagiographical texts that narrate a number of his ecstasies and elevated states of consciousness, apart from his own writings, especially his *Testament*. Allegedly, Francis hardly reported on his religious or mystical experiences, since he held them to be strictly personal; revealing them would mean not only betraying the divine grace bestowed on him, but also carrying the risk of drawing mockery by the multitude upon himself (1C 96. 1-6 [Fontes, 372-273; Armstrong, 2004: 105]).

2.2.5.2 The stages of the mystic way of Francis of Assisi

As outlined, Underhill has described the phases of the mystic way according to five stages. She concedes that the description of the phases of the mystic way, though convenient for purposes of study, is artificial since the different stages are closely entangled (Underhill, 2008: 229). Helene Nolthenius (1988: 220-233) has applied these stages of the mystic way to Francis' spiritual development and life. In using the same Underhill stages, I will come to a slightly different demarcation of Francis' various mystical stages, by using decisive events in Francis' life as delineation of the different phases, as far as the preserved sources allow.

First stage: Conversion or 'the awakening of the Self to consciousness of Divine Reality' (Underhill, 2008: 169). Though conversion is apparently abrupt, it is mostly preceded by 'a long period of restlessness, uncertainty, and mental stress' (Underhill, 2008: 179). This is obviously applicable to Francis' conversion as described by Celano. According to him, Francis was born in Assisi in 1181/1182, as the son of a rich textile merchant and a mother of French origin. Celano narrates that Francis 'miserably wasted and squandered his time from childhood almost up to the twenty-fifth year of his life' (1C 2.1 [Fontes, 278; Armstrong, 2004: 23]). After a battle (at Ponte San Giovanni) between the cities of Perugia and Assisi (November 1202), Francis, together with many other citizens of Assisi, was imprisoned for almost a year in Perugia when the Assisi troops lost (2C 4.2 [Fontes, 446; Armstrong, 2004: 161]); L3C 4.1 [Fontes, 1376-1377; Armstrong 2000: 69-70]). In 1204 Francis fell ill for a prolonged period (1C 3). While recovering from this illness, he started to see the world differently:

But the beauty of the field, the delights of the vineyard, and whatever else was beautiful to see could offer him no delight at all. He wondered at the sudden change in himself, and considered those who loved these things quite foolish (1C 3.1 [Fontes, 279; Armstrong, 2004: 24]). From that day he began to regard himself as worthless and to hold in some contempt what he had previously held as admirable and lovable, though not completely or genuinely (1C 4.1 [Fontes, 280; Armstrong, 2004: 25]).

Celano narrates that Francis still 'reflected upon worldly matters' (1C 4.4 [Fontes 280; Armstrong 2004: 25]). Francis, determined to do great deeds, decided to serve as a soldier and traveled to Apulia, hoping to become a knight (early 1205) (L3C 5.1-2 [Fontes, 1377; Armstrong, 2000: 70]). But a vision during the night made him change his mind. Then followed a period of restlessness and prayer for God's guidance and to 'teach him to do His will' (1C 6.9 [Fontes, 282; Armstrong: 2004: 27]). During this period, Francis had several encounters which had a lasting impact on his life: with a poor man whom he initially rebuked for seeking alms, but was immediately 'led to penance' (1C 17.7 [Fontes, 293; Armstrong, 2004: 35]), with a poor knight to whom he gave his clothes (2C 5. 1-3 [Fontes, 447; Armstrong, 2004: 162]), with beggars at the church of St. Peter in Rome, where he dressed himself in poor man's clothes and ate with them (L3C 10. 5-8 [Fontes, 1382; Armstrong, 2000: 73-74]); 2C 8.3 [Fontes, 450; Armstrong 2004: 165]) and with a leper on the road:

When he started thinking of holy and useful matters with the grace and strength of the Most High, while still in the clothes of the world, he met a leper one day. Made stronger than himself, he came up and kissed him. He then began to consider himself less and less, until by the mercy of the Redeemer, *he came to complete victory over himself* (1C 17.4-5 [Fontes, 292; Armstrong, 2004: 35], my italics; similarly 2C 9.9 [Fontes, 451; Armstrong, 2004: 166-167] and LMj1: 5.1-5 [Fontes, 784-785; Armstrong, 2000: 533]).

Francis himself describes this decisive moment of conversion in the document which he dictated in 1226 before his death called 'My Testament' (*Testamentum* 34 [Fontes, 231; Armstrong, 1999: 127]):

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world (*Testamentum* 1-3 [Fontes, 227; Armstrong, 1999: 124]).

Francis marks the encounter with the lepers as the vital moment of his conversion that 'suddenly made him a man with an all-pervading vision, so overwhelming that the rest of his life was devoted to its realization. We can never understand this experience. It is Francis' deeply personal secret' (Van Doornik, 1979: 177). In this moment of conversion, his eyes were opened and he was able to see the leper as a suffering human being, as a brother and sister created by the same Creator God. From this time onwards he saw the world through the eyes of a suffering human being, changing his relation to other human beings and God for ever (Cusato: 14, 37, 259). The biographies and the *Legend of the Three Companions* depict the years following Francis' conversion as a search to discover God's will; this is expressed, for example, in the Prayer before the Crucifix, dated 1205/1206:

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command (*The Prayer before the Crucifix* [Fontes, 167; Armstrong, 1999: 40]).

After the encounter with the lepers (2C 9) Celano relates the account of the Crucified who speaks to him (end of 1205):

With his heart already completely changed—soon his body was also to be changed—he was walking one day by the church of San Damiano, which was abandoned by everyone and almost in ruins. Led by the Spirit he went in to pray and knelt down devoutly before the crucifix. He was shaken by unusual experiences and discovered that he was different from when he had entered. As soon as he had this feeling ... the image of Christ crucified spoke to him. 'Francis,' it said, calling him by name, 'go rebuild My house; as you can see, it is all being destroyed.' Francis was more than a little stunned, trembling ... He felt this mysterious change in himself, but he could not describe it. So it is better for us to remain silent about it too. From that time on, compassion for the Crucified was impressed into his holy soul (2C 10.1-8 [Fontes, 452-453; Armstrong, 2004: 167]).

According to Francis' *Testament*, after the encounter with the lepers, he 'delayed a little and left the world' (*Testamentum* 3 [Fontes, 227; Armstrong, 1999: 124]). Apparently, in San Damiano, in the encounter with the crucified Jesus his compassion for the suffering leper was confirmed. Francis perceived in the leper the suffering Christ in the world. His conversion was first towards

the poor, and from them towards the crucified Christ (Boff, 2007: 20-21) and gradually extended to all creatures. This ineffable experience [‘this mysterious change in himself’ (2C 10.7 [Fontes, 453; Armstrong, 2004: 167]) changed Francis’ perception of the world and his life forever, as he ‘began to do penance’ and ‘left the world’. I understand this fragment as an indication of the end of the conversion period (end of 1205).

It may be concluded that the process of Francis’ conversion started somewhere in 1203, when imprisoned, and during his long-standing illness. The accounts by Celano mention a long period of unrest and a number of conversion experiences. I delineate the end of the conversion period in 1205 with the account of the image of the crucified Christ speaking to Francis in the church of San Damiano.

Second stage: Purification. Purification is ‘the painful completion of Conversion’ (Underhill, 2008: 169, 204). After hearing the voice of the Crucified (1205) Francis started rebuilding the chapel of San Damiano with his hands and continued repairing old churches (1 C 18.1-3 [Fontes, 293-294; Armstrong, 2004: 36]; 2C 13.1-7; 14.2 [Fontes, 455-456; Armstrong, 2004: 170-171]). During this period he lived as a hermit (1206-1208), and a gradual process of dissolving his family ties took place. He was mocked and insulted by the inhabitants of Assisi (1C 11.1-5 [Fontes, 287; Armstrong, 2004: 31]); LMj 2: 2-5 [Fontes, 791; Armstrong, 2000: 539]), whose humiliations he bravely endured. During this period he heard one day (24 February, 1208, visiting the church of Portiuncula) the gospel being read on the subject of how the Lord sent out his disciples to preach:

When he heard that Christ’s disciples should not possess gold or silver or money, or carry on their journey a wallet or a sack, nor bread nor a staff, nor to have shoes nor two tunics, but that they should preach the kingdom of God and penance, Francis immediately knew: ‘This is what I want, this is what I seek, this is what I desire with all my heart’ (1 C 22.2-3 [Fontes, 296-297; Armstrong, 2004: 41; LMj 3:1;3 [Fontes, 795; Armstrong, 2000: 542]). Immediately he took off the shoes from his feet, put down the staff from his hands, and, satisfied with one tunic, exchanged his leather belt for a cord (1C 22.5 [Fontes, 297; Armstrong, 2004: 42]). He then began to preach penance to all with a fervent spirit and joyful attitude (1C 23.1 [Fontes, 297; Armstrong, 2004: 42) and received the first brothers with great joy (1C 24 [Fontes, 297-300; Armstrong, 2004: 42-44]).

In this period Francis received his first brothers, whom he sent out ‘two by two through different parts of the world, announcing peace to the people and penance for the remission of sins’ (1C 29. 2-3 [Fontes, 303; Armstrong, 2004: 47]). When Francis had eleven brothers, ‘he wrote for himself and his brothers present and future, simply and in few words, a form of life and a rule (*vitae forma et regula*)’ (1C 32.1 [Fontes, 305; Armstrong, 2004: 50]), which was presented to Pope Innocent III, who gave his oral approval (1C 33.5-6 [Fontes, 306-307; Armstrong 2004: 52]). In his *Testament* Francis mentions that this *Testament* has to be attached

to the Rule and that both texts are to be read together (*Testamentum* 36-37 [Fontes, 231; Armstrong, 2004, 127]).

In the year 1209, towards the end of the purification period, Celano describes Francis' experience of the forgiveness of his sins and his vision of a brilliant future for the Fraternity.

This passage I interpret as the end of the purification and the transition to illumination:

He recalled in the bitterness of his soul the years he spent badly, frequently repeating this phrase: 'Lord be merciful to me, a sinner.' Gradually, an indescribable joy and tremendous sweetness began to well up deep in his heart. He began to lose himself; his feelings were pressed together; and that darkness disappeared which fear of sin had gathered in his heart. Certainty of the forgiveness of all his sins poured in, and the assurance of being revived in grace was given to him. Then he was caught up above himself and totally engulfed in light, and, with his inmost soul opened wide, he clearly saw the future. As that sweetness and light withdrew, renewed in spirit, he now seemed to be changed into another man (1C 26.3-8 [Fontes, 300-301; Armstrong, 2004: 45]). He returned and said to the brothers with joy: 'Be strong, dear brothers, and rejoice in the Lord. Do not be sad, because you seem so few, and do not let my simplicity or yours discourage you. The Lord has shown me that God will make us grow into a great multitude, and will spread us to the ends of the earth (1C 27.1 [Fontes, 301; Armstrong, 2004: 45]).

Third stage: Illumination (Underhill, 2008: 169). Illumination 'does but reproduce upon higher levels those characteristic processes of conversion' (Underhill, 2008: 232). In his conversion experience Francis saw for the first time the leper as brother or sister created by the same Creator God. In the stage of illumination this experience gradually extended to other creatures, with the *Sermon to the Birds* marking this point, as narrated by Celano and elaborated by Sorrell (1988: 55-68). While Francis was travelling through the Spoleto valley,

...he reached a place near Bevagna, in which a great multitude of birds of different types had gathered... When Francis, the most blessed servant of God, saw them, he ran swiftly toward them... When he was already very close, seeing that they awaited him, he greeted them in his usual way. He was quite surprised, however, because the birds did not take flight, as they usually do. Filled with great joy he humbly requested that they listen to the word of God. Among many other things, he said to them: "My brother birds, you should greatly praise your Creator and love Him always. He gave you feathers to wear, wings to fly with, and whatever you need. God made you noble among His creatures and gave you a home in the purity of the air, so that, though you neither sow nor reap, He nevertheless protects and governs you without your least care." He himself, and those brothers who were with him, used to say that, at these words, the birds rejoiced in a wonderful way according to their nature. They stretched their necks, spread their wings, opened their beaks and looked at him... After the birds had listened so reverently to the word of God, he began to accuse himself of negligence because he had not preached to them before. From that day on, he carefully exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and also insensible creatures, to praise and love the Creator, because daily, invoking the name of the Savior, he observed their obedience in his own experience (1C 58.2-13 [Fontes, 332-334; Armstrong, 2004: 74]).

In the *Sermon to the Birds* (1213) there is a mention of mutual respect: Francis expresses his high regard for the birds, as he preaches to them, while they listen with respect to him. There is also love and affection between Francis and the birds ('my brother birds') and mutual respect

and love between creatures and God (God sustains them and the birds ‘should love Him always’). When Francis sees that the birds do not move away from him, he is surprised and spontaneously preaches to them, suddenly realizing that he has to preach not only to humans but also to these birds as part of his mission of restoration of apostolic harmony—a literal interpretation of the ending of Mark’s Gospel: ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation’ (Mk. 16: 15) (Robson, 1997: 242; Sorrell, 1988: 66-67). This experience leads to the conviction ‘that his ministry must be to all creation and to humans about all creation, its harmony and the right use of creatures’ (Murray, 1992: 155).

Celano narrates that from then onward Francis preached to all animals and even to insensible creatures, exhorting them as his brothers and sisters to praise God. Apparently, he envisioned an ideal situation where all creation, including humans, unites in praise of their Creator:

Fields and vineyards, rocks and woods, and all the beauties of the field, flowing springs and blooming gardens, earth and fire, air and wind: all these he urged to love of God and to willing service. Finally, he used to call all creatures by the name of ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the heart of creatures (1C 81.4-5 [Fontes, 357; Armstrong, 2004: 91]).

I hold that the secret of the heart of creatures, which he discerns, is their own relation with their Creator. Creatures have their own special worth before God, which Francis is able to sense through his vision, which is purified by his ascetical and evangelical way of living.

Following the *Sermon to the Birds*, Celano narrates Francis’ *Silencing of the Swallows* (1C 59.1-5 [Fontes, 334-335; Armstrong, 2004: 75]). Celano interprets this obedience of creatures to Francis as resulting from Francis’ complete submission to God and thus being ‘worthy of the great honor before God of having the obedience of creatures’ (1C 61.5 [Fontes, 336; Armstrong 2004: 76]). Underhill holds that the point to which the mystic aspires ‘is that in which all disharmony ... is resolved in the concrete reality which he calls the Love of God’ (Underhill, 2008: 224). This may find its equivalent in Francis’ respect for other creatures and other creatures’ responses, where we catch a glimpse of a situation of complete harmony, a restored paradise. During this period he attained a consciousness of the ‘otherness’ of natural things, an ineffable apprehension of the Infinite Life immanent in all living things. The evident conclusion here is that Francis’ illumination is of the external type (Underhill, 2008: 240-241).

During the illumination period (1210-1220) the number of brothers joining the Order increased and a few of them went as missionaries preaching to North Africa, never to return. Francis himself longed, by taking an *imitation Christi* literally, for ‘holy martyrdom’, ‘to preach the Christian faith and repentance to the Saracens and other unbelievers’ (1C 55.2 [Fontes, 329; Armstrong, 2004: 69]), and after two unsuccessful attempts in 1212 to reach Syria and Morocco (1C 55.3-56.6 [Fontes, 329-331; Armstrong, 2004: 69-70]) he finally reached Egypt and resided in the autumn of 1219 in Dimyat, a town in the Nile Delta. Subsequently, after being taken prisoner and ‘lead’ before the Sultan, he was, according to the hagiographic sources, received

with courtesy by Sultan Malik al-Kamil who ‘listened to him very willingly’ (1C 57.7-12 [Fontes, 332; Armstrong, 2004: 71]). Most likely there had been a moment of recognition between the *illiteratus* Francis and the Sultan, not through verbal disputation about religious matters, but through Francis’ visual appearance as a *vir Dei* (man of God) analogous to the wandering and begging Sufis (Islamic mystics) who similarly had wore a rough woollen garment as a sign of renunciation of the world (Müller, 2002: 65-74). Probably, Francis’ charismatic appearance prevented the fulfilment of his wish for martyrdom.

Fourth stage: Dark Night of the Soul is the phase of final and complete purification of the will, the most painful and negative of all the experiences of the mystic way (Underhill, 2008: 169-170, 380-412). When the mystics are in the Dark Night everything seems to ‘go wrong’ with them (Underhill, 2008: 384). ‘The health of those passing through this phase often suffers, they become ‘odd’ and their friends forsake them’ (Underhill, 2008: 385). ‘Such an interval of chaos and misery may last for months, or even for years, before the consciousness again unifies itself and a new center is formed’ (Underhill, 2008: 387).

The period of the Dark Night of the Soul might have been experienced in the life of Francis between 1220 and 1224. While in the Holy Land, Francis received messages from Italy concerning the growing division in the Order which made him return to Italy. He realised that his ideals had not been followed and that there were brothers who had diverted from his Rule. He called for an Emergency Chapter (1220), where he resigned as General Minister of the Order he had founded (Desbonnets et Vorreux, 2002: 1361). Other features, presenting in this period and possibly contributing to or indicating elements of the Dark Night, are his general deteriorating health, in particular the worsening disease of his eyes (trachoma) causing near blindness, the division in his Order and the message of the martyr death of Franciscan friars in Morocco (1C 98.1-9 [Fontes, 374-375; Armstrong, 2004: 106-107]; 1C 104.1-8 [Fontes, 381; Armstrong, 2004: 113-114]) (Nolthenius, 1988: 90).

After Francis’ resignation at the Emergency Chapter of 1220, the term *facere poenitentiam* figures prominently in his writings, corresponding with the stage of the Dark Night of the Soul. For Francis *facere poenitentiam* is a process, a renewed way of life or a *forma vitae*, ‘one’s way of life in Christ’ (Cusato, 2009: 53-54).

Fifth stage: Union. In this stage of the mystic way, ‘man’s will is united with God’ (Underhill, 2008: 413). This is ‘the permanent establishment of life upon transcendent levels of reality’ and is ‘the true goal of the mystic quest’ (Underhill, 2008: 170).

Mystics, attempting to describe the Unitive Life, mainly use the symbolic expression of deification (or identification) or of Spiritual Marriage of his/her soul with God (Underhill, 2008:

415). The stigmatisation, when Christ wounds appeared from the inside in Francis' body at a moment of deep prayer and meditation on the cross, may be designated as an extreme form of mystical experience, as the most intense encounter and as identification with Christ incarnate (Cusato, 2009: 230-231). In the first account of the stigmatisation (1C 91-96 [Fontes, 366-373; Armstrong, 2004: 101-105]), Celano describes what has happened to Francis, most likely based on the testimonies of the friars who witnessed Francis' wounds after his death, by linking the stigmata with a deep contemplation on the cross of Christ, and thus bringing the experience into the area of mysticism (Cusato, 2009: 223-226). Celano tries to put into words Francis' ineffable experience which Francis kept to himself, interpreting Francis' stigmata as 'a unique gift, a sign of special love... Stamped with the holy stigmata, he reflects the image of the One... Conformed to the death of Christ Jesus by sharing in his suffering' (1C 119.1-3 [Fontes, 398-399; Armstrong, 2004: 128]).

The stigmatisation thus represents God's confirmation of the values Francis manifested during his life: his love for all creatures and his service in humility. The stigmatisation incited him in 1224 to compose the *Laudes Dei altissimi* as thanksgiving (a text, partially readable, preserved as autograph in Assisi (Esser, 1976: 134-146).

One may ask what 'peaceful joy' signifies in Underhill's characterisation of the stage of union in Francis' case, especially where Celano narrates, 'as his illness grew worse, he lost all bodily strength, and deprived of all powers, he could not even move' (1C 107.1 [Fontes, 384; Armstrong, 2004: 115]). Francis' reply to a brother reveals his interpretation of the stigmata as obedience and harmony with God's will, as constituting Francis' desire and complete joy (1C 107. 2-4 [Fontes, 384; Armstrong, 2004: 115]). Celano narrates how 'for nearly two years he endured these things with complete patience and humility, in all things giving thanks to God' (1C 102.1 [Fontes, 379; Armstrong, 2004: 111]).

Contrary to Nolthenius (1988: 232-233), who places the mystical stage of 'union' in Francis' life from 1223 till his death in 1226, I prefer to designate the period from the stigmatisation (1224) till his death (1226) as the period of 'union'. The preceding period till his stigmatisation may still be qualified as 'Dark Night', because a number of Dark Night elements are still discernible: the deadly ill Francis, almost blind, was tormented by the division in his Order and the uncertainty of its fate (1C 98.1-3 [Fontes, 374; Armstrong, 2004: 106]); 1C 104.1-7 [Fontes, 381; Armstrong, 2004: 113-114]). The Assisi Compilation narrates that one night when Francis in his illness was reflecting on all the troubles he was enduring, he was told 'in spirit': 'Be glad and rejoice in your illnesses and troubles, because as of now, you are as secure as if you were already in my kingdom' (AC 83.13-18 [Fontes, 1596-1597; Armstrong, 2000: 185]). The next morning he composed the *Praise of the Lord for his creatures* (1225) which he calls the *Canticle of Brother Sun*, 'who is more beautiful than all other creatures and can be most closely

compared to God' (AC 83.19-30 [Fontes, 1597-1598; Armstrong, 2000: 185-186]); similarly AC 66.1-5 [Fontes, 1565-1566; Armstrong, 2000: 168-169]).

It is not only the direct testimony of the mystics that may reveal the character of their transcendent experience, but also their lives may testify to the existence of their contact with the transcendence from which they gain super-human vitality (Underhill, 2008: 413-414). I maintain that the deadly ill and emaciated Francis, marked with stigmata at the end of his life but still preaching around to save souls, testifies to his contact with Life itself, from which his 'super normal vitality' springs (Underhill, 2008: 414).

My demarcation of various stages of Francis' mystic way, elaborated also by Nolthenius (1988: 220-233), differs slightly from her findings, because I accept a different dating of certain events or experiences in Francis' life. A substantial difference concerns the end of the Dark Night period, which Nolthenius dates with the live celebration of the Nativity in Greccio in 1223, while I mark the end of this period in 1224 with the stigmatization experience, because of the still noticeable elements of the Dark Night (as mentioned above).

The purpose of my research has been to investigate whether a mystical experience is at the basis of Francis' attitude of inclusive concern. Already his conversion experience qualifies for an affirmative answer: through his conversion experience Francis came to see the face of the suffering Christ in the lepers. In the encounter with the lepers Francis was confronted with the poor, those who were powerless, had no voice and did not count. In that fundamental experience, he came to the insight that all men and women are creatures of the same Creator God, bestowed with the same grace of salvation. As indicated, this experience was gradually extended (via the *Sermon to the Birds*) to all creatures, and came to its ultimate expression in the *Canticle*.

Underhill remarks about a mystic in general: 'He pierces the veil of imperfection, and beholds creation with the Creator's eye' (Underhill, 2008: 262). In Francis' case this implies that he, when considering animals from the point of view of their Creator, discovered their worth from God's perspective: 'Finally, he used to call all creatures by the name of "brother" and "sister" and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the heart of creatures' (1C 81.1-6 [Fontes 356-357; Armstrong, 2004: 90-91]).

With reference to the preceding heading Illumination, I hold that, the secret of the heart of creatures which Francis was able to discern through his purified vision, is their own relationship with their Creator and their worth before God.

2.2.6 Appreciation of animals in Francis' nature-mysticism

In Francis' respectful attitude for creation one can discern different qualities of appreciation. Francis' view on creation is succinctly expressed in the *Canticum fratris solis vel Laudes*

creaturarum (*Canticle of Brother Sun*, [Fontes, 39-41; Armstrong, 1999: 113-114]). The *Canticum*, composed towards the end of Francis' life in Umbrian Italian, may be considered as 'the final synthesis of Francis' thought' about the relationship between humans, creation and Creator (Sorrell, 1988: 98). As Francis is almost blind at the time of the composition of the *Canticle*, his imagery of light and colors 'may be more about creating (or recreating) a general visual image of the world, rather than a specific one' (Doebler, 2010: 196):

1. Most High, all-powerful, good Lord. Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor and all blessing.
 2. To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no man is worthy to mention Your name.
 3. Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir, Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
 4. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.
 5. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious, and beautiful.
 6. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) Brother Wind, and through (*for*) the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom (by which) You give sustenance to Your creatures.
 7. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) Sister Water, who is very useful and humble, and precious and chaste.
 8. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) Brother Fire, through (by) whom You light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.
 9. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
 10. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.
 11. Blessed are those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.
 12. Praised be You, my Lord, through (*for*) our Sister, Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.
 13. Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.
 14. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.
- (*Canticum Fratris Solis* [Fontes, 39-41; Armstrong, 1999: 113-114])

In the quoted Armstrong translation, I propose to substitute 'through' with the alternative '*for*' as translation for the Umbrian *per* (see below).

The *Canticum Fratris Solis* (the *Canticle*) does not mention animals at all, and thus seems at first glance not to be of prime relevance for my subject. Researchers refer in relation to the *Canticle* to 'creatures' in general, without discriminating between animate and inanimate creatures (e.g., Sorrell, 1988: 68). Other studies do observe that in the *Canticle* no animals are mentioned, without analysing or suggesting possible motives Francis might have had for leaving them unmentioned (e.g., Murray, 1992: 155) or simply suggest that animals are considered here as part of creation as a whole (e.g. Werner, 1986: 23; Le Goff, 1999: 86). The only exception is the authoritative Manselli, who states in his biography on Francis that inclusion of animals

‘would have broken the poetic unity of the *Canticle* which moves between the beauty of the cosmos and humans, as beings for whom it is created and who can appreciate it’ (Manselli, 1984: 328).

This (anthropocentric) explanation remains in my view unsatisfactory, because of the suggestion that Francis, who did demonstrate during his life inclusive concern for animals, would not have taken animals into consideration, or would have omitted them without reason, in what is seen as his pinnacle poem, composed at the end of his life.

Since the 13th century disagreement exists on the intention of the *Canticle*. I will firstly refer to possible influences on the *Canticle* and the various interpretations of its intention. From the perspective of my research, I will suggest a reason for omission of the mention of animals in the *Canticle*, at the same time rendering some additional interpretive arguments for one of the existing interpretations relating to Francis’ intention of the *Canticle*, namely as thanksgiving for creation. Subsequently, I clarify the different qualities of Francis’ appreciation for animals.

Francis’ writings touching upon creation show, as may be expected, a profound influence by the Holy Scriptures: the creation accounts (Genesis 1-2), the *Song of the Three Jews in the Fiery Furnace* (the apocryphal addition to Daniel, inserted between 3: 23 and 3: 24) and the liturgical Psalms (especially Psalm 148 (*A Call for the Universe to Praise God*), Psalm 19 (*God’s Glory in Creation*), Psalm 66 (*A song of Praise and Thanksgiving*) and Psalm 99 (*God the Supreme King*)). The *Canticle* follows the same structure as Psalm 148 and the *Song of the Three Jews*: moving in a sequence from a Laude to the Lord to a praise of creation (first in a general sense, next to specific creatures and then to people), using a repeating refrain to address them: *Laudate eum* (Psalm 148), *Benedicite Domino* (*The Song of the Three Jews*) and *Laudato si, mi Signore* (the *Canticle*) and finally back to the Lord. Furthermore, the *Canticle* alludes to the creation account, for example, verses 3-5 referring to Genesis 1:14-15. The *Canticle* also shows some significant divergence from the *Song of the Three Jews* and the Psalms, for example, where the passive (instead of active) imperative (*Be praised, my Lord*) is used and where creatures and their qualities in the *Canticle* are described, instead of merely listing them (Manselli, 1984: 323; Cunningham, 1976: 52; Sorrell, 1988: 98-105; Robson, 1997: 244).

The early sources tell of chivalry influences on Francis and that he undertook to go to Apulia to fight and ‘to be knighted’ by a count (L3C, 5-6 [Fontes, 1377-1379; Armstrong, 2000: 70-71]; 2C 21.1-4 [Fontes, 462-463; Armstrong, 2004: 176-177]). Amongst Francis’ followers in those days was Pacifico, a well-known troubadour (2C 106 [Fontes, 539-541; Armstrong, 2004: 234-235]); Francis is told to sing in French (AC 38.1-4 [Fontes, 1511; Armstrong, 2000: 142]). The *Fioretti* (*Little Flowers of Saint Francis*) narrates Francis’ regard for courtliness, for example, where Francis tells a brother that ‘courtesy is one of the qualities of God’ (LF1 37 [Desbonnets et Vorreux, 2002: 1159; Armstrong, 2001: 628]). Chivalric influences are noticeable in Francis’

address of creatures in a courtly mode, for example, ‘Sir, Brother Sun’ (Le Goff, 1999: 196-198; Sorrell, 1988: 70-71; 106-108).

The controversy about the *Canticum Fratris Solis* circles around its intention: either an exhortation to creation to praise God, or a thanksgiving for creation, or expressing a dual meaning. The discussion has mainly centred on how the Umbrian preposition *per*, used in verses 5-10 and 12 of the *Canticum Fratris Solis* is to be understood. I summarize the various positions with the respective supporting arguments, and subsequently add my own arguments supporting the position of *per* as causal (*for*).

First position: this position understands *per* as agent, translated as *by*: Be praised my Lord, *by* Sister Moon, *by* Brother Wind, *by* Sister Water, *et cetera*. The Umbrian *per* is understood as a corruption of the Latin *per*, like the French *par*. Such an exhortation of creatures to praise God is found in Psalm 148 and in the *Song of the Three Jews* (both used by Francis as models). This position is consistent with other works of Francis, where he exhorts creatures to praise the Creator, for example, ‘All you creatures, bless the Lord’ (*Exhortatio ad laudem Dei*, 11 [Fontes, 111; Armstrong, 1999: 138]) and ‘Every creature in heaven, on earth and under the earth; and in the sea and those which are in it. And let us praise and glorify Him forever’ (*Laudes ad omnes horas dicendae*, 8 [Fontes, 142; Armstrong, 1999: 161]). Celano and Bonaventure both interpret the *Canticle* mainly according to this model (depicting Francis inviting creatures to praise the Lord), for example, 1C 58.6-13 [Fontes, 333-334; Armstrong, 2004: 74]; 1C 80 [Fontes, 355-356; Armstrong, 2004: 90]; 1C 81 [Fontes, 356-357; Armstrong, 2004: 90-91]; 2C 217.7 [Fontes, 632; Armstrong, 2004: 306]; LMj 9:1.9 [Fontes, 854; Armstrong, 2000: 597].

Celano and Bonaventure and their contemporaries consider the interpretation of *per* as agent (*by*) in line with Psalm 148 or the *Song of the Three Jews*, and thus interpret the expression as a restoration of an ancient Christian belief in a literal way. This then could be considered Francis’ innovation (Sorrell, 1988: 117-118).

This position (of all creatures praising God) is supported by (e.g.) Sabatier (1894: 304-306) with reference to Celano, Murray (1992: 121), Nolthenius (1988: 272) referring to Francis’ loyalty to Scripture (and the biblical models) and his creature-to-creature-relation to nature, as prevalent in 13th century Italy, Freeman (2006b: 213-216) referring to verse 2 of the *Canticle*, and to Francis’ other exhortations of creatures.

Second position: The second position interprets *per* as causal, that is, thanksgiving *for* creation: Be praised my Lord, *for* Sister Moon, *for* Brother Wind *et cetera*. The Umbrian word *per* is understood like the French *pour* or the Latin *propter* (*for, because of*). This interpretation is supported by the Assisi Compilation and the Mirror of Perfection, both stemming from Francis’ most close companions:

And he said to them: ‘I must rejoice greatly in my illnesses and troubles and be consoled in the Lord, giving thanks always to God the Father, to His only Son, our Lord

Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit for such a great grace and blessing. In His mercy He has given me, His unworthy little servant still living in the flesh, the promise of His Kingdom. Therefore for His praise, for our consolation and for the edification of our neighbour, (*ad hedificationem proximi*) I want to write a new *Praise of the Lord* for his creatures, *which we use every day, and without which we cannot live*. Through them the human race greatly offends the Creator, and every day we are ungrateful for such great graces, because we do not praise, as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all good.’ Sitting down he began to meditate and then said: ‘Most High, all-powerful, good Lord.’ He composed a melody for these words and taught it to his companions so they could repeat it (AC 83.20-24 [Fontes, 1597-1598; Armstrong, 2000: 185-186]); similarly MP 119 Sabatier Edition [Fontes, 2044; Armstrong, 2001: 367], my italics).

This interpretation offers the *Canticle* as Francis’ accusation of human beings (‘through them [the creatures] the human race greatly offends the Creator’ because humans are not grateful for creatures which ‘we use every day and without which we cannot live’ (AC 83.21-22 [Fontes, 1597; Armstrong, 2000: 186])). Interpreted in this way, the *Canticle* offers a more innovative meaning, considering that such criticism and command (‘for the edification of our neighbour’ (AC 83 [Armstrong, 2000: 186]) is unheard of in medieval literature (Sorrell, 1988: 118-119).

Arguments supporting this position are:

- a. AC is more detailed compared to Celano’s account, and most likely older than Celano’s *Vita Secunda*, where AC goes back to ‘We, who were with him,’ Francis’ close companions (e.g., AC 11.13 [Fontes, 1485-1486; Armstrong, 2000: 126]; AC 14.2 Fontes, 1492; Armstrong 2000: 129]).
- b. Celano also relates the composition of the *Canticle* to the account of Francis’ illness and the dream of the promise of the inheritance of the Kingdom:

‘Rejoice, then,’ the Lord said to him, ‘for your illness is the pledge of my Kingdom; by merit of your patience you can be firm and secure in expecting the inheritance of this Kingdom’... It was then (*tunc*) that he composed the Praises about Creatures, rousing them in any way to praise the Creator (*et eas utcumque ad Creatorem laudandum accendit*) (2C 213.6.11 [Fontes, 628; Armstrong, 2004: 302-303]).

Sorrell rightly notes that when Celano connects here the composition of the *Canticle* to the AC account, he derides his own interpretation of the *Canticle* (as exhortation to creatures to praise their Creator), as expressed, for example, in 2C 217.7-8 [Fontes 632; Armstrong, 2004: 306]) and in 1C 80-81 [Fontes, 355-357; Armstrong, 2004, 90-91]). It might be concluded that the AC is in this case more detailed and reliable, as it originates from Francis’ companions (Sorrell, 1988: 120).

- c. The explanation of *per* as causal explains the passive imperative (*laudato si*; Praised be You, my Lord), because in other phrases where Francis clearly exhorts creation to praise God, he uses the normal imperative (e.g., in the *Sermon to the Birds*, the *Exhortation* and the *Praises before the Office*). If Francis had had the same intention, he would have used the active imperative. From here, it would follow that in this case it is not creation but people who are exhorted to

praise God, because of their ungratefulness and lack of appreciation for creation (Sorrell, 1988: 120-121).

d. This interpretation is also supported by Francis' use of the admiring and gratifying remarks, and the emphasis on the usefulness of creatures, not present in the mentioned scriptural models available to Francis (especially Psalm 148 and the *Song of the Three Jews*). These elements only make sense if it is Francis' original intention to justify the value and worth of creation (Sorrell, 1988: 121) against those who 'every day are ungrateful [i.e., human beings], because we do not praise, as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all good' (AC 83.21-22; [Fontes, 1597; Armstrong, 2000: 186]). Thus, not creation, but ungrateful people are urged to praise God. As Sorrell (1988: 128-130) has pointed out, in the *Canticle* there is a movement in praise of God ('Most High, all-powerful, good Lord...') via a *praise of God for his creatures* ('Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures') to a *praise of the creatures themselves*, as stated by Francis' expressions of appreciation of the creatures themselves (in order to raise gratitude of people for creation).

e. The language of the poem is not Latin, but an Umbrian dialect, thus connecting it with the informal speech of the troubadour poetry, allowing for easier popular understanding (see for the various novel elements of the *Canticle* from a literary-historic perspective: Doebler, 2010: 196). If the *Canticle* was meant as an exhortation of creation, there would have been no need for Francis to deviate from the traditional well known models (Psalms and *The Song of the Three Jews*) which he did use as exhortation to creation before (and there addressing the elements in Latin) (Sorrell, 1988: 121-122).

The main supporters of this position are, amongst others, the editors Esser (1976:122-133) and Menestò e Brufani (1995: 39-41), both translating the Umbrian *per* into the Latin *propter*; Cousins in the introduction to his translation of Bonaventure (1978: 27-28); Sorrell (1988: 115-124) and Desbonnets et Vorreux, 2002: 168-170.

Third position: The interpretation of *per* as instrumental, translated as *through*: 'Be praised my Lord, *through* Sister Moon' *et cetera*. In this interpretation the Umbrian *per* is understood like the developing Italian *par*, expressing simultaneously that the mentioned elements 'may be seen as instruments of praise or as reasons for praise, praising them also implies praising the God Who created them and acknowledging that they are symbols of their Creator' (Armstrong, 1999: 113-114). The main supporters of this position are, for example, Sabatelli (1958), Van Doornik (1979), Doyle (1980: 39-40), Manselli, (1984: 325), R. Armstrong (1999) and E. Armstrong (1973). Van Doornik translates *per* as *for*, but states in a footnote that *per* also means *through* and that most likely Francis was not consciously aware of this distinction between the meanings of *per* and thus 'used the term with both of its meanings simultaneously' (Van Doornik, 1979: 188-189; 198). Sabatelli (1958: 8-15) supports this position, suggesting that there might be no solution available on exegetical grounds. Both R. and E. Armstrong translate *per* as *for*, mainly

based on the verse preceding the *per* verses: *Laudato sie, mi Signore, cun tutte le tue creature*, Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures (v. 3), suggesting praises of the Lord, for His creatures (R. Armstrong, 1999: 113-114; E. Armstrong, 1973: 229-230). However, E. Armstrong (referring to 2C 217.7 [Fontes, 632; Armstrong, 2004: 306] which states that Francis invited all creatures to praise God [and thus implying a translation with *by*] and to MP 118.10-12 Sabatier Edition [Fontes, 2043; Armstrong, 2001: 366], stating that Francis composed certain Praises of the Lord *for* His Creatures, which we use daily) concludes that

as it is difficult even in our own thought to separate these two attitudes (of thanksgiving for creation or exhorting creatures to praise God), it is academic to regard them as set against one another in the minds of men of the thirteenth century (Armstrong, 1973: 230).

Also Cunningham (although he translates *per* as *for*) admits:

It is quite possible that the ‘per’ can mean both thanksgiving and praise at the same time and that it is simply impossible to translate that dual sense in English. My own inclination is to admit that double sense in light of the different readings that were given to the Canticum in the time of Francis himself (Cunningham, 1976: 53).

Although I sympathize with the view that a dual meaning might have been present in Francis’ mind, I nevertheless favour the view that the intention of the *Canticum* was an exhortation of people to praise God *for* his creation. For this position I do not only value the already mentioned arguments supporting the translation of *per* as *for* (arguments a-e) but I would also like to contribute additional arguments of my own, explaining at the same time the ‘puzzling’ fact that animals are not mentioned in the *Canticum*.

The AC refers to the *Canticum* as the ‘Praise of the Lord for his creatures, which we use every day, and *without which we cannot live*’ (AC 83.21 [Fontes, 1597; Armstrong, 2000: 186, my italics]). Amongst the elements without which we cannot live, the *Canticum* only mentions inanimate creatures. It is my assumption that Francis did omit animals because in his view animals are not among ‘the creatures, which we use every day and without which we cannot live’ (AC 83.21 [Fontes, 1597; Armstrong, 2000: 186]). This argument is supported by the *Canticum*’s allusion to Genesis 1: 14-15 (Sorrell, 1988: 126):

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom You give us light ... and Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful (*Canticum fratris solis vel Laudes creaturarum*, v. 3-5).

Further allusion to Genesis in the *Canticum* may be seen in the paradisiacal harmony between creatures, where a vegan diet is prescribed for humans and for animals (Gen. 1: 29-30): as in the paradisiacal harmony, no animals are eaten, but God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food’ (Gen. 1: 29) and to the animals ‘I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so (Gen. 1: 30). The *Canticum*’s mention (v. 9) of ‘various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs’ may be interpreted as a reference to Genesis 1: 29-30. It is my contention

that in Francis' view animals are linked to people in such an intimate way that he perceives animals and people as one entity or category, as beings unable to subsist ('who cannot live' (AC 83.21 [Fontes, 1597; Armstrong, 2000: 186])) without the other (inanimate) creatures. Thus interpreted, the mentioned creatures in the *Canticle*, used by humans and animals alike, and their Creator, are to be praised. As all creatures mentioned are inanimate, I have come to the conclusion that Francis composed the *Canticle* to thank God and his (inanimate) creatures who attend to humans' and animals' needs. Interpreted in this way, the *Canticle* testifies to a primordial, aetiological kinship and paradisiacal bond between humans and all fellow animate creatures under God's overview. This interpretation of closeness between humans and animals finds support in Cardini's essay 'Francesco e gli animali' and in Vauchez:

The ambiguous silence on animals is not meaningless: as if he who somewhere else recommended to his friars to be subordinated to all creatures, including wild beasts, wants hereby to underline again, with this silence (that joins both human beings and animals together) the deep brotherhood and the privileged relationship that has to be established between them (animals and humans). As a matter of fact, the Lord is praised neither for the animals nor for the human beings (except for those who forgive and patiently suffer for the love of God) (Cardini, 2009: 217);

That animals are not mentioned in this prayer probably derives from the fact that, similar to human beings through their suffering (that is, animals' concrete needs like hunger, thirst, and so on) but also through their beauty, the witness that they bear is not essentially different from that of humans (Vauchez, 2012: 279).

However, neither Cardini nor Vauchez assert that God has to be praised for the inanimate creatures that sustain humans and animals alike.

The analysis of the *Canticle* reveals Francis' profound respect, appreciation, sympathy and joy for creatures. Creatures are addressed as brothers and sisters of each other, expressing their closeness and relationship. I hold that it was only after a long purification process that Francis could 'behold Creation with the Creator's eye' (Underhill, 2008: 262), discerning and praising creatures' intrinsic worth and qualities, independent of human needs. The *Canticle* expresses the harmony of creation and the proper relation to creatures. From the analysis of the *Canticle*, the following qualities of Francis' appreciation for creatures are discernible (adapted from Sorrell (1988: 125).

2.2.6.1 Kinship

In Francis' approach to animals and creatures, as succinctly expressed in the *Canticle*, is a deep feeling of intimacy: ultimately he approaches every creature as 'brother' or 'sister', thus including them in a familial relation, in a 'universal fraternity of all creatures' (Cusato, 2009: 11, 56). Herewith, Francis suggests a closeness that nobody is able to put into words:

Who could ever express the deep affection he bore for all things that belong to God? Or who would be able to tell of the sweet tenderness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator? (1C 80.3 [Fontes, 355;

Armstrong, 90]) ... Finally, he used to call all creatures by the name of ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern *the secrets of the heart* of creatures like someone who has already passed *into the freedom of the glory of the children of God* (1C 81.5 [Fontes, 357; Armstrong, 91]).

Francis, influenced by troubadour poetry, applied chivalric titles to creatures which can be considered as ‘a step toward balancing a perceived ‘I-it’ objectifying relationship with an ‘I-thou’ relationship of respect and affection between humans and creatures’ (Sorrell, 1988: 134).

2.2.6.2 Interdependence

The *Canticle* expresses Francis’ view on the relation between creatures, humans and God: though creatures and humans have their own intrinsic worth, they both originate in God’s creative work. Both depend on His might and mercy for their continuous survival. In Francis’ view it is not only creation that has to serve humans, but humans have to care for creation and even have to be subservient to creation. For example, in *A Salutation of the Virtues*, Francis talks about obedience as

subject and submissive to everyone in the world, not only to people but to every beast and wild animal as well, that they may do whatever they want with it insofar as it *has been given to them from above* by the Lord (*A Salutation of the Virtues*: 14. 16-18 [Fontes, 224; Armstrong, 1999: 165]).

This attitude shows his respect for animals and his confidence in God. As elaborated, Francis’ hagiographers and companions have referred to Francis’ love and compassion for animals and the affection which animals reciprocate (e.g., LMj 8: 8.1-9 [Fontes, 849-850; Armstrong, 2000: 592; *Actus B. Francisci et Sociorum eius*, 23 [Fontes, 2134-2137; Armstrong, 2001: 601-604]); LFl 21 [Desbonnets et Vorreux, 2002: 1116-1119). They interpret the creatures’ responses to him as a sign of their respect for God’s servant and the mutual respect and love as a ‘return’ to a paradisiacal state of innocence, of restoration of harmony between God, humans and the rest of creation (LMn 3:6 [Fontes, 983-984; Armstrong, 2000: 696-697]) according to Genesis 1 and 2. In the sequence of the *Canticle*, the harmony between humans and creatures (vv. 3-9) is first followed by harmony between people (vv. 10-11) and then between humans and God (vv. 12-14).

2.2.6.3 Utility

The *Canticle* expresses the usefulness of inanimate creation: ‘Sir Brother Sun, through whom the Creator gives us light’; ‘Brother Wind and every kind of weather, through whom the Creator gives sustenance to His creatures’; ‘Sister Water, who is called “very useful”’; ‘Brother Fire, through whom the Creator lights the night’; ‘Sister Mother Earth who sustains and govern us’ (*Canticle* 3; 6; 7; 8; 9 [Fontes, 39-41; Armstrong, 1999: 113-114]). From my argumentation, I maintain that in Francis’ view animals, like humans, need the lauded elements for their

sustenance, and animals and humans are ranked by Francis in one category of living beings: inanimate creation is the indispensable condition for survival by human beings and animals alike. On the other hand, inanimate elements have not been created for ‘domination’ or exploitation, but to care for creation, ‘to till and keep it’ [the Garden] (Gen 2:15). From this perspective, the *Canticle* is a reminder of the eternal and unbreakable kinship and sacred bond between humans and their fellow creatures under God (to be elaborated in Chapter 4).

2.2.6.4 Aesthetics

The *Canticle* originates in the ‘unspeakable joy’ Francis feels when contemplating creatures: Sir Brother Sun, who is called ‘beautiful and radiant with great splendour’, Sister Moon and the Stars characterised as ‘clear, precious and beautiful’, Sister Water, called ‘humble, precious and chaste’, Brother Fire, called ‘beautiful and playful and robust’.

From contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator ‘he often overflowed with amazing, unspeakable joy (*ineffabili gaudio*) as he looked at the sun, gazed at the moon, or observed the stars in the sky’ (1C 80.4 [Fontes, 355-356; Armstrong, 2004: 90]). Because of this joy, arising from the beauty of creatures, Francis sings for God and His creation. He loves all creatures in a direct way and at the same time celebrates in them the immanent but all-transcending God.

2.2.6.5 Ontology

Francis considers all creatures as his brothers and sisters because they share with him the same origin. As Bonaventure expresses:

In consideration of the primal origin of all things, he would call all creatures, however insignificant, by the names of brother and sister since they come forth with him from the one source (LMn 3: 6.4 [Fontes, 983-984; Armstrong, 2000: 696]).

From a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of ‘brother’ or ‘sister’, because he knew they shared with him the same beginning (LMj 8: 6.1 [Fontes, 847; Armstrong, 2000: 590]).

Francis is ‘conscious that he shares with these brothers and sisters of his the great and lovely life of the All’ (Underhill, 2008: 260), the Mystery of Life, whom he gives the name of ‘Most High, all-powerful, good Lord’.

2.2.6.6 Theophany

Leclerc (1982: 24-40) concentrates on Francis’ personality from a psychological perspective, searching for Francis’ sub-conscious motives by analysing the qualities Francis has ascribed to the various creatures in the *Canticle*. The *Canticle* expresses a deep feeling for God’s

immanence in creatures. Francis perceives the divine in a direct way in the worth and magnificence of individual creatures. Brother Sun bears a likeness of the Most High. Because the sun, moon and stars, wind, water, fire and earth are reasons for praise, praising these elements implies also praising their Creator and recognizing them as symbols of their Creator. Francis' use of adjectives for the creatures therefore alludes to the image he holds of God (Leclerc, 1982: 35-36).

Francis is able to perceive 'Every visible and invisible creature' as a theophany or appearance of God' because (in Underhill's words) prejudice, selfhood, or other illusions no longer distort his view (Underhill, 2008: 259-260). In Bonaventure's observation:

With the steady gaze of a dove, that is, the simple application and pure consideration of the mind, he referred all things to the supreme Artisan and recognized, loved and praised their Maker in all things (LMn 3:6.2 [Fontes, 983; Armstrong, 2000: 696]).

Francis' mystical experience transforms his perception of the world in a way that he is able to perceive God's goodness, glory and Life in all creatures. Francis shows that harmonious relations between creatures and between creatures and God are an option. Such relations of care and concern include all creatures, animate and inanimate, as God's intention as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Francis exhibits a direct joy, without instrumental attitude or rational calculation. Through his long purification process he is finally able to liberate himself from ties which prevent rational humans from seeing the worth of creation in its own right and from the Creator's perspective.

Here, as well as in section 3.5.6, the term 'theophany' has been used in a specific sense, following Underhill. The ability to perceive animals as 'theophany' or 'appearance of God' can be regarded as one of the characteristics of great mystics. In the ordinary sense, from a religion-historical perspective, 'theophany' is understood as a temporary appearance of a deity known before, as intensification of religious orientation, but without creating anything essentially new. In this sense, the opposing term is 'revelation', in which a deity by appearance reveals himself or herself as new and thus founds belief and worship (Galling, 1962: 840).

2.2.7 Summary

After introducing mysticism, I have applied mystical characteristics and stages of the mystic way to Francis. I have concluded that Francis may qualify for the predicate 'mystic'. I hold that in trying to live the lines of the Gospel in this world in a distinctive and exemplary way, Francis came to experience creation and animals in particular in their own right, and from the Creator's perspective.

It was only after a long purification process that Francis achieved a 'disinterested' view and level of perception in which 'God is seen and known in the whole world', since Francis' form of illumination was dominantly outward-looking. He attained a level of perception from which he

experienced the kinship and common ontological basis between animals and humans, the interdependency between all creatures, their utility, aesthetic value and their theophany.

From Francis' life and work we learn that through direct experience we may achieve real contact with other creatures and with the Most High God. At this level, more profound than the rational, we share with other living beings the mystery of life. This mystery, or the 'heightened significance' in other manifestations of life, cannot be known by 'knowledge', based on naturalistic or interpretative categories, but solely by knowing through 'communion' (Underhill, 2008: 36). Francis was able to experience in other life a 'Reality' transcending the physical world and oneself and may have sensed the animals' own relation with the Creator God. At the origin of nature-mysticism stand empathy, sympathy and compassion through which Francis arrived at a direct relation with creatures and attained mystical relatedness to the divine Mystery of life.

CHAPTER 3

FROM MYSTICISM TO A NEW SPIRITUALITY: ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Chapter 2 contained an introduction to mysticism. This chapter, concerning the ethical mysticism of Albert Schweitzer, develops as follows: first, an outline of Schweitzer's ethical mysticism within a biographical context; second, a description of the origin and principal characteristics of Schweitzer's ethical mysticism; third, an overview of Schweitzer's theological understanding; fourth, an application of the characteristics of mysticism and the stages of the mystic way according to Underhill's classification; and fifth, the position of animals in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism.

A substantial part of Schweitzer's writings has been published posthumously, mainly in German. These *Werke aus dem Nachlass* were published in München from 1995 to 2006. The ten volumes, over 6000 pages, consist of essays (amongst others the unfinished third volume of *Kultur Philosophie*), correspondence, lectures, speeches, conferences and sermons. Where references are made to these volumes, translations are my own. Existing English translations of other works have been compared with the German original.

3.1 Outline of Schweitzer's ethical mysticism

Albert Schweitzer (born in 1875 at Kaisersberg, died 1965 at Lambarene) grew up in Günsbach, Upper Alsace, as the son of a pastor of the Evangelical Protestant church. After he finished the Gymnasium, he studied Theology, Philosophy and Music theory. He finalized his philosophical studies with a doctoral thesis on Immanuel Kant (Strassbourg, 1899), and his theological studies with a doctoral thesis on the Last Supper (Strassbourg, 1900). Schweitzer stands in the rationalistic tradition of the Enlightenment. Romantic influences can be discerned as well: where reason falls short, 'the will' is determining. Schweitzer acknowledges influences of thinkers like Kant, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and others, whose thoughts are outlined throughout his second volume of *The Philosophy of Civilisation*. Here I will just touch on the most salient influences and on his major points of criticism of those who influenced his thinking.

Immanuel Kant (see Chapter 1) influenced Schweitzer by his emphasis on morality and by the conviction that ethics must be based in rational thought (Schweitzer, 2003: 30). Schweitzer criticises Kant for replacing 'sympathy' and 'compassion' (of the eighteenth century thought) by the sense of 'duty', that is, respect for the law, as the source of ethical behaviour, without connecting it with a content (Schweitzer, 1923a: 104-105). Other points of criticism are that Kant excluded animals (as ends) from ethical considerations (Schweitzer, 1923a: 105-106) and that his postulates of God and immortality cannot be proven (Schweitzer, 1923a: 108-109). In a rare letter (1965) to Karl Barth, Schweitzer mentions that the ethics of Kant with its exclusive

character, which appeared to Schweitzer as being ‘cold’ (*kalt*), had been in fact the starting point for his own ethics inclusive of all creatures (Schweitzer, 2006: 70). Schweitzer praises *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* (1749-1832), whose insights he has much affinity with, such as the view of the human will-to-live as spiritual and material matter, the togetherness of thought and practical engagement (Schweitzer, 1928: 472) and his view of relation to nature (Schweitzer, 1932: 486-492; Schweitzer, 1923a: 133-135). Schweitzer obtained the key concept of his thought system, ‘will-to-live’, from *Arthur Schopenhauer* (1788-1860), a proponent of metaphysical voluntarism. But contrary to Schweitzer, for Schopenhauer the will is an irrational and unconscious force to which the reason is subordinate. Because this will-to-live, both in the universe as in the individual, is a purposeless drive for Schopenhauer, the world is senseless and all being is suffering. Schopenhauer’s ethics, influenced by Indian thought, is three-fold: an ethic of resignation, an ethic of universal compassion and an ethic of world-negation (Schweitzer, 1923a: 162-165). Schopenhauer’s response is asceticism, in order to eradicate the will-to-live and to become detached from the world. In Schweitzer’s thought, however, the will-to-live has a spiritual and material dimension, and for him only a partial negation of the will-to-live is needed for self-perfection, but life as such has to be affirmed. In Schweitzer’s view, ethics is therefore higher than asceticism. In addition, Schweitzer criticises Schopenhauer because his compassion is only a passive one (Schweitzer, 1923a: 167-169). In his life-affirmation, Schweitzer agrees with *Friedrich Nietzsche* (1844-1900) that morality springs from the inner demand of the will-to-live for self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923a: 171). Because higher life-affirmation requires repression of natural impulses, Nietzsche comes to consider repression of natural impulses as life-negation. Schweitzer differs from Nietzsche in that he considers repression of natural impulses (required for higher life-affirmation) not a negation of the self, but a way of self-transcendence, leading to union with the universal Will-to-live. Devotion to other life is thus not a surrender of the self, but a ‘manifestation of its expansion’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 182). He criticises Nietzsche for his focus on self-fulfilment, and for neglecting the moral duty to others.

In his *Indian and Chinese Thought and Religion* Schweitzer expresses on the one hand appreciation for inclusion of animals in ethical considerations in Eastern thinking. His criticism on the other hand is that the compassion in the Indian systems is merely theoretical; world negation is an end in itself (Schweitzer, 1923b: 167-168). The Chinese effort of trying to identify in the impersonal of world history the secret of the ethical, is in Schweitzer’s view a hopeless effort, as it is not possible to discover an ethical meaning in the world (Schweitzer, 1923b: 227-230).

While being successful in academia from an early age, Schweitzer decided during the Pentecostal holiday of 1896 that he would start serving humanity from his 30th birthday onwards. This decision came, in his own explanation, from the realization that he could not just take for granted his own happiness, but that he had to give something in return. After having

considered different options for this future service, he decided in 1904 to take up the study of medicine in order to serve as a medical doctor and missionary in Africa (Schweitzer, 1935b: 70-74). He therefore resigned in 1906 from his post as Principal of the Theological Seminary, Strassbourg, and subsequently from his posts as university teacher and preacher at St. Nicholas in 1912. That same year he married Helene Bresslau, finished his medical studies with a doctoral thesis on the Psychiatry of Jesus (Strassbourg, 1913) and embarked with his wife for Africa.

From his early years at university, Schweitzer expressed doubts about the reigning optimistic world view during the *Belle Époque* (at the turn of the century) that humanity was advancing steadily on the road to development. Later on, Schweitzer came to interpret World War I as the outcome of a decline of modern civilization (Schweitzer, 1935b: 128; 1923a: 371; 1923b: 1). He experienced his own share of the Great War, when, as an Alsatian with a German passport living in French Equatorial Africa, he was ordered in 1917 to return to Europe and was subsequently interned on French soil until the end of the war in 1918.

‘The tragedy of western world view, I have undertaken to write’ (*Die Tragödie der abendländischen Weltanschauung habe ich zu schreiben unternommen*) reads the opening sentence of the preface to *Kultur und Ethik (Civilization and Ethics)* (Schweitzer, 1923b: VII). This second part of Schweitzer’s *Kulturphilosophie (Philosophy of Civilization)* starts with the word ‘tragedy’, because in Schweitzer’s view western philosophy was incapable of basing (*begründen*) consistently and sustainably the world view of ethical world- and life-affirmation in thought. The optimistic western philosophy, dominant in Schweitzer’s era, had not been able to provide answers to elementary questions concerning life and the world. Concerning the relation of the individual to the universe, this philosophy could not provide a useable world view, a lack that had resulted in a decline of civilization (Schweitzer, 1923b: 1-10; 2005: 27-65; 1923a: 371-378; 1923b: VIII; 1929(2): 35). The only way out of this chaos was to base world- and life-affirmation and ethics (which we need for actions that give meaning to our life) in thought about the world and life (Schweitzer, 1923b: IX). Western philosophy wrongly assumes that world- and life-affirmation has to be deduced from knowledge about the world, revealed by external reality (from history and science). Western philosophy thus attributed a meaning to the world, which would allow for an understanding of the purpose of human life (Schweitzer, 1929(2): 35). For Schweitzer, however, it is impossible to discern a moral purpose in the natural world. Nature produces thousands of lives in the most meaningful way, and destroys thousands of lives in the most meaningless ways. ‘Beings’ (*Wesen*) live at the cost of other beings (Schweitzer: 2001: 1240-1241; Schweitzer, 1936: 226). Looking at nature, we see that all life wants to live itself out (Schweitzer, 1923b: 210; 242). The meaning of history remains for us unfathomable. The only insight we may discern is that the world presents itself to us in every respect as ‘mysterious manifestation’ (*rätselhafte Erscheinung*) of the universal Will-to-Live. Resignation, in relation to ‘knowledge’ (*Erkennen*) of the world is the only way to arrive at a

useful world view (Schweitzer, 1923b: 244). A world view which does not start from resignation is artificial because it is based on an inadmissible explanation of the world. Therefore, we have to accept that we cannot harmonize world view and life view and that we have to decide to place the life view above the world view (Schweitzer, 1936: 226). The 'will' in our 'will to live' goes beyond knowledge of the world (Schweitzer, 1923b: 199-205). What determines our life view is not our knowledge of the world, but the certainty of our will, which is inherent in our will-to-live. In nature, the 'infinite Spirit' (*der unendliche Geist*) presents itself as mysterious creative Will. In our will-to-live He is experienced as world- and life-affirmation and as ethical Will (Schweitzer, 1922: 700). For Schweitzer, a world view is based on our will-to-live when our will-to-live tries to understand itself in thought. Thus, world view develops from life view and not the other way round (Schweitzer, 1923b: XIV). Schweitzer holds that a world view only clarifies the relation of the individual to the universal Will, and does not try to understand the meaning of the world (which is impossible) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 234); life view does not come from knowledge of the world, but stems from our will-to-live, which is the most immediate experience of our consciousness as '*I will to live*'. (Schweitzer, 1936: 227-228).

The dualism between world view and life view, between 'knowledge' and 'will', cannot be harmonized in our thought. According to Schweitzer, all developed world views have been only attempts to solve this dualism (Schweitzer, 1923b: 199-205). The only solution to this dualism is not to try to solve it, but to experience dualism in ourselves, as something which can no longer harm us. Thus, the problem of world view, posed in 'unconditional rationalism' (*voraussetzungslosen Vernunftdenken*) can be formulated as the question concerning the relation of my will-to-live, when it becomes thinking, to itself and to the world (Schweitzer, 1923b: 206-213). Schweitzer holds that our will-to-live starts relating, from an inner urge (in order to remain faithful and consistent to itself), to our own being and to all surrounding manifestations of will-to-live, determined by the disposition of *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*, translated throughout as 'reverence for life' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 244-246). (The German *Ehrfurcht* signifies 'awe' for something overwhelming). Life means for Schweitzer not only humans and animals, but also trees and plants. Schweitzer even refuses to draw a sharp line between the living and the non-living, because 'the will-to-live is everywhere present, even as in me' (Schweitzer, 1936: 230). Reverence for life is, Schweitzer maintains, the most immediate and deepest performance of my will-to-live. In reverence for life, my knowledge turns into experience (Schweitzer, 1923b: 238). Although I do not understand the meaning of the world, my life has meaning in itself, which is, that I live the highest idea, which occurs in my will-to-live, the idea of reverence for life. From there, I give my life and all will-to-live around me, a worth, a compulsion to act and to create value. Ethics grows with the world- and life-affirmation from the same root. Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life. This reverence for life evokes in me the basic principle of ethics, that good is to maintain, promote and increase life and that evil is to destroy, damage and hamper life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 239). Affirmation of the world, that is, affirmation of wills-to-

live that manifest themselves around me, is only possible through my self-devotion to other life. From inner compulsion, without understanding the meaning of the world, I act, create value and perform ethics in the world (Schweitzer, 1923b: XV). The meaning of my life is to live the idea of reverence for life (Schweitzer, 1923b: XV).

To relate to the manifestations of will-to-live in the world in a reverence for life disposition is ethical mysticism (Schweitzer, 1936: 234-235). Schweitzer's ethics is mystical because, in devotion to other life, union with the Infinite might be realized. 'In this union (*Einswerden*) with all life he realizes the active union with the primal Source of Being, to whom this life belongs' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 193). 'The essence of mysticism is that my open-minded "naive" being in the world, through thinking about "I" and about the world, becomes "spiritual surrender" (*geistige Hingebung*) to the mysterious infinite Will, who manifests itself in the Universe' (Schweitzer, 1923b: XVI).

From this experience of the mystery of life Schweitzer arrives at ethical knowledge: not by studying nature or world processes, but by the revelation of the Will-to-Live in himself. The knowledge from nature and the world is knowledge from outside, and thus incomplete. Only the knowledge from within is direct and goes back to the mysterious primal Source of Being. On the basis of the experience of the Will-to-Live, Schweitzer arrives at the fundamental ethical principle: good is enhancing life, evil is destruction of life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 239-240), and at the knowledge that by serving life I serve the eternal Will-to-Live, the primal Source of Being.

It is my assertion that Schweitzer's mystical claim for (moral) knowledge is of the kind 'associated with experiencing the world in a way progressively freed from the ordinary constructions of consciousness' (Rothberg, 1990: 190). The naturalistic and interpretive approach, aiming at empirical explanation, 'excludes in a systematic and *a priori* manner on epistemological grounds, the possibility of this way of knowing' (Rothberg, 1990: 189) (as explained in chapter 2.1.7). I have come to this assertion, given Schweitzer's emphasis on resignation concerning knowledge and his reference to the *docta ignorantia* ('learned ignorance') of the learned man (meaning that we cannot understand God through reason alone).

3.2 Origin and principal characteristics of ethical mysticism

3.2.1 Origin of ethical mysticism

Schweitzer maintains that when a human starts thinking about himself and his relation to the world, he has to start with the first, immediate fact of his consciousness which is 'I am life, which wills to live, surrounded by life, which wills to live' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 137).

Man conceives himself, during each moment he reflects upon himself and the world around him, as will-to-live in the midst of will-to-live. Just as in my will-to-live there is a yearning for continuation of life and for the mysterious exaltation of the will-to-live, which we call love of life, and there is fear for destruction and for that mysterious

depreciation of the will-to-live which we call pain: thus also in all will-to-live surrounding me, whether it is able to express it to me or whether it is dumb (Schweitzer, 1935b: 137). (My translation)

If the human person affirms his will-to-live, he conforms to an act which has already been accomplished in his instinctive thought by repeating it in his conscious thought. The beginning of thought, a beginning which continually repeats itself, is that a human being does not simply accept his existence as something given, but experiences it as something ‘unfathomably mysterious’ (*unergründlich Geheimnisvolles*). Life-affirmation is the spiritual act in which he ceases to live unreflectively and begins to devote himself to his life with reverence, in order to raise it to its true worth. To affirm life is to deepen, to make more inward, and to exalt the will-to-live (Schweitzer, 1999: 285; Schweitzer, 1935b: 137-138).

The process of arriving at the universal ethic of reverence for life and mystical union is elaborated by Schweitzer in three spiritual acts:

1. Starting from elemental thought, ‘which starts from the fundamental questions about the relations of man to the universe, about the meaning of life and about the nature of goodness’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 194), the immediate fact of my consciousness is this: I will-to-live. ‘Through every stage of life, this is the one thing I know about myself. I do not say, ‘I am life’, for life continues to be a mystery too great to understand. I only know that I cling to it because of my reverence for life.’ Schweitzer calls this the first spiritual act in man’s experience: reverence for life (Schweitzer, 1936: 227-228).

2. The consequence of this insight is that man comes to realize that his dependence upon events is quite beyond his control. The result is resignation as the second spiritual act (Schweitzer, 1936: 229). Although man realizes that he has no control over events, at the same time he does realize that he has a certain liberty. Our dependence upon events is not absolute, since it is qualified by our spiritual freedom. Resignation then is the triumph of our will-to-live over whatever happens to us (Schweitzer, 1936: 229).

3. At the same time the man, who has become a thinking being, experiences the compulsion to treat other will-to-live with the same reverence for life as his own, since he experiences the other life in his own (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138). It can only be of a piece with my attitude towards my own life. If I am a thinking being, I must regard life other than my own with equal reverence. And this is the third spiritual act:

For I shall know that it longs for fullness and development as deeply as I do myself. Therefore, I see that evil is what annihilates, hampers or hinders life. And this holds good whether I regard it physically or spiritually. Goodness, by the same token, is the saving or helping of life, the enabling of whatever life I can to attain its highest development. This is the absolute fundamental principle of morality, and is a ‘necessity of thought’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 137-138). (It is given inherently in the will-to-live (Schweitzer, 1936: 230-231).

Thus, according to Schweitzer, there exists a natural empathy and sympathy, which is based on reverence for life: ‘... we find sympathy to be natural for any type of life, without any restrictions, so long as we are capable of imagining in such life the characteristic which we find in our own. That is dread of extinction, fear of pain, and the desire for happiness’ (Schweitzer, 1936: 237).

Schweitzer holds that sympathy is natural and that this expands with thought (reason) (Schweitzer, 1936: 237-238; Schweitzer, 1999: 287). Seeing the presence of life in ourselves, we realize how closely we are linked with other life and recognize it as having some similarity to the life that is in us. ‘Thus, when a human thinks about the question of his proper behaviour regarding other living beings, he realizes that what tradition and culture prescribes, is insufficient. Next to the existing ethics, there is another ethics, based in his personal experience’ (Schweitzer, 1936: 237-238; Schweitzer, 1999: 288).

Although the origin of the ethic of reverence for life is given physically, it arrives at the ‘noblest spirituality’:

(It is born of physical life, out of the linking of life with life. It is therefore the result of our recognizing the solidarity of life which nature gives us. And as it grows more profound, it teaches us sympathy with *all* life. Yet, the extremes touch, for this material-born ethic becomes engraved upon our hearts, and culminates in spiritual union and harmony with the Creative Will which is in and through all (Schweitzer, 1936: 239).

3.2.2 Principal characteristics of reverence for life

Four principal characteristics of reverence for life as defined by Schweitzer are rationality, absoluteness, universality and spirituality.

3.2.2.1 Rationality

As the primary characteristic of the ethic of reverence for life, rationality develops as a result of thought upon life. Schweitzer holds that everyone who truly explores the depths of thought necessarily arrives at this point: ‘to be truly rational is to become ethical’. He maintains that it has not been achieved before, because thought fears such an ethic, since thought wants to impose regulations and order that can be duly systematized. And the ethic of reverence for life is boundless (Schweitzer, 2003: 144; Schweitzer, 1936: 231).

Since reverence for life is an ethic which is rational in a direct and elemental, not a speculative, sense; it is a ‘necessity of thought’ (*denknotwendig*) for anyone who will only ‘reflect upon the first, the most immediate, and the continually given fact of his own consciousness’: his will-to-live (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138).

3.2.2.2 Absoluteness

Reverence for life is an absolute ethic, ‘calling for creating of perfection in this life’. It cannot be completely achieved, as it demands what is actually beyond our capacity. ‘It does not lay

down specific rules for each possible situation’, nor sets ‘maximum or minimum limits to what we must do.’ ‘It simply tells us that we are responsible for the lives around us’. Reverence for life is an ideal, which cannot be fully realized, but which lets man experience within himself an absolute moral compulsion (Schweitzer, 2003: 144; Schweitzer, 1936: 232).

3.2.2.3 Universality

Moral duty is not only experienced as absolute; its content is also universal:

True ethics are world-wide. All that is ethical goes back to a single principle of morality, namely, the maintenance of life at its highest level, and the furtherance of life... Ethics are boundless in their domain and limitless in their demands. They are concerned with all living things that come within our sphere (Schweitzer, 1935a: 191).

According to Schweitzer, reverence for life is an universal ethic because its realm is infinite:

Ordinary ethics seeks to find limits within the sphere of human life and relationships. But the absolute ethics of the will-to-live must revere every form of life, seeking so far as possible to refrain from destroying any life, regardless of its particular type. It says of no instance of life: ‘This has no value.’ It cannot make any such exceptions, for it is built upon reverence for life as such. It knows that the mystery of life is always too profound for us, and that its value is beyond our capacity to estimate. We happen to believe that man’s life is more important than any form of which we know. But we cannot prove any such comparison of value from what we know of the world’s development (Schweitzer, 1936: 233).

Schweitzer refuses to draw a sharp line between the living and non-living nature, because will-to-live is present in all phenomena throughout the universe, which has to be revered. ‘Behind and in all phenomena there is will-to-live’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 237). Because will-to-live is present throughout the universe, Schweitzer’s ethic aspires to be universal.

3.2.2.4 Spirituality

As a natural being, a human belongs to the natural world. In order to give meaning to his life, he wants to attain harmony with the universal Will-to-Live, that is, to raise his natural relation to the world to a spiritual one. The basis for this striving for harmony is that the human wants to perfect his own life (Schweitzer, 1936: 225). As a being he relates to the world both passively and actively: on the one hand he is subordinate to the course of events; on the other hand he is capable of affecting the life which comes within his reach by hampering or promoting it. In order to achieve a spiritual relation to the world, Schweitzer makes a distinction between a passive and an active relation: as a being *in a passive relation* to the world he comes into a spiritual relation to it by resignation. True resignation consists in this: man, while feeling his subordination to the course of the world happenings, at the same time wins his way to inward freedom. Inward freedom means that he finds strength to deal with everything that is hard in such a way that it helps to make him a deeper, more inward, purified and peaceful person. ‘Resignation, therefore, is the spiritual and ethical affirmation of one’s own existence. Only he who has gone through the stage of resignation is capable of world affirmation’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 199). From this stage of world affirmation,

as a being *in an active relation* to the world, he comes into a spiritual relation with it by not living for himself alone, but feeling himself one with all life that comes within his reach. He will feel all that life's experiences as his own, he will give it all the help that he possible can, and will feel all the saving and promotion of life that he has been able to effect as the deepest happiness that can ever happen to him (Schweitzer, 1935b: 200, my italics).

Thus, in order to attain full harmony with the mysterious Spirit of the Universe, this harmony must be both active and passive, hence both in deed and in thought (Schweitzer, 1936: 233-234).

Schweitzer maintains that when a human starts reflecting on the mystery of his life and the ties which bind him to lives around him, he cannot react otherwise than to develop an active attitude of reverence for all life, not only for his own but for all other life that comes within his reach.

Only by serving every kind of life do I enter the service of that Creative Will whence all life emanates. I do not understand it; but I do know (and it is sufficient to live by) that by serving life, I serve the Creative Will. It is through community of life, not community of thought that I abide in harmony with that Will. This is the mystical significance of ethics (Schweitzer, 1936: 234).

3.3 Theological understanding of ethical mysticism

Before exploring the experience of infinite Being, I have to establish whether Schweitzer identifies the Creative Will, the Will-to-Live, or the infinite Being with God.

3.3.1 The (nature of the) universal Will-to-Live

The concepts mostly used by Schweitzer are primal Source of Being; infinite Being; universal Will-to-Live; creative Will; cosmic Reality. The question is whether these concepts can be equated with 'God' in the sense of a transcendent, personal God.

Schweitzer has been accused of pantheism. Indeed, the concept of 'God' employed by Schweitzer in his ethical mysticism is not unambiguous, as the following examples show.

Schweitzer maintains that expressions like 'Essence of Being', 'the Absolute', the 'Spirit of the World' and other similar expressions do not mean anything real, but are something abstract, and therefore not possible to imagine. 'Real are only the manifestations of Being' (*Wirklich ist nur das in Erscheinungen erscheinende Sein*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 234). Therefore, it is impossible for man to enter into a spiritual relation with an 'abstraction' (*Gedachtending*). Thought works with these abstractions and symbols, as if they mean something concrete.

But reality does not confirm that an individual can enter into a relation with the Totality of Being. As reality only knows the manifestations of Being in individual beings, in the same way (it knows) only relations of individual beings to other individual beings. For a 'genuine' (*wahr*) mysticism, there is no other way than to do away with all abstractions and agree that nothing that makes sense can be done with such imagined Essence of Being (Schweitzer, 1923b: 234-235). There is no 'Essence of Being', but

just infinite Being in infinite manifestations. Only through the manifestations of Being, and only through those, with whom I enter into a relation, my being relates with the infinite Being (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235).

Such sentences prompted critics such as Kraus to say, ‘Anyone who can speak thus produces the impression that he can concede reality only to “phenomena” (manifestations) and does not acknowledge the existence of a transcendental being... Perhaps, indeed probably, he is a pantheist. It seems quite possible’ (Kraus, 1944: 41-42). Or Martin, who suggests that the statement, ‘The only reality is the Being which manifests itself in phenomena’ more likely (than allowing a difference between God and creation, Being and the phenomenal world,) ‘expresses a form of pantheism in which the sacred is equated with the universe in its creative aspects’ (Martin, 2007: 9). Groos also holds that God for Schweitzer is not an object of faith or a Reality which we are aware of, but that for Schweitzer God is in the first place an ethical ideal and thus expresses more a certain direction of thinking and a way of speaking (Groos, 1974: 444-445).

However, I hold that Schweitzer is not to be categorized as a pantheist, for at least the following arguments:

- a) For most pantheists the universe and God are identical; Schweitzer perceives in nature the terrible drama, how one being lives at the cost of other beings (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242).
- b) Furthermore, most pantheists do not believe in a personal God; Schweitzer talks about a revelation ‘from within’ of the universal Will as ethical Personality.
- c) Another central idea of pantheism is the sacredness of nature. But for Schweitzer, life as such is sacred (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202), not nature. These three arguments may be substantiated with passages from Schweitzer’s texts.

First, confronted with the existence of evil in the world, we cannot equate nature or world with ‘God’ because we do not find the God of love in nature:

In my will-to-live the universal Will-to-Live is experienced differently than in other manifestations. In other manifestations the universal will appears in an ‘individualization’, which, as far as I can discern from the outside, is aimed only at living itself out, and in no way aimed at union with other will-to-live. The world is the terrible drama of ‘self-division’ (*Selbstentzweiung*) of the Will-to-Live. One existence only lives at the cost of other existence, one destroys the other. One will-to-live is only ‘wanting’ to the other, not ‘knowing’ about the other. In me, however, the will-to-live has become ‘knowing’ of other wills-to-live. Desire to enter into union with itself is in it. On the question why the will-to-live only in me is experienced in this way, there is no answer (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242-243).

Second, Schweitzer speaks about ‘being different from the world’:

If in the tenderheartedness of being different from the world another person and I help each other in understanding and forgiving, when otherwise will would torment will, the self-division of the will-to-live is removed. If I save an insect from a puddle, life has devoted itself to life and the self-division of life is removed. Whenever my life devotes itself in any way to life, my finite will-to-live experiences union with the Infinite Will in which all life is one, and I enjoy refreshment, which saves me from dying of thirst in the desert of life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 243).

Another passage reveals Schweitzer's experience of the primal Source of Being as impersonal and at the same time as personal Being:

Every form of living Christianity is pantheistic in so far as it has to consider everything that is, as being in the primal Source of all Beings (*Urgrund alles Seins*). But at the same time all ethical piety is superior to any pantheistic mysticism, in that it does not find the God of love in nature, but knows about Him only from the fact that He announces Himself in us as Will-to-Love. The primal Source of Being (*Der Urgrund des Seins*) as He manifests Himself in nature, is to us always impersonal. To the primal Source of Being (*Urgrund des Seins*) who is revealed to us in the Will-to-Love, however, we relate as to an ethical Personality. Theism does not stand in opposition to pantheism, but emerges from it as the ethically determined out of what is natural and undetermined (Schweitzer, 1935b: 207).

Schweitzer explained his use of his various concepts in a letter of 2nd of January 1924 to Oskar Kraus, having been confronted with the question whether he was a pantheist:

It has always been my principle in philosophy not to say anything that goes beyond the absolute logical exercise of thought. Therefore, in philosophy I do not speak of 'God', but of the 'universal Will-to-Live,' which meets me in a twofold way: as creative Will outside me, as ethical Will within me. Certainly, the tentative conclusion which you speak of [that Schweitzer is a pantheist] may readily be drawn, but I am very doubtful as to whether drawing this conclusion is a matter for philosophy, or whether to do so would be advantageous for one's world view. Consequently, I prefer to limit myself to a description of the process of thought and to let pantheism and theism remain in undecided conflict within me. For that is the fact I keep coming back to.

But when I am speaking the traditional religious speech, then I make use of the word 'God' in its historical preciseness and lack of preciseness, just as I also in ethics say 'love' instead of 'reverence for life'. For here the idea is to convey the experienced thought in its direct vitality and in its relation to traditional religiosity. In this way I am not making any concession either to philosophy of nature or to religion. For in both cases the content remains the same: abandonment of knowledge concerning the world and establishment of the primacy of the universal Will-to-Live which is experienced within me... Being deeply moved by the ethical Will of God is the main thing...' [In the same letter Schweitzer concludes:] 'I do not seem able to get beyond this renunciation of knowledge of the universe nor beyond the conflict between pantheism and theism. And I mean it in the philosophical as well as in the traditional religious sense' (Schweitzer, 2006: 430-432).

The 'mystery' (*Rätsel*) of religion is that we experience God in ourselves as different from the God we find in nature. In nature we recognize Him only as impersonal Creative Force, in ourselves we recognize Him as ethical Personality (Schweitzer, 1922: 700).

God as ethical Personality and God as impersonal creative Power are one, but how they can be understood as one, we do not know, Schweitzer holds (Schweitzer, 1922: 711). He compares this unity with the Gulf Stream:

There is an ocean. Cold water, without motion. In this ocean, however, is the Gulf Stream, hot water, flowing from the Equator towards the Pole. No scientist can explain it. In the same way, there is the God of love within the God of the Forces of the universe, one with Him, and yet so totally different from Him. We let ourselves be seized and carried away by that stream (Schweitzer, 1922: 711-712).

Schweitzer gives priority to God as ethical Personality over God as impersonal Will-to-Live, because the knowledge derived from experience of Him as ethical Will is knowledge from within.

The knowledge concerning God which is derived from nature is always imperfect and inadequate, because we perceive the things in the world from outside only. I see the tree growing, come into bud and flower. But the Forces that bring this about, I do not understand. In myself, on the other hand, I know things from within. The Creative Force which produces and sustains all that is, reveals itself in me in a way in which I do not get to know it elsewhere, as ethical Will, as something that wants to be creative in me. This experienced mystery is determining for my thinking, willing and understanding. All the mysteries of the world and of my existence in the world may ultimately be left on one side unsolved and insoluble. My life is completely and unmistakably determined by the mysterious experience of God revealing himself within me as ethical Will and desiring to take hold of my life (Schweitzer, 1922: 711).

In later texts (written in 1932, posthumously published in *Werke aus dem Nachlass*), eight years after the quoted letter to Kraus concerning pantheism and theism, Schweitzer elaborates this idea further: ‘The question is not theism and pantheism, but whether I can enter with the primal Source of Being into a spiritual relationship, whether he is personality somehow, (whether he) to me becomes revealed as personality’ (Schweitzer, 1999: 413).

Notwithstanding all this, Schweitzer remains agnostic regarding the Absolute: ‘All thinking about the Infinite is like a voyage to a shore, from which we have to return home, without having been able to land’ (Schweitzer, 1999: 414). Other poignant fragments: ‘The world is the body of God. And I want to come in connection with his soul, become one’; ‘I grasp the spiritual in God as the Will-to-Love. And I only grasp the material in all creatures (*Kreatürlichen*) which can be reached’ (Schweitzer, 1999: 414).

Third, despite Schweitzer’s agnosticism relating to the metaphysical, he repeatedly states that life as such is sacred (e.g., Schweitzer, 1935b: 202). It can reasonably be argued that life is sacred, because it is grounded in the primal Source of Being itself, sharing in the qualities of sacred Life itself. For Schweitzer, in active devotion to life which comes within our reach and needs our devotion, we realize mystical union with all life and with the primal Source of Being, to whom all this life belongs (Schweitzer, 1935a: 193). For Schweitzer the first awareness of my consciousness is that ‘I will-to-live’, and the last fact that knowledge tells me is that the world is the manifestation of the universal Will-to-Live (Schweitzer, 1936: 227; 230). Thus for Schweitzer the metaphysical Will-to-Live is immanent in nature, especially in living beings, though he is reluctant to draw a line. He nowhere equates nature with God.

The aim of this section has been to determine whether the universal Will-to-Live and similar notions could be equated with a transcendent, personal God. It has been substantiated with quotations from Schweitzer’s writings, that Schweitzer cannot be designated a pantheist (as some critics do) because there is so much suffering and evil in the world; the God-of-Love cannot be found in nature; only in ourselves may the Will-to-Live be experienced as Will-to-

Love; life as such is sacred, not nature. I maintain that Schweitzer intends to convey that we can only enter into a real relation with God through devotion to other life, through ethical action: ‘Only through the manifestations of Being, and only through those, with whom I enter into a relation, my being relates with the infinite Being’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235).

It could, however, reasonably be argued that Schweitzer could be more appropriately designated a panentheist. In his writings appears the conviction that a metaphysical Will-to-Live is immanent in nature and creatures, but he states simultaneously that he experiences the Will-to-Love from within as ethical Personality, and therefore (in Schweitzer’s view) theism transcends pantheism. In *Christianity and the Religions of the World* it is explicitly stated: monism and pantheism, however profound and spiritual, do not lead into the ultimate mystery of religion. The ‘mystery’ (*Rätsel*) of religion is that we experience God in ourselves as different from the God we find in nature:

In nature we recognize Him (God) as impersonal creative Force, in ourselves we recognize Him as ethical Personality’ (Schweitzer, 1922: 700). I live my life in God, in the mysterious ethical God-person, who I do not know in the world, but only experience as mysterious Will in me (Schweitzer, 1923b: XVI).

In conclusion, although one cannot find a clearly defined concept of God in Schweitzer’s writings, it is clear that, for him, God is both within and outside us; inside us revealed as ethical Personality and Will-to-Love, and outside us as Will-to-Live in all manifestations of Being. Schweitzer maintains this tension because God as ethical Personality evokes in us the compulsion for ethical devotion to other will-to-live, while God as universal Will-to-Live is revered in the devotion to other manifestations of Will-to-Live. But the relationship between the Will-to-Love and the Will-to-Live remains a permanent mystery.

This concept of God as Will-to-Live and Will-to-Love, raising the question of man’s relation to and his experience of infinite Being, will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.2 The relation to and experience of infinite Being

In *Die Weltanschauung der Indischen Denker: Mystik und Ethik* and in *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* Schweitzer elaborates his concept of mysticism. As well, the posthumously published *Die Weltanschauung der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben (Kulturphilosophie III, Volume 1-2/3-4, Werke aus dem Nachlass, 1999)* provides additional insight into Schweitzer’s use of the concept of mysticism (although *Kulturphilosophie III* has remained unfinished, Volume 1-2 provides an unfinished chapter on mysticism (pages 154-165).

Schweitzer holds that the most fundamental question for philosophy is how a human can understand his being in spiritual union with infinite Being (Schweitzer, 1999: 154). According to Schweitzer,

We find ourselves in the presence of mysticism where a human being considers the division between earthly and super-earthly, temporal and eternal as overcome and where man experiences himself, while still standing in the earthly and temporal, as entered into the Super-earthly and Eternal (Schweitzer, 1930:1).

The role Schweitzer attributes to thinking in mysticism is evident: the path to mysticism passes from deep thought into experience of the world and of our will-to-live (Schweitzer, 1999: 193):

When, as in developed mysticism, a concept of the universal is attained and man contemplates his relation to the Totality of being and to Being in itself, mysticism expands, deepens and purifies. The Super-earthly and Eternal is entered by an act of thinking. In this act the conscious personality raises itself above that illusion of the senses which makes him regard himself as in bondage in the present life to the earthly and temporal (Schweitzer, 1930: 1).

As for my argumentation, significant distinction made by Schweitzer is between the mysticism of identity and the mysticism of ethical origin, also called the mysticism of reality. He holds that the mysticism of identity 'is not ethical either in origin or in nature and cannot become so. Ethical thoughts can only be found in it and developed from it insofar as an ethical nature is attributed to the World-Spirit' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 193). But this is the fundamental difficulty, with which the philosophy of nature has to struggle, ever since the beginning of man: how can man give his work in nature-events a meaning, as he does not know the meaning of these nature-events? These events are so mighty that he can only grasp himself as dependent on them and not as active in them. Furthermore, what a human perceives as ethical cannot be found in these mysterious nature-events, in which one life exists at the cost of other life. And because this difficulty appears to be insoluble, man may choose to avoid this difficulty by abandoning world- and life-affirmation. Because, when mysticism is only concerned with the idea of passive oneness of human beings with the infinite Being, this difficulty does not exist; then the spiritual union of the individual being with the Infinite is thought of merely as an 'absorption' (*Aufgehen*) in Him (Schweitzer, 1999: 155).

This world- and life-negating mysticism does not offer from Schweitzer's perspective a real solution to the problem of spiritual union of man with the infinite Being, because it replaces the real, living being by an unreal and lifeless one, and man experiences as lifeless his union with infinite Being, considered also as abstract. In this mysticism the human ceases to be occupied with himself as he is and with the world as it is, and instead searches to reconcile an imaginary self and an imaginary world with one another (Schweitzer, 1999: 155).

Thus, the attempt of a world- and life-negating mysticism to comprehend its mysticism of identity as ethical is an impossible task. 'The attempt consists in nothing more than adding an ethical element to mysticism by means of inadmissible explanations' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 193-194); it is an ethical world- and life-affirmation, '*put into, not won from* the mysticism of union with the infinite Being' (Schweitzer, 1999: 157; italics by Schweitzer).

Schweitzer has elaborated this thought further in his *Werke aus dem Nachlass*, while referring to medieval Christian thinkers who tried to give Neoplatonic ideas a Christian character:

Bernardus of Clairvaux, Meister Eckhart, Suso and others (Schweitzer, 1999: 159). Those thinkers attempted to bring about the ultimate union with God in love to him, but from this love originates no ethical action. Schweitzer sees as exemplary Eckhart, ‘who feels the quietism as the danger of mysticism’, and who lets ‘active ethics stand alongside mysticism, without being based in it, so to speak as counterweight against the contemplative inwardness’. Eckhart represents the idea that inwardness must manifest itself in active love, without justifying it (Schweitzer, 2000: 73).

But in Schweitzer’s thought this is an impossible task, as the ethical cannot arise from the world- and life-negating mysticism, but can only be ‘added in thought to it’ (*hinzugedacht werden*) (Schweitzer, 1999: 159).

Thus, for Schweitzer all efforts to gain a living religion from pure monistic God-mysticism are in vain:

They grasp the direction, but they don’t find the way. From union with the infinite Essence of the All-Will-to-be only a passive determination of man’s being, an absorption into God like a sinking into the ocean of the Infinite can be derived (Schweitzer, 1930: 367-368).

From mere contemplation, from the devotion to the Absolute, only a ‘dead spirituality’ can arise: ‘It is a purely intellectual act. Motives for working are not given in it. Even the ethics of resignation can on the basis of such an intellectualism only lead a miserable existence’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235).

In contrast to the mysticism of identity, stands in Schweitzer’s view a merely activist ethic, which forces man into service of other people, without allowing him to gain awareness of a spiritual inward relation to Being (*Besinnung*); such an ethic can be only a superficial and not an authentic ethic (Schweitzer, 1923b: 233). Schweitzer identifies the great defect of modern philosophy: it does not ask man to think deeply about himself.

It hounds him into activity, commanding him to find escape in this way. In that respect it falls far below the philosophy of Greece, which taught men better the true depths of life (Schweitzer, 1936: 229).

Therefore, Schweitzer stresses the importance of resignation. As discussed under ‘Origin and principal characteristics of ethical mysticism’ (3.2.1 and 3.2.2.4) he understands resignation as

the experience of freedom from the destinies of life, a feeling of spiritual independence. We not only experience our will-to-live as something which wants to live itself out, but also as conscious of itself (Schweitzer, 1923b: 244).

Schweitzer considers resignation as the basis of ethics (Schweitzer, 1936: 230), necessary to gain awareness of a spiritual, inward relation to Being and to give ethics its depth and perseverance of devotion to other life:

Resignation is the vestibule through which we enter ethics. Only he who experiences, in profound surrender to his own will-to-live, inner freedom from external events is

capable of profound and permanent surrender of himself for the sake of other life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 244).

Against the mysticism of identity and the merely activist ethic, Schweitzer places the mysticism of reality, in which the compulsion to action is not an added element but springs from the mystical experience itself. In this mysticism of ethical origin, devotion is not a purely intellectual act, but one in which all life of humans is involved. Therefore in the mysticism of reality reigns a spirituality, that carries elementary in itself the urge to action. Here, 'spirituality and ethics are no longer two things, but are both one and the same' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235). Thus, mystical union with the creative Will is first and foremost achieved by service to other life, and not by contemplation. A complete ethics consists of an ethic of passive self-perfection and an ethic of active self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923b: 224). The ethics of 'self-perfection' (*Selbstvervollkommnung*) and the ethics of 'devotion' (*Hingebung*) have to penetrate each other, to form together the real basic principle of the ethical:

By its own character, the ethic of self-perfection is cosmic, because self-perfection cannot be something else than that man enters into a real relation to Being, that is within and outside him. From the natural, external belonging to Being, he wants to make a spiritual, inner, devotion to Being and (wants) his passive and active relation to the things to be determined by this devotion (Schweitzer, 1923b: 228; Schweitzer, 1999: 154-165).

Only in active devotion to Being that is both inside and outside man himself self-perfection and devotion unite (Schweitzer, 1923b: 228). This means that we can only attain self-perfection in devotion to God as ethical Personality (the Being inside) and in devotion to other living beings (as manifestation of Being outside). Otherwise, either a dead spirituality or a superficial ethic will develop.

A content receives the 'union' (*einswerden*) of the finite will with the Infinite (will) only, when it is experienced in him as quiescence and at the same time as 'being seized' (*ergriffensein*) by the Will-to-Love, which in us comes to consciousness of itself and wants to become act in us. Mysticism only gets at the path of life when it goes through the contradiction of the 'Will-to-Love of God' (*Liebeswillens Gottes*) to His infinite, mysterious creative Will (*Schöpferwillen*) and 'further' (*über ihn hinauskommt*). Because human thought cannot grasp 'the Eternal' (*das Ewige*), how it is in itself, man is placed to reach dualism and to conquer it, in order to find the Eternal. But human thought has to consider all mysteries of being, which occur in thought and cause restlessness. Ultimately it can leave behind everything, which cannot be grasped, and goes the way of willing to know with certainty of God as the Will-to-Love and find in Him peace and act (Schweitzer, 1930: 368).

When trying to clarify human relation to and experience of infinite Being, Schweitzer's answer seems to be that our relation to infinite Being is a dual one: on the one side a relation to infinite Being as ethical Personality, on the other side a relation to infinite Being as to all the manifestations of infinite Being. Consequently this union is experienced two-fold and also in contradiction: as passive quiescence in infinite Being and at the same time as inner compulsion to act, as 'being seized (*ergriffensein*) by the Will-to-Love, which in us comes to consciousness of itself and wants to become act in us' (Schweitzer, 1930: 367-368).

At this point it might be appropriate to state that this finding is consistent with Underhill's position that a limited dualism is the only type of metaphysic adequate to the facts of mystical experience (Underhill, 2008: 35, 36, 43, 90), and that the complete mystic consciousness has a twofold character: 'It includes a Reality which seems from the human standpoint at once transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal, demanding on its side a dual response' (Underhill, 2008: 35-36). In the case of Schweitzer this double nature of reaction to Reality is expressed by his devotion to other life and self-perfecting.

Therefore, we do not agree with Martin, who maintains that Schweitzer's ethic remains intact, when we put aside Schweitzer's metaphysics (Martin, 2007: 10). Although Schweitzer draws the 'natural' consequences from the ethical feeling of sympathy, that is, as consistency in the ethical domain, he has convincingly argued that only a superficial ethic will result. It is exactly the relation between contemplation and service to other life that gives ethics its depth and strength for moral motivation, perseverance and patience.

The major difference between Schweitzer's position and medieval mystics such as Eckhart, whom Schweitzer criticised, appears to be that with Eckhart, contemplation and ethical action are two different things: ethical action stands alongside mystical union, without emerging from it; with Schweitzer there is in mystical union an inner compulsion to act, and the attempt to base contemplation in ethical action: in serving other life, union with the great Life is experienced.

A comparison of Schweitzer's ethical mysticism with the German mysticism of the Middle Ages (as has been outlined by H-J. Werner) falls outside the scope of this enquiry but it is worthwhile to mention that Werner concluded that in both Eckhart and Schweitzer it concerns an inward spiritual attitude, which is expressed in ethical work, without 'exhausting itself' in ethical works (*ohne völlig darin aufzugehen*) and that there exists a 'spiritual relationship' (*geistigen Verwandtschaft*) between the two (Werner, 1990: 222). Werner holds that Schweitzer, like medieval mystics, talks about 'inner freedom from the world, and therein achieves the ability to sacrifice his life for a pursued goal' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 2-3). It is my hypothesis, to be elaborated in section 3.4, that Schweitzer's thought bears mystical traits, and that typical marks of a mystic may be discerned in his life.

3.3.3 Schweitzer's theological position

Section 3.3.1 has dealt with the question whether Schweitzer could be designated a pantheist. I have argued that what Schweitzer calls pantheism is more adequately designated as panentheism in the sense of a belief in a God who penetrates all life/nature, while at the same time transcends it. This section deals with the issue of Schweitzer's theological position.

Questions have been raised, not only whether Schweitzer was a pantheist, but also whether he can be qualified as a Christian. Groos, in his extensive evaluation of Schweitzer's thought,

comes to a negative answer in this respect (Groos, 1974: 375-501), the main reason being that Jesus, as portrayed by Schweitzer, can no longer be considered a religious authority for anyone (Groos, 1974: 404; 492). Groos refers to statements such as the following:

To me, however, Jesus remains what he was. Not for a single moment have I had to struggle for my conviction that in him is the supreme spiritual and religious authority, though his expectation of the speedy advent of a supernatural Kingdom of God was not fulfilled, and we cannot make it our own (Schweitzer, 1951: 113).

As already mentioned, Schweitzer is agnostic about metaphysical matters and critical of (the authority of) traditional theological dogmas and authoritative doctrines. At the same time Groos, quoting sources close to Schweitzer, describes him as a pious and praying person (Groos: 1974: 494). From Schweitzer's sermons and theological writings it is evident that he considers his service as 'fellowship of Jesus' (*Nachfolge Jesu*) and that his devotion to human and non-human life has a Christian inspiration (Schweitzer, 1935b: 70-74). For example, *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest* starts with Jesus' parable about the rich man and the poor man Lazarus as an explanation for his decision to go to Africa (Schweitzer, 1921: 61-62). Schweitzer's focus on Jesus' 'command' constitutes a strong incentive for his medical work in Africa (Schweitzer, 1921: 131).

The holy music of religion sounds softly but clearly! I am very reticent (probably too much) about my religious feeling. But everything is in the conclusion to the *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*: Jesus the Lord! Peace in Christ! Jesus has simply taken me prisoner since my childhood... My going to Africa was an act of obedience to Jesus (*Deutsches Pfarrblatt*, 1931: 824 quoted in Clark, 1962: 77).

In the beautiful closing passage of 'the Quest' (*Die Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*), Jesus' command for fellowship is presented as a call for the present:

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as He came to those men by the lakeside, who did not know who He was. He speaks the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the peace, action, struggling and suffering that they will pass through in His fellowship and, as an ineffable mystery, they will experience Who He is (Schweitzer, 1913: 642).

Because Schweitzer wanted his ethical mysticism to be universal, he employed philosophical instead of theological terminology, using in his philosophical writings expressions such as 'primal Source of Being' and 'universal Will' instead of God. But Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life was elaborated from his preceding belief in Jesus Christ as 'spiritual authority of the will' and therefore has an apparent Christian foundation (Barsam, 2008: 23).

Throughout his *Philosophy of Civilisation* Schweitzer uses the term 'Will-to-Love' which turns out in the last pages of *The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul* to be Jesus Christ: 'In Jesus Christ, God is manifested as Will-to-Love' (Schweitzer, 1930: 368). Critics state that 'the theological returns through the back door' (Barsam, 2008: 17). 'Precisely because Jesus embodies moral perfection in such a high degree, he becomes the focus of Schweitzer's ethical mysticism, both before and after he developed reverence for life as an ethical theory' (Martin, 2007: 10).

Schweitzer holds that the ethic of ‘reverence for life’ is the ethic of Jesus (Schweitzer, 1935b: 201), which makes (moral) philosophy and theology to be interrelated in Schweitzer’s thought. Schweitzer’s academic work in the field of theology and philosophy may be considered an expression of his search for moral and spiritual perfection, not only at the individual level, but for humanity at large, whereby moral perfection encompasses our relation with other people, with creation and with God. Therefore, the question whether Schweitzer was a Christian can only be posed as the question whether his theological position can be designated as Christian. Critics like Groos argue that

Schweitzer’s dedication to all life is not based on a religious feeling, but on his ethical earnestness (Groos, 1974: 492). For everyone, for whom Christianity means more than ethical life, for the one who knows that faith cannot be deduced from this as ‘of minor importance’ (*nebensächlich*) and that this faith always presupposes a certain world view, a minimum of metaphysical ideas and historical judgements, can there be no doubt that Schweitzer has crossed the borders of Christian faith, and not only of the old or ‘strict’ (*strenggläubigen*) Christianity, but Schweitzer left also a so-called ‘Free Christianity’ (*freisinnig*) behind (Groos, 1974: 492-493).

Although Schweitzer considers ethical action as essential to religion, I hold, however, that he nowhere reduces religion to ethical action, as Groos argues. Schweitzer regularly warns of a reduction in two directions: to a passive mysticism, and to a superficial ethic. Rössler, using five criteria (as developed by the systematic theologian Hans Grass) to determine whether a theology qualifies to be called ‘Christian’, concludes positively after applying these criteria to Schweitzer’s writings; the touchstone of every Christianity is the faith in a universal and at the same time personal God and in Jesus Christ as the central manifestation of God’s love (Rössler, 1990: 231). As argued before, Schweitzer’s writings express consistently the distinction between the mysterious primal Source of being working in all living beings and its revelation in the human person as ‘Will-to-Love’, that is, the distinction between God as Will-to-Live and God as ethical Personality.

With the exception of Groos, most critics agree that Schweitzer may be qualified as a ‘liberal theologian’. Schweitzer has qualified himself in this respect: ‘I know from myself, that I remained religious and Christian through thinking’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 206). Schweitzer designates himself more specifically as a *Freisinnig* Protestant Christian, with the principal marks of sincerity, freedom in thought and the togetherness of faith and reason, religion and thought (Rössler, 1990: 243-252). Schweitzer hardly concerns himself with traditional dogmas of the Divine Trinity and Christology; while he respects dogmas, he subjects them at the same time to critical thinking; spiritual resignation requires accepting the limitations of knowledge (Schweitzer, 1935b: 22; Rössler, 1990: 254).

Schweitzer’s theological position concerning three major Christian themes of Creation, Covenant and Incarnation deserve closer scrutiny here.

3.3.3.1 Creation

Genesis 1 has traditionally been interpreted from an anthropocentric point of view, as if the world was created for humankind's use. These interpretations are mainly based on the word רָדָה (*rādâ*), translated as 'to have dominion'. In this view the creation of humans is usually considered as the culmination of the creation account. In Schweitzer's work one cannot find such an instrumental view of animals; Schweitzer radically rejects the view that humans are the pinnacle of the creation account:

We like to imagine that man is nature's goal; but facts do not support that belief. Indeed, when we consider the immensity of the universe, we must confess that man is insignificant... Life has existed in the universe but a brief second. And certainly man's life can hardly be considered the goal of the universe... In fact, the creative Force does not concern itself about preserving life. It simultaneously creates and destroys (Schweitzer, 1936: 226).

Schweitzer feels a close kinship with all life, and shows an attitude of respect and responsibility for all living beings rather than one of dominion or domination: 'A truly human person feels like a brother of creatures, not like their master' (Schweitzer, 2003: 234). I will explore in Chapter 4 whether there exists a biblical basis for the kinship and inter-relatedness of all life.

Remarkably, of the more than 250 preserved sermons delivered by Schweitzer between 1898 and 1948 (see Schweitzer, 2001) there is not one that includes a reference to Genesis 1 or 2. A single reference to Genesis 1 in all of Schweitzer's collected numerous lectures and speeches relates to the Pauline topic of the creation of man and wife as an allegory for Christ and his Church (Schweitzer, 2003: 666). It is hard to infer as Stemple (1995: 184-185) did, that the biblical creation doctrine has been the starting point for Schweitzer's philosophy of Reverence for Life. I hold that Schweitzer in this respect is influenced by Paul's concept of creation and cosmic redemption. There is, for example, a sermon, as early as 1908, on Romans 8: 22, 'We know that the whole Creation has been groaning in labour pains until now' (NRSV), (Schweitzer, 2001: 959-965) (see also the next section 3.3.3.2. God's covenant with the created order).

Schweitzer holds that it is impossible to acquire knowledge about God from science or from nature; knowledge about God from nature remains incomplete and the Creator-God Himself remains mysterious. In philosophical language, Schweitzer speaks of the two-fold way in which the primal Source of Being, the universal Will-to-Live, is experienced: in nature as creative Will (*Schöpferwille*, the will of the Creator), which is filled with dark and painful mystery to us, and in us as ethical Personality, as Will-to-Love (Schweitzer, 1935b: 204).

For some critics, like Groos (1974: 440-441), this Creator God, 'full of dark and painful mystery' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 204) to us, is far removed from the biblical Creator God. However, Schweitzer does not engage in theodicy, as he is agnostic about the metaphysical. In nature we cannot detect immediately the goodness of the primal Source of Being, the creative

Will. The only direct knowledge from God is revealed inside us, where God reveals Himself as God of Love.

Schweitzer's reference to man's destiny as 'an active, purposeful force in the world' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 132) and the mention of 'our cooperation with the activity which the world-spirit wills for us' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 181) prompts Clark to suggest that the idea of co-creatorship (as partaking in the creative process around him) is implicitly present in Schweitzer's thought (Clark, 1962: 174). Schweitzer's posthumously published work, however, reveals the contrary: the idea of man as 'co-creator in the world-process' (*Mitschöpfer der Welt*) in Nicolai Hartmann's *Ethik* (1926) is criticised by Schweitzer as an exaggeration of what humans can do. Our works are only limited and fraught with errors: introspection learns that an attitude of humility is more appropriate than one of pride (Schweitzer, 2000: 234). Besides, Clark quotes Schweitzer out of context where Schweitzer is referring to modern thought concerning material progress (Schweitzer, 1935b: 132) and to representatives of ethics as ideal for self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923b: 180-181). Most important for Schweitzer is that we concern ourselves with the problem of how we can achieve spiritual union with infinite Being (Schweitzer, 2000: 234).

In ethical action, in reverence for life, our will to love unites with the will to live, and thus the human unites with the infinite Creator, who is Love. In this union, which is 'ethical mysticism', the human being enters into a religious relation with the Infinite Will to-Live and Will-to-Love.

Furthermore, in Schweitzer's view, all life belongs to God (e.g. Schweitzer, 1935a: 193). Schweitzer refers to animals as God's creatures (Schweitzer, 2001: 186). Therefore, he holds (in a sermon of 1900) that 'compassion' (*Barmherzigkeit*) towards animals is a 'Christian matter' (*Christensache*) and a 'Christian duty' (*Christen Pflicht*) (Schweitzer, 2001: 186-187). As far as we act to save and develop life, we are in the will of God.

3.3.3.2 God's covenant with the created order

According to the available sources, Schweitzer never wrote, lectured or preached on Genesis 9. However, the concept of a covenant as 'cosmic harmony', in the sense of thinking about harmonious relations of humans with God and with other creatures, is explicitly present in Schweitzer's work. The place of humans in the world is one of interrelatedness with all life and with Life itself: 'When man starts thinking about himself and his relation to the world, he experiences that other life in his own' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138). Schweitzer experiences the analogy of his life with life around him (Schweitzer, 1936: 230). 'Life demands that we see through to the solidarity of all life which we can in any degree recognize as having some similarity to the life that is in us' (Schweitzer, 1936: 237).

And as this solidarity of life grows more profound, it teaches us sympathy with all life, which culminates through our dedication to this life in union with Life itself. Thus, in Schweitzer's view, humans are linked with all other life and with God. Whether the word *בְּרִית* (*berit*) 'covenant', as a way of thinking about harmonious relationships of humans with God and with other creatures can find biblical support, will be explored in Chapter 4.

Related to a more inclusive covenantal thinking, Schweitzer emphasizes Paul's conviction (as expressed in Romans 8:18-24) that redemption includes the whole creation. In Schweitzer's view, expressed in an article on Animal Protection in 1935, the New Testament does not elaborate on the ethical treatment of all animals, because Jesus and early Christendom lived in the expectation of the imminent end of the natural world. Therefore, there was no need to elaborate for the interim period on an ethic for animals:

The question is often propounded why sympathy with animals was not laid down as a Christian commandment, especially as the Jewish law already contained instructions for the care of animals. The explanation must be sought in the fact that primitive Christendom lived in the expectation of the speedy end of the world and therefore believed the day to be near when all creatures would be delivered from their sufferings. St. Paul speaks of the longing of the whole creation for early redemption in the eighth chapter (verses 18-24) of the Epistle to the Romans. His deeply sympathy with the animal creation finds expression in those verses. But because the end of the natural world with its suffering and misery was believed to be so near, there was as little thought for the protection of animals as for the abolition of slavery. In this way we can understand how it is that the Christian commandment of love does not expressly demand sympathy with animals, although this is really implicit in it (Schweitzer, 1935c: 185).

3.3.3.3 Incarnation

In *The Quest of the Historical Jesus (Die Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung)* (1906; revised 1913) Schweitzer depicts Jesus as having shared the imminent eschatological expectations of his time and the crucial role this played in Jesus' thought and actions (Schweitzer, 2003: 362, 367). As evidence of the apocalyptic expectations of Jesus, Schweitzer maintains that Matthew 10 in its entirety contains Jesus' authentic sayings (Schweitzer, 2003: 365) (a view which in the meantime has been refuted since mid-20th century exegetical methods of Form Criticism). Jesus is convinced that He is the Messiah, but this will only be revealed to the world when its end has come. He hides his calling (Schweitzer, 2003: 362-363). But when the tribulations which were expected to precede the Messianic Kingdom (Schweitzer 1951: 95) did not start at the expected time, Jesus believed that God wanted him, as the future Messiah, to take the suffering of the world upon himself. He decided to sacrifice himself and made this and his Messianic calling known to his disciples (Schweitzer, 2003: 363-366). Judas betrayed the secret of Jesus' Messiahship to the religious authorities and this action set in motion the process of Jesus' condemnation. Schweitzer leaves Jesus in his own Jewish world with its eschatological expectations, hereby making Jesus' character and actions better understandable and of more

influence to us. Schweitzer maintains that we can be inspired by Jesus only as a mysterious figure from the past, and not by projecting our own views on him (Schweitzer, 1951: 90).

Jesus' eschatological expectations were not fulfilled; his self-sacrifice did not bring about the end of this world. Yet, paradoxically, his belief that the world was ending enabled him to offer the most powerful statement ever made of love as an ideal (Schweitzer, 1951: 112). In Schweitzer's view, Jesus' ethical sayings were not intended as a timeless ethic, but were rather an 'ethic of the interim', between His preaching and the coming of the apocalyptic Son of Man, with the main points in the 'Sermon on the Mount' (Schweitzer, 1913: 640). In the history of the early church, eschatology was, on account of the delay, gradually replaced by Christology, and individual salvation became increasingly the goal, resulting in a neglect of the cosmic significance of the Kingdom of God (Schweitzer 1951:109).

In the conclusion of the *Quest* (Schweitzer, 1913: 631-642) Schweitzer points to the need to translate the fundamental thought of Jesus' world view into concepts we can understand today. The difficulty here is the setting of the world view of a man in the wider framework of the late-Jewish apocalypticism to which we cannot relate in our own time (Schweitzer, 1913: 639). The essence of Jesus and his world view was a deep longing for ethical perfection of the world (Schweitzer, 1913: 636), beyond the perfection of the individual (Schweitzer, 1913: 633). Schweitzer holds that the eternal in Jesus is independent of historical knowledge about him (Schweitzer, 1913: 634). Not the historical facts, but the personal relation with Jesus' will are determining for our knowledge about Him. The abiding in Jesus can only be understood by contact with his Spirit which is still at work in the world. Thus, if Jesus is to mean anything to us, we must enter into a mystical relation with Him (Schweitzer, 1913: 641): 'Only when we exhibit a will and hope for moral perfection like Jesus, can we have a real and living relation with Jesus' (Schweitzer, 1913: 637). Schweitzer maintains that the significance of the concept of the Kingdom of God for our world view is the same as it was for Him, and that we may experience in the same way that He did the urgency and the power of that concept (Schweitzer, 1913: 639).

In the final analysis, our relation to Jesus is of mystical nature... We enter into relationship with Him only by being brought together in the recognition of a common will, and by experiencing a clarification, enrichment and quickening of our will through His (Schweitzer, 1913: 641).

Schweitzer holds that

In the final analysis, the whole scientific quest for the historical Jesus has only this single aim: to set forth accurately the natural and unforced interpretation of the oldest accounts. To know Jesus ... it is not necessary that we know the details of His public ministry or be able to reconstruct a 'life of Jesus'. His very being, that which He is and wills, manifests itself in a few of His lapidary sayings and thrusts itself upon us. We know Him without knowing much about Him, and we sense His eschatological significance even without having a scholarly knowledge of this concept. For the characteristic thing about Jesus is the way He looks beyond the perfection and

blessedness of the individual to the perfection and blessedness of the world and of an elect humanity (Schweitzer, 1913: 634).

The delay of the eschatological end time compelled believers to take a more and more spiritual view of the Kingdom of God and the Messiahship of Jesus. The Kingdom of God became an inward spiritual condition (Schweitzer, 1951: 109). Schweitzer, influenced by Paul, maintains:

In Paul there is no God-mysticism, only a Christ-mysticism by means of which man comes into relation to God. The fundamental thought of Pauline mysticism runs thus: I am in Christ; in Him I know myself as a being who is raised above this sensuous, sinful, and transient world and already belongs to the transcendent; in Him I am assured of resurrection; in Him I am a child of God (Schweitzer, 1930: 3).

For Schweitzer, the world view which is based on reverence for life is not identical with Christianity, but in essence 'related' (*wesensverwandt*) to Christianity with its active ethic of love and through its 'inwardness' (*Innerlichkeit*) (Schweitzer, 1935b: 204). The ethics of reverence for life is the ethic of love, extended in the Universe. It is the 'ethic of Jesus, recognized as a necessity of thought' (*denknotwendig erkannte*) (Schweitzer, 1935b: 201).

Although Schweitzer does not elaborate in a systematic way on the doctrine of Incarnation, he preaches that Christianity 'is the religion of the Infinite become flesh,' and of 'Jesus as 'the Divine made flesh' (Picht, 1964: 73). The word 'flesh' implies the inclusion of all bodily creatures. Although the Logos is made flesh in Jesus, it is present in all creatures. In this perspective, the Logos identifies with all creation, composed of flesh, not only with human beings.

Schweitzer criticises the Christological doctrine of the two natures as far as Jesus' full humanity falls short, including his ability to err (Schweitzer, 1953: 369; 371). But Schweitzer holds on to the content of the Christological dogma. Jesus as supreme authority for revelation of religious and spiritual truth is for Schweitzer fundamental (Rössler, 1990: 257).

Schweitzer elaborates on the dogma of Jesus' death as 'atonement', maintaining that the forgiveness of sins occurs by God's mercy: God does not need Jesus' atonement in order to forgive sins. The redemption brought by Jesus is to be understood as the bringing of God's spirit, through which we will be lifted from the world to God (Schweitzer, 1951: 95).

Schweitzer states as the major weakness of all post-primal Christian salvation doctrines that they are only concerned with individual salvation, not simultaneously with the coming of God's Kingdom (Schweitzer, 1930: 373). Furthermore, Schweitzer considers Jesus' death and resurrection as of cosmological significance (Schweitzer, 1930: 55). In Paul's vision in Romans 8:18-25, the eschatological salvation includes animals. Paul's vision of a redeemed creation explicitly refers to future justice for animals (elaborated in Chapter 4).

The foregoing discussion on Schweitzer's theological position may raise the question whether Jesus was for Schweitzer just an inspiring ethical model or whether Schweitzer upheld the divine nature of Jesus. Given Schweitzer's agnosticism about metaphysical matters and his

reserve to express his own religious feelings, this question cannot be answered unequivocally. Schweitzer mentions in a sermon (1911) on Luke 24: 36 (*Peace be with you*) that Jesus' apparition after his death to his disciples might be understood—and here Schweitzer raises the issue from the pulpit in form of a question—not so much physically but more as a spiritual and inner experience. This indicates that Schweitzer does not believe in Jesus' bodily resurrection as such (Schweitzer, 2001: 1112). However, to infer from this sermon that Jesus was for Schweitzer 'merely' a supreme ethical authority is in my view an unjustified deduction, because Schweitzer also maintains that Jesus' Spirit is still at work amongst us and that we may enter into a mystical relation with his Spirit. I therefore prefer to leave unanswered the question whether Schweitzer upheld the divine nature of Jesus and respect Schweitzer's view insofar as he himself simply states that human beings cannot have knowledge about metaphysical matters. Schweitzer's Christology constitutes an area which Karl Barth criticizes in *Die Lehre von der Schöpfung* (*Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* III/4, 1951: 366-453). In a section entitled *Die Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*, Barth disapproves of Schweitzer's understanding of the meaning of incarnation. Barth writes: 'God Himself did not identify with the cosmos and with this or that other being in the cosmos, but in Jesus Christ with human beings, became human Himself' (Barth, 1951: 382). (For an evaluation of Karl Barth's perception of Schweitzer's theological views, see Barsam, 2008: 46-53).

3.4 The mystic way of Schweitzer

As elaborated, the concept of 'mysticism' as used by Schweitzer deviates from the concept as traditionally used. Schweitzer's understanding of traditional mysticism is mainly one of passivity, with no ethical content, or ethics just as an added element (in word or deed). The experience of union has in his view no relation with world-transforming activity: 'mysticism has always stopped with the passive, on an insufficient basis, as far as it regards ethics. Indian, Stoical, mediaeval, all the great mysticisms, have aimed at achieving union through passivity' (Schweitzer, 1936: 234). In contrast, in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism, spiritual union with the universal Will is achieved by active devotion to other life; the compulsion to action is based in the mystical experience itself, and does not stand alongside this experience. 'Here, spirituality and ethics are one and the same' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235). Schweitzer's view on traditional mysticism is not shared by Evelyn Underhill; in her view of mysticism, creative vitality and production of good works are crucial characteristics, while 'holy passivity' is a mark of 'quietistic heresy' (Underhill, 2008: 429). As there is no consensus on whether Schweitzer was a mystic himself (see this chapter's introduction), the characteristics and the stages of the mystic way as depicted by Underhill have to my knowledge not yet been applied to Schweitzer. In this section I apply 1) characteristics and 2) various phases of the mystic way as described by Underhill to what Schweitzer calls his 'ethical mysticism', in order to answer the question

whether this ‘ethical mysticism’ qualifies as mysticism. The design of Underhill’s characteristics and stages is still regarded as authoritative in the current debate between an ‘essentialist’ and a ‘constructivist’ position, where a ‘revival of the essentialist view’ can be noted (Baers, 2003: 192).

3.4.1 Characteristics of mysticism

Underhill provides five characteristics of mysticism (outlined in section 2.1.4) (Underhill, 2008: 70-94):

First, ‘true mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical. It is an organic life-process, a something which the whole self does; not something as to which its intellect holds an opinion’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). Both aspects—the practical and the personal—(Underhill, 2008: 82-83) are illustrative for Schweitzer’s case.

Schweitzer severely criticizes a passive mysticism (see section 3.3.2), which aims at achieving union through passivity (Schweitzer, 1936: 234) and becomes an aim in itself instead of regarding ethical action as the highest manifestation of spirituality (Schweitzer, 1930: 289).

As noted earlier, Schweitzer holds that God-mysticism as direct union with the infinite creative Will of God cannot be realized (Schweitzer, 1930: 367) because it is directed to an abstract ‘Essence of Being’ (*Insbegriff des Seins*) instead of being focused on the real Being that is both within and outside (Schweitzer, 1999: 376; Schweitzer, 1923b: 232).

Against the mysticism of identity, Schweitzer positions the mysticism of reality, in which the compulsion to action springs from the mystical experience itself and in which spirituality and ethics are amalgamated: passive and active self-perfection result from one and the same inner compulsion. (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235-236). In ethical mysticism spiritual union with the universal Will is achieved by active devotion to other life (Schweitzer, 1936: 234).

Man’s relation to and experience of Infinite Being is on the one side a relation to infinite Being as ethical Personality, and on the other side a relation to infinite Being as to all the manifestations of Infinite Being. Consequently this union is experienced two-fold and in contradiction: as passive quiescence in infinite Being and at the same time as inner compulsion to act (i.e. ‘as ‘being seized’ (*Ergriffensein*) by the Will-to-Love, which in us comes to consciousness of itself and wants to become act in us’)(Schweitzer, 1930: 367-368).

Underhill agrees that most active mystics ‘have first left the world, as a necessary condition of establishing communion with that Absolute Life... Hence something equivalent to the solitude of the wilderness as an essential part of mystical education’ (Underhill, 2008: 173). Schweitzer also praises the solitude (of the primeval forest) because it allows him to work out his ideas:

‘Solitude of the primeval forest (*Urwaldeinsamkeit*), how can I ever thank you enough for what you have been to me?’ (Schweitzer, 1921: 172).

For Schweitzer the deepest pursuit of mysticism is self-perfection, which consists of coming into a real relation of man to Being, that is within and without him. From the natural, outer belonging to Being, he wants to come to a spiritual, inner devotion to Being, so that his passive and active behaviour to the things may be determined by this devotion (Schweitzer, 1923b: 228). Therefore, the ethics of self-perfection is intimately connected with mysticism. To think the ethics of self-perfection means nothing else than to attempt to base ethics in mysticism (Schweitzer, 1923b: 231). Schweitzer warns that without mysticism we can only arrive at a superficial ethics, without inner personality:

Ethics can only be deep, when it develops from mysticism. Ethics has to come out of mysticism. Mysticism in turn may never mean to exist for her own sake. She is not the flower, but only the calyx of a flower. The flower is ethics. Mysticism, existing for itself, is the salt that is dull (Schweitzer, 1923b: 233).

For Schweitzer, the highest world view is the mysticism of ethical life and world-affirmation, in which man experiences spiritual union with infinite Being not only as submission, but also as devotion to infinite Being in ethical attitude and action towards its manifestations (Schweitzer, 1999: 378, note 263).

Concerning the second aspect of this characteristic, whether these insights are ‘known by experience’ (Underhill, 2008: 84) or whether these insights are theoretical, based on ‘mystical experiences of others’ (Underhill, 2008: 82-83), it can be reasonably argued that Schweitzer’s thought and writings can only be understood in the wider context of his life and his life-project. Schweitzer lived his philosophy of devotion to other life: ‘My life is my argument’. Schweitzer realized his philosophy of ethical mysticism in his personal way of life and sacrifice. The profoundness of his own experience, when he talks about suffering, exhaustion from the heavy work and the loneliness of the separation from his family, is a constituent of Schweitzer’s ethical mysticism: the sacrifices he had to make, having to explain his most inner thoughts to the Paris mission for his decision to go to Africa, losing his financial independence, giving up music and university teaching. Schweitzer’s ethic of devotion to other life is illustrative for this characteristic.

Second, ‘its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual ... Though he does not, as his enemies declare, neglect his duty to the many, his heart is always set upon the changeless One’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). This mark may be illustrated by Schweitzer’s view of civilization, which he defines as ‘spiritual and material progress in all spheres of activity, accompanied by an ethical development of individuals and of mankind’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 7). Yet he defines the ultimate object of civilization as the spiritual and moral perfecting of individuals (Schweitzer, 1923a: 389-390). Material achievements become only ‘civilization’, to the extent that the ethos

of civilization is able to use these material achievements for the perfection of the individual and all society (Schweitzer, 1923b: 5).

Although Schweitzer places high value on ethical action, he maintains that the creation of a new consciousness (*eine neue Gesinnung*) within individuals is more important than the attainment of any immediate results arising from that action (Schweitzer, 1923b: 259). Schweitzer holds that the ethics of self-perfection is closely linked with mysticism (Schweitzer, 1923b: 231). The deeper 'occupation' (*Beruf*) of mysticism is the pursuit of self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923b: 232).

Schweitzer states in this respect:

Normally, once the man who has penetrated to the recognition and experience of the Eternal amid the transient, from then he shows contempt to the inadequate conception of ordinary thought and everyday piety. He is a mystic and nothing but a mystic. As possessed of a mode of apprehension coming from within and directed towards that which is within, he is exalted above all knowledge coming from outside (Schweitzer, 1930: 24).

Schweitzer's life from age 30 was directed to serve other life. Through devotion to other life, Schweitzer aims to end the self-division of the will-to-live against itself and achieve union with the universal Will-to-Live.

Third, 'this One is for the mystic, not merely the Reality of all that is, but also a living and personal Object of Love, never an object of exploration' (Underhill, 2008: 81). Underhill marks outgoing activity, originating from generous love, and not transcendental knowledge, as 'one of the distinctive notes of true mysticism' (Underhill, 2008: 85).

With reference to the Universal-Will-to-Live (see section 3.3.1) Schweitzer maintains:

The primal Source of Being (*Der Urgrund des Seins*) as He manifests Himself in nature, is to us always impersonal, but the primal Source of Being who is revealed to us as Will-to-Love, however, we relate to as an ethical Personality (Schweitzer, 1935b: 207).

Schweitzer gives priority to God as ethical Personality over God as impersonal Will-to-live because the knowledge derived from human experience of Him as ethical Will is knowledge from within. According to Schweitzer,

...it is only through love that we can attain to communion with God. All living knowledge of God rests upon this foundation: that we experience Him in our lives as Will-to-Love' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 184). The question is ... in how far *the primal Source and Essence of Being* for me is something to which I have a spiritual relationship (or get into a spiritual relationship). At the moment I step into a spiritual relationship to him and surrender myself to him, the primal Source and the Essence of Being becomes for me God, that is, I conduct myself to him as a spiritual being to a spiritual Being (Schweitzer, 1999: 411-412) (italics by Schweitzer).

All the mysteries of the world and of my existence in the world may ultimately be left on one side unsolved and insoluble. My life is completely and unmistakably determined by the mysterious experience of God revealing himself within me as ethical Will and desiring to take hold of my life (Schweitzer, 1922: 700).

Fourth, ‘living union with this One—which is the term of his adventure—is a definite state or form of enhanced life’ (Underhill, 2008: 81). Underhill holds that mysticism shows itself not merely as an attitude of mind and heart, but as a form of organic life. It is a remaking of the whole character on high levels in the interests of the transcendental life (Underhill, 2008: 90).

This characteristic is concisely expressed by Schweitzer as follows:

Reverence for life is something, which once it has entered our thought, never disappears again. Compassion, love and all enthusiasm are given in it. With restless vitality reverence for life works upon the mind (*Gesinnung*) it has entered, and throws it into the unrest of a never- and nowhere-ending responsibility’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 241-242).

For Schweitzer, devotion to other life is an act in which all aspects of human life are involved. Active and passive self-perfection result from one and the same inner compulsion. The completeness is now there by itself (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235-236).

Schweitzer’s sensitivity to the suffering around him meant that only in rare moments was he really glad to be alive:

I could not help but constantly ‘experience’ (*miterleben*) all the suffering that I saw around me, not only of that of the people but also that of the creature. I have never tried to withdraw myself from ‘com-passion’ (*Mit-erleben*). For me it seemed natural that we all have to carry part of the burden of suffering which lies on the world (Schweitzer, 1935b: 209).

At the moments when I should like to enjoy myself without restraint, reverence for life wakes in me reflection about misery that I see or suspect, and it does not allow me to drive away the uneasiness I feel ... thus, I will never live my life for itself, but always in the experience that takes place around me. It is an uncomfortable doctrine which the true ethics whisper into my ear. You are happy, they say; therefore, you are called upon to give much (Schweitzer, 1923b: 253). You must show more than average devotion of life to life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 255-256).

Fifth, ‘true mysticism is never self-seeking’ (Underhill, 2008: 92). The motive is not the desire for transcendental satisfaction, but just the motive of true love. The mystic ‘completes his personality because he gives it up’ (Underhill, 2008: 92). It may reasonably be argued that this idea is expressed in Schweitzer’s contention that ‘self-devotion is not a surrender of the self, but a manifestation of its expansion’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 182), and also in the statement that ‘the absorption in the Absolute is never an end in itself’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 232).

For Schweitzer self-perfection includes self-devotion to other life. This self-devotion originates from ‘inward compulsion’—from the ‘mysterious experience of God, revealing himself within me as ethical Will’ (Schweitzer, 1922: 700). By including devotion to other life in self-perfection Schweitzer solves the problem of one-sidedness in two directions: on the one side of a non-ethical mysticism, on the other hand of a superficial ethic, that does not spring from inside and from contemplation. In self-devotion to individual life, Schweitzer involves not only the active, but also the contemplative dimension of faith. In total surrender to other life, in ‘the poignant interplay between the creatures and his own eyes’ (Schweitzer, 1999: 415) he experiences union with the ‘Life of the All’. ‘Mysticism, then, is seen as the “one way out” for

the awakened spirit of man; healing that human incompleteness which is the origin of our divine unrest' (Underhill, 2008: 93). Thus, mysticism is not a sacrifice of one's personality but the realization of the special love that is in a human being (Underhill, 2008: 93).

The application of Underhill's characteristics of mysticism on Schweitzer's life and thought suggests that some of the experiences as lived by him may be of mystical nature. The following is an attempt to apply the various stages of the mystic way, with Underhill's categories, on Schweitzer's life and work, via an analysis of his mainly autobiographical texts. Its legitimacy may be found in Underhill's concluding insight:

Every person, then, who awakens to consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense—however small, weak, imperfect that consciousness may be—is put upon a road which follows at low levels the path which the mystic treads at high levels (Underhill, 2008: 445).

3.4.2 Stages of the mystic way of Schweitzer

As outlined in the introduction, Underhill has described the phases of the mystic way according to these classifications: awakening of the Self/Conversion, Purification, Illumination, Dark Night of the Soul, and Union. Underhill reminds us that the description of these various phases of the *Via Mystica*, though convenient for purposes of study, is artificial: in real life, the different stages are closely entangled (Underhill, 2008: 229).

Schweitzer provides an insight in his life and (development of) thought by his autobiographical texts, although he himself readily admits that he is reticent about communicating his religious feelings (Schweitzer, 1931: 824), saying that we remain a mystery to each other:

A man must not try to force his way into the personality of another ... for there is a modesty of the soul which we must respect, just as we do that of the body. The soul, too, has its veil of which we must not deprive it. (Schweitzer, 1924: 306; cf. also Schweitzer, 2001: 1260).

It might be as a result of Schweitzer's reserve concerning his own religious feelings, that his writings provide only scanty reports of his religious or mystical experiences. Often, mystical accounts have described elevated states of consciousness or ecstasies. Schweitzer's mysticism is built on a rational basis and he does not describe such elevated conditions. Schweitzer's ethical mysticism originates in logical thinking where real union with the Infinite is realized by ethical action (Schweitzer, 1935b: 203-204). Critics such as Groos therefore maintain that Schweitzer's ethical mysticism cannot be called mystical; Groos calls Schweitzer's ethical mysticism ethical, but not mystical since he is unable to discern categories such as the mystic way, nor the 'passive state' at the end (Groos, 1974: 437-439). Others have commented that Schweitzer only provides a philosophical thought system or reflections on the relation between mysticism and ethics (e.g. Kraus, 1944: 5). Notwithstanding these arguments this section attempts to elaborate Schweitzer's mystic way via Underhill's scheme.

Applying the stages of the Via Mystica to Schweitzer's spiritual development and life:

First stage: Conversion or 'the awakening of the Self to consciousness of Divine Reality'

'This experience, usually abrupt and well-marked, is accompanied by intense feeling of joy and exaltation' (Underhill, 2008: 169). Though conversion is apparently abrupt, it is mostly preceded by 'a long period of restlessness, uncertainty, and mental stress' (Underhill, 2008: 179). Often these persons are already religious (Baers, 2003: 343; Underhill, 2008: 177). 'In most cases the onset of this new consciousness seems to the self so sudden, so clearly imposed from without rather than developed from within, as to have a supernatural character' (Underhill, 2008: 178). From Schweitzer's autobiographical description, *Aus meiner Kindheit und Jugendzeit*, this was a long process, starting at an early stage in life. He writes, 'A deep impression was made on me by something which happened during my seventh or eighth year'. His friend and Albert had made catapults to shoot birds. Although it was a terrible proposal for Albert, he did not refuse, because of fear of being laughed at. At the moment they wanted to shoot,

the church bells began to ring, mingling their music with the songs of the birds and the sunshine. It was the warning bell, which began half an hour before the regular peal ringing, *and for me it was a voice from heaven*. I shooed the birds away, so that they flew where they were safe from my companion's catapult, and then I fled home. And ever since then, when the Passiontide bells ring out to the leafless trees and the sunshine, I reflect with a rush of grateful emotion how on that day their music drove deep into my heart the commandment: '*Thou shalt not kill*' (Schweitzer, 1924: 26-27; cf also Schweitzer, 2001: 1250-1251, my italics).

Although the Absolute is not perceived by means of visible nature, in Schweitzer's description birds, sunshine, and leafless trees play a role in this phase of awakening of the self, (though in Underhill's terms, these perceived phenomena are usually a more common characteristic in the stage of Illumination) (Underhill, 2008: 191). As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Underhill considers the mystic's and man's consciousness in its full development extended in two directions, as two fundamental, complementary ways of apprehending Reality, that is, the transcendent and immanent, the eternal and temporal aspects of Truth but in the first awakening, usually only one of these forms is present (Underhill, 2008: 35, 195). When comparing Schweitzer's description, then the transcendent dimension (the voice from heaven) is more pronounced, but nature plays a role as well.

There slowly grew in me an unshakeable conviction that we have no right to inflict suffering and death on another living creature unless there is some unavoidable necessity for it, and that we all of us ought to feel what a horrible thing it is to cause suffering and death out of mere thoughtlessness (Schweitzer, 1924: 28).

Schweitzer describes two facts determining his life: first, his feeling of profound compassion with the pain and suffering around him:

Especially, I suffered, because the poor animals had to endure such a lot of pain and hardship. The sight of an old, limping horse, a man was pulling, while another with a

stick was hitting it—it was brought to the slaughterhouse—had haunted me for weeks (Schweitzer, 1924: 26).

Second, his own right to happiness:

These two experiences gradually merged into one another and gave definiteness to my interpretation of life in general and decided the future of my own life in particular... He who has been spared personal pain must feel himself called upon to take his part in alleviating the pain of others. We must all take our share of the misery, which weighs so heavily upon the world (Schweitzer, 1924: 46-47).

A period of restlessness and dissatisfaction can also be indicated in Schweitzer's autobiography:

Dimly and confused this thought was at work in me. Sometimes it left me alone, so that I breathed freely again and fancied once more that I was at liberty to become the sole arbiter of my fate. But the little cloud had risen above the horizon. I could indeed sometimes look away and lose sight of it for a while, but it was growing notwithstanding; slowly but surely it grew and at last it hid the whole sky (Schweitzer, 1924: 47).

Arguably this quotation expresses in Schweitzer's case Underhill's insight that the search for reality, for heightened and completed life as a constant characteristic of human consciousness, gradually becomes the dominant factor in the life of mystics (Underhill, 2008: 93-94).

Schweitzer only receives inward happiness, after his decision at the age of 21 to devote his life from age 30 to the suffering:

The plan which I meant now to put into execution had been in my mind for a long time, having been conceived so long ago as my student days. It struck me as incomprehensible that I should be allowed to lead such a happy life, while I saw so many people around me wrestling with care and suffering... Then one brilliant summer morning at Günsbach, during the Whitsuntide holidays—it was in 1896—there came to me, as I awoke, the thought that I must not accept this happiness as a matter of course, but must give something in return for it. Proceeding to think the matter out at once with calm deliberation, while the birds were singing outside, I settled with myself before I got up, that I would consider myself justified in living till I was thirty for science and art, in order to devote myself from that time onwards to the direct service of humanity. Many a time already had I tried to settle what meaning lay hidden for me in the saying of Jesus, 'Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it.' Now the answer was found. In addition to the outward, I now had inward happiness (Schweitzer, 1935b: 70-71; Schweitzer, 1924: 47).

From the foregoing it may be concluded that Schweitzer's conversion period can be situated from 1882/3 to the year 1896: at age 21 the decision (to serve as a medical doctor) was finally taken, preceded by a period of unrest because of the experienced contrast between the suffering around him and his own happiness. After this decision followed a period of relative inward happiness (in addition to outward happiness). 'I would take a path of immediate service as man to fellow man. What this path should be I hoped to learn from circumstances during the interval' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 71).

The decision of devoting myself to the work of medical help in the colonies was not the first idea that came up. This one emerged after plans for giving other kinds of help had occupied my mind, and had been given up for the most varied reasons. Finally, a chain

of circumstances pointed out to me the road which led to the sufferers from sleeping sickness and leprosy in Africa (Schweitzer, 1924: 47).

Schweitzer describes the end of his search:

One morning in the autumn of 1904 I found on my writing table in the College one of the green-covered magazines in which the Paris Missionary Society reported every month on its activities... That evening, in the very act of putting it aside that I might go on with my work, I mechanically opened this magazine, which had been laid on my table during my absence. As I did so, my eye caught the title of an article: 'Les besoins de la Mission du Congo' [The needs of the Congo Mission].... The writer expressed his hope that his appeal [for more workers] would bring some of those 'on whom the Master's eyes already rested' to a decision to offer themselves for this urgent work. The conclusion ran: 'Men and women who can reply simply to the Master's call, 'Lord, I am coming,' those are the people whom the Church needs'. The article finished, I quietly began my work. My search was over (Schweitzer, 1935b: 73-74).

Second stage: Purification: 'The Self, aware for the first time of Divine beauty, realizes by contrast its own finiteness and imperfection, the manifold illusions in which it is immersed, the immense distance which separates it from the One' (Underhill, 2008: 169). '...the way of Purgation is rather the slow and painful completion of Conversion' (Underhill, 2008: 204). It attempts to eliminate by detachment and mortification all that stands in the way of its progress towards union with God.

This stage of Purification can be situated in Schweitzer's life from 1905 till the stage I identify as his 'illumination' in 1915. In 1905 Schweitzer made his decision, to study medicine in order to serve as a medical doctor and missionary in Africa, known to his family and colleagues. He was met with incomprehension and condemnation concerning his decision to give up his promising academic career; he had to endure queries from the Mission congregation on his most inner religious feelings.

When I first went to Africa I prepared to make three sacrifices: to abandon the organ, to renounce the academic teaching activities to which I had given my heart, and to lose my financial independence, relying for the rest of my life on the help of friends. These three sacrifices I had begun to make, and only my intimate friends knew what they cost me (Schweitzer, 1935b: 170).

The long process of purification and character building found an expression in Schweitzer's description of the ethics of self-perfection (Chapter XX of *Kultur und Ethik* (Schweitzer, 1923b) and resignation, that is, 'that man wins his way to inward freedom, meaning that he finds strength to deal with everything that is hard, in such a way that it all helps to make him a deeper and more inward person, to purify him, and to keep him calm and peaceful' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 199). The newly awakened self is urged to a life of discomfort and conflict (Underhill, 2008: 200), described by Schweitzer thus:

In my own life I have experienced anxiety, distress and sadness at times so abundantly that I would have collapsed with less severe nerves. I carry the heavy burden of fatigue and responsibility that lies on me constantly for years. Of my life I do not have much for myself, not even the hours that I would like to dedicate to my wife and child (Schweitzer, 1935b: 210).

The adjustment of human nature to the demands of its new life requires a complete self-surrender and is a painful process (Underhill, 2008: 218-222). At the end of the *Quest (Die Leben-Jesu-Forschung)* Schweitzer remarks that only in suffering can we know Him. The mystics' quest of the Absolute drives them to an eager and heroic union with the reality of suffering, as well as with the reality of joy:

As a being in an active relation to the world he comes into a spiritual relation with it by not living for himself alone, but feeling himself one with all life that comes within his reach. Existence will thereby become harder for him in every respect than it would be if he lived for himself, but at the same time it will be richer, more beautiful, and happier (Schweitzer, 1935b:200).

He will experience 'also deep joy (*Seligkeit*), which the world cannot give' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 243).

I have already pointed out the pain that Schweitzer endured from loneliness and misunderstanding. Underhill holds that,

To the contemplative mind, which is keenly conscious of unity in multiplicity—of God in the world—all disinterested service is service of the Absolute which he loves (Underhill, 2008: 223). The point to which he aspires—though he does not always know it—is that in which all disharmony is resolved in the concrete reality which he calls the Love of God (Underhill, 2008: 224).

An equivalent in Schweitzer's life may be found in his efforts directed towards resolving the 'self-division' (*Selbstentzweiung*) of life against itself, in the 'yearning' (*Sehen*) of the will-to-live (in the ethical person that has become 'knowing of other wills-to-live') to arrive at union with itself and to become universal (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242).

Third stage: Illumination 'forms with the two preceding states "the first mystic life" ... Illumination brings a certain apprehension of the Absolute, a sense of the Divine Presence: but not true union with it. It is a state of happiness' (Underhill, 2008: 169). Illumination 'does but reproduce upon higher levels those characteristic processes of conversion' (Underhill, 2008: 232). Thus, during the phase of awakening Schweitzer obtained the insight: 'Thou shalt not kill'; during the stage of illumination this insight was further revealed as 'reverence for life'. Underhill calls illumination a change of consciousness: 'It has achieved consciousness of a world that was always there, and wherein its substantial being—that Ground which is of God—has always stood... "Transcendental Feeling": a deep, intuitional knowledge of the "secret plan"' (Underhill, 2008: 233). Here corresponding consciousness may be found in Schweitzer's dictum that life is a mystery. 'Such a beholding, such a lifting of consciousness from a self-centred to a God-centred world, is of the essence of illumination'; it is a certitude about God, and his own soul's relation to God (Underhill, 2008: 234).

According to Underhill, 'to see God in nature', to attain a radiant consciousness of the "otherness" of natural things, is the simplest and commonest form of illumination (Underhill, 2008: 240-241). Schweitzer's experience, repeatedly mentioned by him as his deepest

perception and insight, can be traced back to the year 1915. This experience he himself designated as a 'revelation':

Slowly we advanced upstream, manoeuvring between sandbanks, as it was dry season. Absent-mindedly I sat on the deck of the barge, struggling to find the elementary and universal concept of the ethical, which I hadn't found in any philosophy. I wrote page after page, with incoherent sentences, only to remain concentrated. On the evening of the third day, when we just passed a herd of hippos, stood suddenly (*urplötzlich*) before me, not foreseen and not searched for (*nicht gehant und nicht gesucht*), the words *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*. The iron door had given way; the path in the thicket had become visible. Now I had reached the idea, in which world- and life-affirmation and ethic are encompassed (*miteinander enthalten sind*) (Schweitzer, 1935b: 136).

Schweitzer considered this insight the major contribution for which he would like to be remembered. Forty-seven years later he wrote in a letter to H.W. Bähr (January 2, 1962) that he still remembered exactly

the experience on the voyage in September 1915 near the three islands close to the village Igendja. But only by the words 'reverence for life', that in that hour mysteriously and unconsciously (*geheimnisvoll und unbewusst*) came up in my thought, it became clear to me, that ethics by consideration of the whole creature, would possess a much deeper energy, while we through this ethics would achieve a spiritual relation to the Universe (Schweitzer, 2006: 39).

In another letter to Martin Werner (26th of January 1964), Schweitzer states:

During a long voyage on the Ogowe river as in a dream I reached the insight (*Einsicht*), that ethics, which is only concerned, like the European, with the spiritual relation between humans, is just a fragment of ethics, and that only ethics which includes goodness and compassion with all creatures, also the most inferior, is real and complete ethics (Schweitzer, 2006: 897-898).

In his search for a basic principle of the ethical he received as a 'revelation', the words *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben* while observing animals. Apparently, the view of animals served as inspiration for this insight: 'I couldn't believe that the way to deeper and stronger ethics I had sought in vain had become apparent (*offenbar*) to me as in a dream' (Schweitzer, 1922: 180). 'At a sandbank, at the left side, roamed four hippos and their young in the same direction' (Schweitzer, 1922: 180). Thus in the concrete encounter with these animals a new ethical principle was revealed to him.

Illumination tends to appear (in the history of mysticism) under an inward-looking or outward-looking form. Both can be present, but mostly one is dominant (Underhill, 2008: 240). First, in the internal form, the soul's progressive apprehension of Divine Reality, of the Presence of God, omnipresent in the universe; the mystic's perception of 'harmony with the Infinite' (Underhill, 2008: 242). In Schweitzer's writings this form finds expression as all life sharing in the qualities of Life itself, the unity of all life.

Secondly, in the external type, the illuminated vision of the world, 'the self perceives an added significance and reality in all natural things, in the phenomenal world: (the self) is often convinced that it knows at last 'the secret of the world' (Underhill, 2008: 240). 'It entails ... the discovery of the Perfect One self-revealed in the Many, not the forsaking of the Many in order

to find the One' (Underhill, 2008: 254). While the basic experience in the inward-looking form is all creatures in God, 'the whole universe as seen and known in God' (Underhill, 2008: 264), the basic experience in the external type is 'God in all creatures, God as seen and known in the whole universe' (Underhill, 2008: 264). Schweitzer apparently also knew these experiences, as he remarks in a sermon of 1919: 'God the Force ... lives in the whole world and the whole world lives in Him' (Schweitzer, 2001: 1242 [footnote 17]).

'Every visible and invisible creature is a theophany or appearance of God—as all perhaps might see it, if prejudice, selfhood, or other illusion did not distort our sight' (Underhill, 2008: 259-260). I maintain that the centuries-long discussion about the mortal/immortal soul is one of those illusions that have blurred our view. In his striving for self-perfection and in his devotion to other life, Schweitzer has the experience of all living beings, all life, sharing in the Life of the All. In such view, no barrier between human and non-human life exists.

Fourth stage: Dark Night of the Soul is the phase of final and complete purification of the Self, the most painful and negative of all the experiences of the mystic way.

The consciousness which had, in Illumination, sunned itself in the sense of the Divine Presence, now suffers under an equally intense sense of the Divine Absence... the great desolation in which the soul seems abandoned by the Divine (Underhill, 2008: 170). In this phase the self can do little but surrender itself to the inevitable process of things (Underhill, 2008: 169-170, 380-412).

When the mystics are in the Dark Night everything seems to 'go wrong' with them (Underhill, 2008: 385). 'The health of those passing through this phase often suffers, they become "odd" and their friends forsake them' (Underhill, 2008: 385). 'Such an interval of chaos and misery may last for months, or even for years, before the consciousness again unifies itself and a new centre is formed' (Underhill, 2008: 387).

While in Illumination a purgation of the organs of perception has taken place, in the Dark Night a more drastic purgation of the will is required, that the will may be merged without any reserve 'in God where it was first' (Underhill, 2008: 395). 'Our own will is our separation from God... The self then has to make that final surrender which is the price of final peace' (Underhill, 2008: 397). Schweitzer speaks in this respect like the German medieval mystics (e.g., Suso) about 'true resignation': 'How is my will in the Will of God?' (Schweitzer, 2001: 1194). Mystical union happens in the realm of the will in which it has union with God (Underhill, 2008: 397).

The 'transition from multiplicity to Unity', 'from the Many to the One', 'of that mergence and union of the soul with the Absolute' as the goal of mystical activity ('Everywhere one Being, one Life' [Underhill, 2008: 401]) finds in Schweitzer's writings its equivalent in 'resolving the 'self-division' (*Selbstentzweiung*) of life against life: the yearning of the will-to-live (in the person who has become thinking) to achieve a union with itself and to become universal (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242).

The period of the Dark Night of the Soul could be established in the life of Schweitzer between 1917 and 1920, at the time he and his wife Helene, as German nationals, were forced as a result of World War I to leave Lambarene, and were detained in French camps (Garaison and St. Rémy). During the period under detention and afterwards, he felt ill ('I felt more miserable by the day') (Schweitzer, 1935b: 156), forgotten as it seemed by the academic world (Schweitzer, 1935b; 160). After World War I, Schweitzer went back to Strassburg, where he took up a position as a medical doctor and as Vicar in St. Nicolay, while working at the same time on a new version of *Kulturphilosophie*, since he had to leave the first draft in Lambarene, because of the war (Schweitzer, 1935b: 158).

While he was working on his *Kulturphilosophie*, he received on Christmas Eve (1919) an invitation from Bishop Nathan Söderblom to lecture after Easter 1920 at the University of Uppsala. 'This call came to me quite unexpectedly. The whole time after the war in my Strassburger seclusion I felt like a lost penny, rolled under a piece of furniture' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 160). Schweitzer recalls:

As a tired, depressed, still ailing man—in the summer of 1919 I had to undergo a second surgery—I had come to Sweden. In the delicious air of Uppsala and in the good atmosphere of the archbishop's house, where my wife and I stayed, I recovered and I became again a happy working man (Schweitzer, 1935b: 161).

Fifth stage: Union. In this stage of the mystic way man's will is united with God, 'the true goal of the mystic quest ... that permanent establishment of life upon transcendent levels of reality, a state of purely spiritual life, characterized by peaceful joy, by enhanced powers, by intense certitude' (Underhill, 2008: 170, cf. also Underhill, 2008: 169-170, 413-443).

Not only the direct testimony of the mystics reveals the character of their transcendent experience, but also their lives may testify to the existence of super-normal springs of action within them, contact set up with deep levels of vital power (Underhill, 2008: 414). Schweitzer's ethical work and his perseverance can be designated as an expression of his contact with Life itself, from which his 'super-normal vitality' springs.

Mystics, in their attempt to describe the Unitive Life, mainly use the symbolic expression of deification (or identification) or of Spiritual Marriage of the soul with God, depending on the mode under which Reality is received (Underhill, 2008: 415). Mystics of the transcendent-metaphysical type, for whom the Absolute is impersonal and transcendent, describe their final attainment of that Absolute mainly as deification or identification. Mystics of the intimate personal type, for whom personal communion has been the mode under which they best apprehend Reality or to whom union means self-fulfilment in the union of heart and will, speak of the Spiritual Marriage of the soul with God, using the language of love in their attempt to express the personal and emotional aspect of their relation with their Source. The mystics try to speak about their 'conscious sharing of an inflowing *personal life* greater than his own' (Underhill, 2008: 425-426). It is obvious that both the language of identification and the

language of love are only able to transfer in a fragmentary way something concerning the intrinsic character of the state of union.

It can reasonably be argued that in Schweitzer's case both forms can be discerned, when he understands Being (God) as both inside us as Will-to-Love and outside us as Will-to-Live. The will-to-love means that we, through thinking, have become conscious of other will-to-live, and experience a compulsion to give to every will-to-live the same reverence for life that we give to our own (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138) and devote through our actions our own will-to-live to that of the Infinite Will-to-Live (Schweitzer, 1935b: 204). The Will-to-Love, as experienced in ourselves, wants to solve through us the self-division (*Selbstentzweiung*) of the Will-to-Live (Schweitzer, 1935b: 204). Thus, we achieve union with God as Will-to-Love by willing love and we achieve union with God as Will-to-Live by devoting ourselves to manifestations of Will-to-Live, in need of our devotion.

One may enquire what Underhill's characterization of the stage of union as 'peaceful joy' means in Schweitzer's case. Schweitzer maintains that 'only at quite rare moments have I felt really glad to be alive', because 'I could not but feel with a sympathy full of regret all the pain that I saw around me, not only that of men but that of the whole creation' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 186). One could refer to expressions of deep happiness that he has experienced in his devotion to other life:

As a being in an active relation to the world, he (i.e., the human whose compassion has been deepened by resignation) comes into a spiritual relation with it by not living for himself alone, but feeling himself one with all life that comes within his reach. He will feel all that life's experiences as his own, he will give it all the help he can possibly give, and will feel all the saving and promotion of life that he has been able to effect as the deepest happiness that can ever happen to him... Existence will thereby become harder for him in every respect than it would be if he lived for himself, but at the same time it will be richer, more beautiful, happier (Schweitzer, 1935b: 200).

Yet, 'the effort for harmony never succeeds' (Schweitzer, 1936: 226). We will not be able to solve the 'self-division' (*Selbstentzweiung*) of life against life completely. Nevertheless, not only in ethical action do we experience mystical union, but also in the effort itself to solve the disunion of life against itself, even if that effort will not be successful. Through resignation we are lifted above the pain of disunion and above the frustrated efforts for harmony and still achieve peace and harmony. It is because of the experience of mystical union that we gain the ethical power for deep and persistent self-devotion to other life. Therefore, it is my contention that mystical union does not depend on the successful solving of the 'self-division' (*Selbstentzweiung*), but can also be realized in the willingness to devote ourselves, when we really do all we can to resolve suffering around us. Thus, even in the attitude of compassion, mystical union can be achieved.

As elaborated under 'The nature of the universal will-to-live' (section 3.3.1), Schweitzer rejects the possibility of union with an abstract 'Essence of Being', or with the 'Totality of Being'

(Schweitzer, 1923b: 234-235). We can only come in connection with infinite Being in service to manifestations of Being, that need our devotion:

Only an infinitely small part of the infinite Being enters within my reach ... In my devotion to those, which come into my reach, and who need my devotion, I realize the spiritual, inner devotion to the infinite Being and give my poor existence meaning and value (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235).

Thus, for Schweitzer there is not 'in general' a compulsion for ethical action, but the 'inner compulsion' arises from a concrete, individual encounter with another living being, that is in need of my devotion. The principle of reverence for life, though based in rational thinking, has only meaning in concrete encounters with other life. And in this concrete devotion to other beings, 'from inner compulsion', moved by sympathy and compassion, mystical union is achieved. This results in union with infinite Being, inside and outside myself, with life and with Life itself.

Groos calls Schweitzer's ethical mysticism ethical, but not mystical (Groos, 1974: 437). Yet, it can reasonably be argued, that in the actual encounter with other life in need of my devotion, I experience something which transcends my own being, my own individual existence. Although Groos quotes Underhill, stating that the goal of mysticism is the 'Union with the One' (Groos, 1974: 436), he seems not to take into consideration Underhill's position that the mystic's and man's spiritual consciousness is extended not in one but in two directions, as two fundamental ways of apprehending Reality: the eternal and temporal, transcendent and immanent aspect of Truth (Underhill, 2008: 194, 35, 36, 43, 90) demanding from its side a dual response (Underhill, 2008: 35-36). In the case of Schweitzer one may see this double nature of reaction to Reality expressed by his devotion to other life and by his self-perfection: on the one hand incessantly serving other life, on the other hand his continuing concern for quietness, resignation and contemplation.

In addition, Groos argues that in devotion to other life, 'no real union' with Infinite Being is achieved (Groos, 1974: 439). However, Schweitzer maintains that in the ethical act, in the reverence for life, our will to love unites with the will to live, and therein a human experiences union with the infinite Will-to-Live. In Schweitzer's experience of mystical union, through the response to the direct appeal by other life in need for our devotion, the interrelationship and unity between all life and with Life itself is experienced. For Schweitzer the most fundamental question is how man is to become spiritually one with infinite Being. In a sermon on Philippians 4:7 (*The Peace of God*) delivered in 1913 he phrases it thus:

But the last question ... is concerned with only one thing: What happens with our will? How is it in the Will of God? And the highest knowledge which man can attain is the longing for peace, that our will becomes one with the infinite Will, our human will with the Will of God (Schweitzer, 2001: 1193-1194).

Only 'in spiritual union' (*im geistigen Eins-Werden*) with infinite Being can he give meaning to his life and find strength to suffer and to act. That is the 'ethical mysticism' that leads man to a

spiritual relation with the Infinite. Reverence for life is union with the infinite Will-to-Live and Will-to-Love. We mystically become one with God through acts of caring for other life. In a sermon on Romans 14.7 (*We do not live to ourselves*) delivered in 1919, Schweitzer conveys experiences of mystical union. He holds that in the understanding of Reverence for Life, the deepest understanding of life has been reached when experiencing

[t]he life that is at the same time sympathy (*Miterleben*), where in one existence, the wash of the waves of the whole world is felt, (where) in one existence life as such arrives at the consciousness of itself - (where) the individual existence ceases, (where) the being outside of us floods into our being (Schweitzer, 2001: 1242). (My translation)

How could one envision (as Groos does) this ‘real union’ to be achieved differently in traditional mysticism?

Furthermore, in reply to Groos (that Schweitzer’s ethical mysticism is ethical but not mystical), or that religion with Schweitzer is reduced to ethics (Groos, 1974: 492-493), one can reiterate that Schweitzer’s emphasis on the ethical character of ethical mysticism is directed against a kind of mysticism and religion which are merely contemplative. I have already referred to the central notion of resignation as the basis of ethics (sub-experience of mystical union). ‘True resignation is not a becoming weary of the world, but the quiet triumph which the will-to-live celebrates in its greatest distress over the circumstances of life’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 212). Resignation is necessary in order to gain awareness of our inward relation to Being as ethical Personality and to gain the strength ‘for deep and persistent self-devotion to other life’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 244; 199-200).

Schweitzer’s description of the content of his union remains scant, as in the case of Suso and other mystics (Underhill, 2008: 412). As elaborated, I have classified Schweitzer’s experience as of the type ‘associated with experiencing the world in a way progressively freed from the ordinary constructions of consciousness’ (Rothberg, 1990: 190). Schweitzer describes the knowledge derived from his mystical experience simply as ‘good is to preserve and promote life, evil is to destroy and hamper life’. As Underhill has stated, not only the direct testimonies of the mystics inform us about their transcendent experiences, but also their lives testify to the existence of their contact with the Transcendence, from which they gain super-human vitality (Underhill, 2008: 413-414). I maintain that this category might apply to Schweitzer as well: at which level and to what extent Schweitzer has trodden the mystic path scholars may differ in opinion, but few will disagree that his ethical achievements testify of an extraordinary vitality, of ‘creative powers which spring from the realm of the Creative Will, experienced as working in his soul’ (Underhill, 2008: 414).

3.5 Appreciation of animals in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism

One of the objectives of this study (see Introduction) is to identify possible appreciative dimensions of creatures, having contributed to Schweitzer's caring attitude towards all living beings.

Schweitzer maintains that the most basic human experience is 'I will-to-live', which fills me with reverence for life. As a rational being I am aware that all life around me is 'will-to-live' and is equally struggling to survive and develop and therefore I must regard other life with reverence equal to that with which I regard my own life. Because will-to-live is present throughout the universe, Schweitzer's ethical mysticism of reverence for all life is universal.

The basic experience in ethical mysticism is the experience of spiritual union with all life and with Life itself, every time we devote ourselves to other life in an attitude of reverence for life. As elaborated, reverence for life bases ethics in our own will-to-live, a level more basic than reason. This level, deeper than reason, we share with all other living beings, who are all 'wills-to-live'. It is my contention that at this level, deeper than reason, which Schweitzer attained through resignation, the barrier between rational and non-rational, between human and non-human life is done away with, and therefore Schweitzer was able to experience the closeness of all life and experience other living beings as his intimates. In Schweitzer's ethical mysticism the following levels of appreciation of animals can be discerned:

3.5.1 Kinship

Schweitzer holds that ethical mysticism originates in logical thinking, results from our recognizing the solidarity of life which nature gives us (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138, 204), and gradually grows to sympathy with all life:

Seeing its presence in ourselves, we realize how closely we are linked with other life. Life demands that we see through to the solidarity of all life which we can in any degree recognize as having some similarity to the life that is in us (Schweitzer, 1936: 237).

In another sermon (on Mark 12: 28-34, *The Greatest Commandments*) delivered in 1919, he holds that this sense of kinship with other life becomes so deep, that we even come to see ourselves in other lives: 'Where you see life – that is you!' He elaborates:

Reverence for life, for the Uncomprehensible (*Unbegreiflichen*) that meets us in all, and that is like ourselves, different in its outer appearance (*Erscheinung*), but inside of the same being (*Wesen*) with us, terribly the same, terribly related (*furchtbar ähnlich, furchtbar verwandt*), puts an end to the estrangement between us and the other beings (Schweitzer, 2001: 1238).

Thus 'By reason of the quite universal idea, which is as flexible as one pleases, of kinship (*Wesensverwandtschaft*), it is imperative to declare the unity (*Verbundenheit*) of humankind with all created beings' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 192). Therefore, he speaks of creatures as our brothers and that they have the right to be treated as such: 'A true human feels like a brother of

creatures, not their master. Because nobody knows how far down the boundary of conscious, sensing life reaches, and where the life of animals halts and of plants begins, every life is sacred for us ... We do not know whether a plant feels or senses anything, we cannot prove it' (Schweitzer, 2001: 1248). Schweitzer employs here the criterion of sentience.

3.5.2 Interdependence

Closely related with kinship of life is interdependence: as we are born of other lives and have the capacity to bring other lives into existence, each life has to help other lives which are linked to it. We are all part of life. Thus nature compels us to recognize the fact of mutual dependence and the solidarity of life (Schweitzer, 1936: 237). From this experience grows the feeling of union and unity with other life.

3.5.3 Utility

Although Schweitzer accepts the 'necessary' suffering of animals on behalf of humanity (e.g., in animal experimentation), he strongly pleads to alleviate animal pain to the minimum level possible. He refers in this connection to the debt humans owe to the animal world and to the duty to alleviate suffering wherever we can.

No one must shut his eyes and regard as non-existent the suffering of which he spares himself the sight. Let no one regard as light the burden of his responsibility. While so much ill-treatment of animals goes on, while the moans of thirsty animals in railway trucks sound unheard, while so much brutality prevails in our slaughterhouses ... we all share the guilt (Schweitzer, 1923b: 249-250).

Concerning animal experiments Schweitzer's view is that researchers

must never quieten any misgivings they feel with the general reflection that their cruel proceedings aim at a valuable result. They must first have considered in each individual case whether there is a real necessity to force upon any animal this sacrifice for the sake of people. And they must take the most anxious care to mitigate as much as possible the pain inflicted.... By the very fact that animals have been subjected to experiments, and have by their pain won such valuable results for suffering humanity, a new and special relation of solidarity has been established between them and us. From that springs for each of us a compulsion to do to every animal all the good we possibly can. By helping an insect when it is in difficulties, I am only attempting to cancel part of humanity's ever new debt to the animal world (Schweitzer, 1923b: 249-250).

In *Kulturphilosophie III* he talks about thanking the cow for the milk and the chicken for the egg *et cetera* (Schweitzer, 1999: 414-415). Schweitzer accepts the use of animals under 'very necessary' conditions. He apparently only became a vegetarian towards the end of his life (Free, 1993: 40; Barsam, 2008: 152), indicating his evolving insights in this 'necessary' use.

3.5.4 Aesthetic

Schweitzer talks about nature's mysteries and beauties for which we stand in awe, as well as for the existence of life and the variety of species (Schweitzer, 2001: 1237). Schweitzer mentions animals helping each other and about sacrificial care of animals for their young (Schweitzer, 1936: 238-239). But at the same time he refers to the drama of will-to-live divided against itself, of 'nature darkened by suffering' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 209), where one existence holds its own at the cost of another. In the already mentioned sermon on Romans 14.7 he remarks: 'Nature is beautiful and awesome, seen from the outside, but to read in its book, is horrible. And its cruelty is so senseless' (Schweitzer, 2001: 1241).

3.5.5 Ontology

In the ontological view all beings share in the same qualitative status as manifestations of Being itself. Schweitzer speaks of the universal Will-to-Live, immanent in the world, of which each will-to-live constitutes a part. Because of the participation in a common nature (*Wesensverwandtschaft*) man has to declare the union (*Verbundenheit*) of humankind with all life and with Life itself (Schweitzer, 1935a: 192). And because each will-to-live is part of the infinite Will-to-Live, all life is sacred. Because of this participation in a common nature, man cannot succeed in defining the limits of solidarity with other life and is compelled to declare the union of humankind with all created beings (Schweitzer, 1999: 287-288; Schweitzer, 1935a: 192).

3.5.6 Theophany

As elaborated in the section on the nature of the universal will-to-live (section 3.3.1), Schweitzer holds that 'all matter is only appearance of the Spiritual' (Schweitzer, 1999: 413-414). Schweitzer grasps in devotion to other life—in need of devotion—Being in all manifestations of Being, Life in all manifestations of Life (Schweitzer, 1935a: 191).

The mysticism in higher sense ... strives to a differentiation between Being and manifestation (*Erscheinung*) and understands the material as a manifestation of the spiritual. *Thus, it beholds the Eternal in the transitory* (Schweitzer, 1930: 1-2, my italics).

I hold that Schweitzer in his purified view attained a consciousness of the 'Otherness of natural things' (Underhill, 2008: 234) and perceived 'an added Reality and Significance' (Underhill, 2008: 254) in the phenomenal world.

In conclusion, for Schweitzer the deepest quest of mysticism is self-perfection, which implies coming into a real relation to Being, who is both inside and outside the human being. From the

natural, outer belonging to Being, he wants to come to a spiritual, inner devotion to Being, so that his passive and active behaviour to other beings may be determined by this devotion. Reverence for life bases ethics in the will-to-live, which all living beings share. I maintain that Schweitzer was able, through his purified view, to perceive the kinship and interdependence of all creatures (as wills-to-live) and to perceive God in other life. Therefore, service to other life is service to God, and the ethical act becomes a spiritual act. Only when self-devotion to Being inside is complemented with self-devotion to other life may we achieve self-realization and give meaning to our life. Compassion plays a key role in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism: God as ethical Personality inside (God as Will-to-love) moves us to compassion and care for other manifestations of God (as Will-to-live) outside. Through empathy, sympathy and compassion we re-unite the self-division of Will-to-live, the conflict of will-to-live against will-to-live that characterizes the disharmony and estrangement of our existence. I therefore suggest a focus on the role of empathy and compassion in the creation of a new spirituality (as will be elaborated in Chapter 6).

3.6 Summary

In this chapter I have presented out of Schweitzer's biography an outline of ethical mysticism. From the application of characteristics of mysticism and of stages of the mystic way I have concluded that Schweitzer may qualify to be called a 'mystic'. As a follower of Jesus in his service to other life he came to experience animals in their own right, and from a Creator's perspective.

Schweitzer achieved after a long purification process a level of perception from which 'the whole world is seen and known in God', as Schweitzer's illumination is mainly of the inward-looking type (see section 2.1.5). He attained a point of perception from where he experienced a common ontological basis and kinship between animals and humans, interdependency between all creatures, their utility as well as their aesthetic value and theophany.

Not primarily through processes of thought but deep, immediate experience Schweitzer's life and work shows to have reached a real contact with other creatures and with the primal Source of Being. Schweitzer was able to perceive in other life a 'Reality' that transcends the physical world and oneself; he may have sensed, in service to other life, an animal's own relation with the Creator God. Schweitzer's ethical mysticism takes root in empathy, sympathy and compassion through which he came to serve needy life, arriving at a direct relation with creatures and finally attaining a mystical relatedness to the divine Mystery of life.

Where Schweitzer's concerns relate to the most basic questions of existence, that is, the relation of humans to other creatures and to God, there may be a contemporary relevance. His search for right and harmonious relations of humans to other creatures and to God may offer hope and

guidance to a contemporary search for human's proper place in a world which we share with other animate and inanimate creatures. There is the option of another way, leading to a new understanding of our place as well as a place for animals in this world.

In spirituality, the believer, in the act of contemplation, focuses on certain aspects of faith, like poverty, or the passion of Christ. I propose in the experience of faith an explicit focus on animals and to contemplate animals as God's creatures, with their own worth and with their own relation to God, independent of the relation to humans or to human needs. A new spirituality may result in a different approach toward other creatures where the focus is on the kinship of life instead of on the distinction between humans and animals. Christian teaching (Chapter 4) can contribute to a change in attitude towards nature in general and to animals in particular (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ANIMAL SPIRITUALITY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates whether an animal inclusive concern and spirituality, as demonstrated by Francis and Schweitzer, may find support in the Christian biblical tradition. In Chapter 1 I understood ‘animal spirituality’ as a sense of connection to a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself, that is experienced in the encounter with animals and is explicitly focused on in the contemplation of faith.

Under the influence of Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, with their emphasis on rationality, an instrumentalist view on animals has developed. This view has influenced the traditional Christian interpretation of biblical texts by supporting, for example, preconceived concepts of rational and irrational souls. The dominant anthropocentric vision, in which only humans have value for God, while animals are to be considered as mere resources for nourishment and labour, has been challenged by a number of Classical and Modern thinkers. Biblical texts, when read and interpreted from a non-anthropocentric perspective, may show a view of animals as loved by God and as having intrinsic worth as God’s creatures. The three notions of ‘soul’, ‘dominion’ and ‘image’, central in biblical discourse, are to be explored here in section 4.2.

My starting point for reading of biblical texts in this context is a believer’s position in a contemporary world that may be characterized by instrumental use of animals by humans. Exegesis here takes place within a broader hermeneutical and theological frame of interpretation, whereby the biblical text is not only read as a historic-linguistic phenomenon, but is in the reading act also acknowledged and experienced as testimony of faith and as an invitation to act (Virkler and Ayayo, 2007: 80-81). Exegesis thus understood is fundamentally linked to systematic theology as a form of applied hermeneutics (van Wolde, 1994: 207-208; Osborne, 1991: 286). I aim to investigate via an inductive path (by using biblical commentaries) what the Bible mentions about the position of animals in creation (Osborne, 1991: 68). By scrutinizing the lexicon in such a way, I select passages that may exhibit a favorable view of animals, with the intention of highlighting the relevance of those biblical sources that have been ignored because of traditional anthropocentric reading. In hermeneutic methodological terms this constitutes the ‘contextualization’ of selected texts (Osborne, 1991: 318-319). I will concentrate on those biblical texts that concern the relationship between God and animals, and less on biblical texts that concern human-animal relations. Here I intend to focus on the one hand on biblical texts that testify of God’s love and care for all creatures, and on the other hand on biblical texts that testify of animals’ responses to God’s love and care. It is my hope that my questions to these biblical texts, when reading them as a heterogeneous corpus, will transform

my pre-understanding into a deeper significance for interpreting Francis' and Schweitzer's approaches towards animals in the subsequent Chapter 5 (Osborne, 1991: 324).

For the Hebrew-English transliteration, Strong's *Hebrew-Aramaic Simplified Transliteration and Pronunciation Table* (Strong, 2001: 1467) has been used, with the English meaning of Hebrew words according to Strong in italics. 'Strong H' (with number) refers to Strong's Hebrew word numbering according to the *Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary-Index to the Old Testament* (Strong, 2001: 1465-1583); 'Strong G' (with number) refers to Strong's Greek word numbering according to the *Greek Dictionary-Index to the New Testament* (Strong, 2001: 1585-1654).

4.2 God as Creator

The Old Testament presents several creation traditions: Genesis 1:1–2:4a and Genesis 2:4b–3:24. Psalm 74: 13-14 and Isaiah 51: 9 also reflect creation accounts in which the creation follows after a conflict in which YHWH defeats a sea monster. Other versions exist in Proverbs 8: 22-31, in different parts of the book of Job and elsewhere (OBC, 2007: 42). In this chapter, I will focus on the creation accounts according to Genesis.

There is a consensus that the first major comprehensive narrative of the Pentateuch (i.e., the first five books of the Old Testament, Genesis to Deuteronomy) as we have it dates from the 7th or 6th century BCE, consisting of a 'late Yahwistic' (J) or a 'Deuteronomistic' (D) narrative. The more recent Priestly work (P) involves the insertion into this older narrative of the specifically Priestly accounts and laws, resulting in a composition close to the actual Pentateuch. According to the Documentary Hypothesis, the P source is to be considered part of the original core; during the last decades there has been a growing opinion that P represents the final phase of a composition process rather than a separate source of the original core (OBC, 2007: 37; for the relevant arguments, see OBC, 2007: 12, 30-38).

The book of Genesis can be considered as a preface to the history of Israel, establishing its identity as a nation, as well as establishing the recognition of YHWH as the God of this nation. This monotheistic position, as a characteristic Yahwistic article of faith, is exceptional in the Ancient Near Eastern context, although traces of polytheism are still discernible: inclusion of 'us' (Gen. 1: 26) and 'like one of us' (Gen. 3: 22). Also unique for Israelite religion is the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies being depicted as part of God's creation (Brayford, 2007: 216-217) in contrast to Near Eastern religious systems, where they are portrayed as powerful deities; unique also is the institution of the Sabbath (OBC, 2007: 40-41). For the P-writer, the symbolic function of the sun and moon (Gen. 1: 14) is the justification of the calendar, revised by P along lunar-solar lines (Murray, 1992: 6-7).) Where the book of Genesis reflects events and circumstances of post-patriarchal times (such as the account of a nation comprising twelve

tribes, the Exodus and repeated promises of the possession of the land of Canaan), it dates either from the time of the Babylonian exile (6th century BCE) or from the early post-exilic period, with the Jewish community living as foreigners in and around Jerusalem under Persian domination (OBC, 2007: 39-40).

4.2.1 Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 4a

Although the theology of the P-tradition is largely a ritualistic one (emphasizing priesthood and sacrifice), it is based on the definition of the place of humankind in the world: God as Creator and humans made in his image, implying that humans are God's representatives on earth to whom dominion is granted. Genesis 9: 8-13 depicts the covenant with Noah and all living creatures. An important feature in the P-theology, to be located probably between the destruction of the First Temple (587/586) and the completion of the Second Temple (in 516) (OBC, 2007: 28), is the depiction of the divine present in the middle of the people, requiring the building of a sanctuary at Mount Zion. Genesis 1: 1-2: 4a does not show mythical traces, as the P-tradition has removed these from the creation story (Jenni and Westermann, 1971: I, 339).

This creation account is monotheistic in not depicting or reflecting on conflicts or battles with forces of chaos (as, for example, in the Babylonian Enuma Elish creation account); God creates by merely speaking or by a creative act. God's creation thus entails the establishment of order by imposing His will on the elements at creation (Murray, 1992: 14). Although the account does not *explicitly* mention God's purpose for creation, traditional Christian interpretation holds in this respect that the creation of humans is the culmination of this narrative, while the creatures created on previous days 'are all by implication provided for mankind's use and convenience' (OBC, 2007: 42).

This common anthropocentric reading is especially based on the notion of רָדָה (*rādā*)(Qal), 'to rule over; to scoop out, scrape out' (Strong H7287), and of כָּבַשׁ (*kābaš*)(Qal), 'to subdue, overcome, enslave' (Strong H3533), traditionally translated by 'to have dominion' and 'to subdue' respectively. 'To have dominion' (רָדָה *rādā*) has often been understood as 'domination' and as 'right to exploitation'. On the one hand it can be argued that humans are, in this biblical context, considered unique—a notion expressed by the meaning of זֵלֶם (*šelem*), 'image (usually referring to an object of worship), idol: phantom, fantasy, shadowy thing' (Strong H 6754), as well as by the meaning of דְּמוּת (*dēmut*), 'likeness, figure, image, form' (Strong H1823). On the other hand the context of the word רָדָה (*rādā*) does not support a view of dominion as 'domination' or as 'right to exploitation' since the endowment of dominion is linked in this text to being created in the image of God and presented within a paradisiacal context.

The topic of God's image and likeness has received attention by the early Christian Fathers (notably the Genesis commentary by Augustine), while the Hebrew Bible further on only

concerns itself with the issue of God's image and likeness in Psalm 8 (Brayford, 2007: 221). It is necessary to interpret the image of God in humankind and the problem of the plural 'us' in Genesis 1: 26-27, as this co-determines the meaning of the image.

Then God said, 'Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness'. So God created humankind in *his* image, in the image of God he created them (Gen. 1: 26, 27 NRSV, my italics).

While the 'image' has been traditionally situated in some spiritual quality of the human person, biblical scholars have emphasized since the middle of last century that in Hebrew thought a human being is considered a unity: the Pentateuch does not allow for a division between soul and body. In the Semitic thinking the human being as a whole is the image of God, without distinction of spirit and body. P's notion of the transcendence of God, however, does not allow the P-tradition to speak of God's (male and female) corporeality (Clines, 1967: 53-61). Jenni and Westermann (1976: II, 559), von Rad (1952: 45) and Clines (1967: 75) understand the preposition ב in בְּצִלְמֵנוּ as 'beth essentiae', meaning 'as', or 'in the capacity of'. Thus interpreted, God does not say, 'Let us make a human *in* our image', or '*according to* our image', because God has no image of his own; rather God says, 'Let us make a human *as* our image' or 'to be our image'. 'According to Genesis 1, man does not *have* the image of God, nor is he made *in* the image of God, but *is* himself the image of God' (Clines, 1967: 80. my italics), meaning God's representative (Clines, 1967: 70-80), thus solving the difficulty of being created 'male and female' (Gen. 1: 27). 'The image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation' (Clines, 1967: 101). The words רָדָה (*rādā*) and צֶלֶם (*selem*) in this argument are closely linked.

In this context the Hebrew דְמוּת (*dmut*) ('likeness') is generally understood as a weakening of a perceived strong physical connotation of צֶלֶם (*selem*) by those commentators who traditionally do understand the meaning 'image' as a physical image: man is not an exact reproduction of God, but only a 'likeness'. Other commentators hold that דְמוּת (*dmut*) and צֶלֶם (*selem*) are nearly identical in meaning (Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 559; OBC, 2007: 43; Clines, 1967: 91; Brayford, 2007: 223). As I do not understand צֶלֶם (*selem*) as physical image, for my line of reasoning I concur that both words carry an almost identical meaning.

As 'to be the image of God' means representing God, implying that we are to rule in such a way that we express the image of God, I propose to render רָדָה (*rādā*) not with the common translation 'to have dominion', but with 'to rule over', which is its primary meaning ('*to rule over; to scoop out, scrape out*') (Strong H7287). This translation is confirmed by the LXX-G, which parallels the ruling role of human beings with the ruling role equally assigned by God to the lights in Genesis 1:14-16. Using the Greek equivalent ἄρχω ('to rule over') to represent the function of human beings (i.e., to rule over the living beings which God has created) is here more appropriate than the rendering for the verb רָדָה (*rādā*) as 'have dominion' (Brayford, 2007:

222). The already mentioned verb כָּבַשׁ (*kābaš*), to ‘*subdue, overcome, enslave*’ (Strong H3533) is proposed to be understood in a similar way, that is, as human rule over the world, parallel to the rule over animals.

In the Ancient Near Eastern context, the image of a god, when referring to human persons, almost always appears in relation to kings: there the image of the god is closely linked with the imagery of a supreme ruler, who may act as the god’s representative on earth (Clines, 1967: 80-85; Murray, 1992). Therefore, the use of the verb רָדָה (*rādâ*), associated with royal power, constitutes in the context of Genesis 1: 26 and 1: 28 not merely an ‘odd choice,’ as Brayford (2007: 222) holds.

Concerning the plural in Genesis 1: 26 (‘Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness’, my italics). Clines rejects in this matter a number of interpretations, such as: 1) an unassimilated fragment of a myth (an interpretation to be rejected because the author of Genesis 1 was in other instances able to remove all traces of polytheism from the traditional material, so the plural is used here ‘deliberately’); 2) an address to creation (to create together with the earth man’s body; an interpretation to be rejected because verse 27 indicates that God alone is the Creator); 3) a *plurale majestatis* (an interpretation to be rejected as well, because of the near-absence of parallels in the Old Testament); 4) an address to the heavenly court (an interpretation to be rejected equally, because a human cannot be created in the image of God and of other heavenly beings, and because the imagery of a heavenly court nowhere appears in this chapter or the P-strand of the Pentateuch); 5) a self-deliberation or self-summoning (a reading, although not uncommon in the Old Testament as a whole, but not obvious in a context such as this); 6) a duality within the Godhead. Clines favours this last option as the most probable explanation for ‘us’ in Genesis 1:26; God is addressing here His Spirit, who has appeared in Genesis 1: 2 in a prominent role (not just a ‘mighty wind’) and who has disappeared thereafter; in other Old Testament passages, the Spirit constitutes the agent of creation, for example in Job 33: 4 and Psalm 104: 30 (Clines, 1967: 62-69, 101).

I accept the understanding of the plural as referring to ‘the Spirit or wind of God’ as mentioned in Genesis 1: 2 as a plausible explanation, here and further on where God’s Spirit is also mentioned as agent of creation, as in Psalm 104: 30, ‘When you send forth your spirit they (i.e., animals) are created’.

The Old Testament ‘image’ primarily means the representation of the one who is imaged. In the Hebrew view a human being, understood as union of physical and spiritual being, is the created representative of the transcendent God. This understanding comes close to the way the sacral king in Egypt and Mesopotamia is considered as a mediator between God and the king’s people: the image of the one who is represented depicts the character of the represented god. Similarly, a human representing God in Genesis also expresses the character of the represented God (Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 559-560). Humans and animals alike are formed out of dust of the

ground, and both are infused with God's breath or Spirit. The most important difference with the imagery of sacral king of Mesopotamia and Egypt is that there a sacral king is considered a possessor of the divine spirit and thus as partly divine, while in Genesis, the Creator and his creation are kept separate: here humans are representing in the created world the transcendent God, thus fully maintaining God's transcendence. Humans represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation (Clines, 1967: 89-90). While this imaged relationship places humans high above other creatures, at the same time this created dignity fences off from above (von Rad, 1982(8): 158). Qualities that can be ascribed to God (according to the creation account) are 'wisdom in planning and naming his works, power in performing them, and 'rightness' (*sedeq*) in creating things so that 'he saw that they were very good' ... 'These are royal qualities: without using the word, the author of Genesis 1 celebrates the Creator as King, supreme in all the qualities which belong to the ideal of kingship' (Murray, 1992: 98). Therefore, by granting to his creature Adam the dignity of existing *as* 'his image and likeness' (Gen. 1: 26-27) and of 'ruling over' other creatures (Gen. 1:26, 28), God as the transcendent King establishes humanity in a 'vice-regal' relationship to God. The Priestly writer here conveys 'the image of God' from the king to human beings in general (Murray, 1992: 97-98).

Although the verb *רָדָה* (*rādā*) (to rule over) in other contexts signifies rough acts (e.g., Joel 3: 13 and Num. 24: 19), in the context of Genesis its use is governed by the image relationship between humans and God. The verb *כָּבַשׁ* (*kābaš*) (to subdue) in this context is used in connection with the earth. In this context these verbs, therefore, cannot imply permission for exploitative treatment of other creatures. Furthermore, the context of *רָדָה* (*rādā*) is also determined by a vegetarian diet prescribed by God (Genesis 1: 29-31), both for humans and for animals, consisting of plants yielding seed and fruit with seeds from trees (both containing seeds for reproduction; Brayford, 2007: 224) and of green plants for animals.

A vegetarian diet hints at the paradisiacal peace in creation, as intended by God. Therefore, it is not by God's order and command that killing and slaughter have come into this world (von Rad, 1952: 47; Metzger and Coogan, 1993: 29). A peaceful creation, where there is no killing, is described as *טוֹב מְאֹד* (*tôb m'e'ôd*), 'very good', that is, very pleasing to God. Although one may suppose that the creation of man prompts this comment (Spanner, 1998: 218), it is creation as a whole that is declared *טוֹב מְאֹד* (*tôb m'e'ôd*) 'very good', in Genesis 1: 31. I am, however, more inclined to support the observation made by Jenni and Westermann concerning the relation between the adjective *tôb* and the abstractum *tûb* (of the same root): the original meaning of the word *tûb* is 'returns'/'yield', often used in combination with eating, to fill or satisfy oneself. Replacing the word *tôb* in Genesis 1: 31 by the word *tûb* implies that God is very satisfied with the food which He has assigned to the categories of humans and animals alike in Genesis 1: 29 and 30 (Jenni and Westermann, 1971: I, 652, 662-663).

Not only humans but also ‘living creatures’ are special: although the earth has been able to generate (on its own) vegetation upon God’s creative word (Gen. 1: 11-12), the earth and waters have not been able to bring forth a נֶפֶשׁ (*nepes̄*, ‘living being’) upon God’s creative word (Gen. 1: 20 and Gen. 1: 24). For this God’s additional creative action (Gen. 1: 21, 25) is needed, as in the case of making the dome (Gen. 1: 7) and the two great lights (Gen. 1: 16). God declares the first animated creatures (sea monster, living water creatures and birds) ‘good’ and gives them His reproductive blessing (Gen. 1: 22) (Brayford, 2007: 218).

In light of the foregoing, the ‘instrumentalist creation’ interpretation given in the Oxford Bible Commentary finds insufficient ground in the creation account itself.

The creation of mankind, the last of God’s creative acts, is evidently the climax of the whole account, and receives the greatest attention (1:26-30). The creatures created on the previous days – light, day and night, dry land, heavenly bodies, plants and animals – are all by implication provided for mankind’s use and convenience (OBC, 2007: 42).

Reading the creation account according to Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a from a non-anthropocentric perspective results in the following conclusions:

- i. The world is not created for human beings’ use: ‘God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was טוֹב מְאֹד (*tôb m^e’ôd*), ‘very good’, including the specific food assigned to the category of humans and of animals (Gen. 1:31 NRSV). God the Creator is pleased with His creation and declares His creation טוֹב (*tôb*) ‘good’ at the end of the first, third, fourth and fifth days and after making the animals on the sixth day, before humans are created. As God creates the heavens and the earth for all His creatures and declares them ‘good’, animals have value to God (unrelated to their usefulness to humans); the purpose of the creation of animals here is thus not thought by P as to serve as resource for humans. A vegetarian diet is assigned by God to both humans and animals.
- ii. Before the creation of human beings, water animals and birds are created, declared טוֹב (*tôb*) ‘good’ and given God’s fertility blessing, herewith giving animals an equal right to exist.
- iii. Animals have their own relationship with their Creator, independent of their relationship with humans.
- iv. The creation of human beings is not the climax of the creation account, since the account concludes with the Sabbath, when God ‘rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done’ (Gen. 2:2) and all creation lives together, without killing.
- v. Humans are to rule over animals in a way that expresses humanity’s given image of God. Although the verbs רָדָה (*rādâ*)’ and כָּבַשׁ (*kābaš*) can imply violent action in other contexts, in the context of Genesis these verbs are ruled by the ‘image’ relationship and the vegetarian diet prescribed. Furthermore, the notions of צֶלֶם (*selem*) ‘image’ and דְמוּת (*d^emût*) ‘likeness’, have been interpreted traditionally (i.e., on the basis of preconceived concepts of rational and irrational souls) as implying the possession of a spiritual quality or rational soul, thus without

linking these verbs רָדָה (*rādā*) and כָּבַשׁ (*kābaš*) with the content of the ‘image’ שֵׁלֶם (*šelem*) of God. The image of God is expressed in Genesis 1: 26 and 28 in its function, consisting primarily in ‘ruling over’ animals and the earth, parallel to the lights to ‘rule over’ the day and the night (Gen. 1: 16-18), as pointing at stability and harmonious relations.

vi. I propose a more adequate rendering of the word רָדָה (*rādā*). Its primary meaning is ‘to rule over’, instead of ‘to have dominion’, commonly used by commentators (e.g., OBC). I propose to render כָּ כְּשֵׁלֶם יְהוָה by the phrase ‘as His image’, meaning God’s representative. The understanding of ‘image’, as unity of body and soul, implies that a human being (in body and soul) is the representative of the One Who is imaged. Linking שֵׁלֶם (*šelem*) and רָדָה (*rādā*), humans, created as God’s image and as representing God in creation, are to ‘rule over animals’ in a way that express the image of God. Although the ‘image of God’ is commonly understood as an ontological or relational concept (as some spiritual quality, or as the creation of human beings to live in a faith relationship with God), the ‘image of God’ is being expressed functionally, that is, consisting in ruling over animals and the earth as image of God.

4.2.2 Genesis 2

Compared to the creation story of Genesis 1 (with its Mesopotamian perspective) the context of Genesis 2 is a Palestinian one, where rainfall is considered vital for vegetation and animal life (OBC, 2007: 43). Here the J-tradition opens with the creation of human beings (in Gen. 2: 7) while referring only to the creation of the natural world in a secondary passage (Gen. 2: 4b-5). The J-tradition (to be divided into two parts: Gen. 2-11 and Gen. 12 onwards) offers a ‘narrative theology’, witnessing of certain historical deeds as examples of God’s universal dominion, by narrating events with a specific meaning for later generations (for example, the human condition, mortality, and the existence of many languages) or by narrating historic events as models for circumstances that might occur at any time in human’s existence (for example, rivalry of brothers). The narrative theme of ‘sin-punishment-mercy’ appears several times, with YHWH as provider for his elected people’s needs (OBC, 2007: 26).

In the first creation account of Genesis 1, God creates by word and deed, detached from what he has been creating. In verses 7 and 8 of Genesis 2, the second account, God is actively forming the אָדָם (*’ādām*) ‘man, human being; humankind’ (Strong H120) from the dust of the אֲדָמָה (*’ādāmā*) ‘earth, the entire surface of the place where humans dwell, as well as smaller regions: land, with a focus on the elements of the earth: ground, soil, dust’ (Strong H127), and He is himself physically in contact with this אֲדָמָה (*’ādāmā*) ‘ground’ and this אָדָם (*’ādām*) ‘human being’. While the first creation account depicts the relationship of humans with God as one of image and likeness, in this second account humanity is related to and part of the earth. In common with all the animals, the first אָדָם (*’ādām*) is made out of the אֲדָמָה (*’ādāmā*). Thus humans and animals have the same origin. The word ‘adam in the first three chapters of the

book of Genesis is never used as a proper name in the MT text. To differentiate אָדָם ('*ādām*) 'human being' from the אֲדָמָה ('*dāmā*) 'ground', God breathes נָפַח (*nāpāḥ*) (v., Qal) 'to blow upon', 'breathe upon'; 'to be blown upon'; 'to sniff out'; 'to cause to breathe: blow' (Strong H5301) into the nostrils of the human being 'the breath of life' נְשָׁמָה (*nešāmā*) 'breath, blast of breath, by extension: life' (Strong H5397) and אָדָם ('*ādām*) became a living being (Gen. 2:7). This contrasts with the first creation account, where the human that has been made is never referred to as a 'living being': only the water and land animals are depicted as living beings in Genesis 1. 'The breath of life' is called נְשָׁמָה (*nešāmā*) or רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*) 'breath, wind; by extension: spirit, mind, hearth, as the immaterial part of a person that can respond to God, the seat of life; spirit, being, especially the Spirit of God' (Strong H7307). Animals are also characterized as having 'the breath of life' in Genesis 1: 30 as נְפֶשׁ חַיָּה (*nepeš ḥayah*), and further on, in Genesis 6:17 and 7:15, as רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*), and in 7:22 as נְשָׁמָה (*nešāmā*) or רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*) (Schochet, 1984: 53). Thus, both humans and animals have רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*), which is also rendered as 'spirit' or 'Spirit of God' (Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 742). Both animal and human are also called נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*). The Hebrew words used for 'soul' in the Old Testament are נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) 'breath; by extension: life, life force, soul, an immaterial part of a person, the seat of emotion and desire; a creature or person as a whole: self, body, even corpse...' (Strong H5315) and חַי (*ḥay*) 'living being, living soul' (Strong H2416). Genesis 2:4b – 3:24 expresses closeness and kinship of humans and animals: both are formed of the (dust of the) ground, created by the same God, both sharing the breath of life and sharing the same fate:

For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath (רוּחַ), and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again (Ecclesiastes 3: 19-20 NRSV).

The paradise story is constructed on a 'reversal pattern', rising from God's fashioning the '*adam* from the *adama*' (Gen. 2: 7) and sinking to its conclusion, God's sentencing him to return to the '*adama* from which he was made' (Gen. 3: 19) (Murray, 1992: 100).

Although animals and humans are both created from the same אֲדָמָה ('*dāmā*) 'ground' and the same words are used to indicate animals and humans, the word נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) is inconsistently translated: in the King James Version (KJV) the same word נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) translates most frequently as 'soul' when it applies to humans (e.g., Gen. 2: 7; 12: 13; 17: 14, etc.) while found translated as 'creature' or other terms, when applied to other non-human living beings (animals) (e.g. Gen. 1: 20, 21, 24; 2: 19; 9: 10, 12, 15, 16). Reading the Old Testament with the notion of the term 'soul' as immortal part of the individual confounds the meaning, because of adding to the interpretation that human beings (translated as 'souls') have an immortal part, while non-human beings are lacking this 'soul', where נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) is given the meaning 'creature'. The Hebrew word נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) is used throughout the Old Testament, and is especially frequent in poetic texts. The basic meaning refers to the essence of life, the act of breathing (Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 71-3); from this concrete concept, abstract meanings have been

developed (Vine, 1996: 237). Therefore, the ‘translation of *nepeš* with the term ‘soul’ is inadequate, because in Semitic thought there is no opposition of the pair ‘body’ and ‘soul’, contrary to Greek thought. The soul, the distinct immortal part which inhabits our bodies is a Greek concept, and foreign to the Hebrew Bible (Vine, 1996: 237; Brayford, 2007: 218). The Hebrew נְפֶשׁ refers most often to a breathing being and implies a unity of body and soul (Brayford, 2007: 218; Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 88-89). The frequent translations of נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) with ‘soul’ in older translations give the impression that the Semitic mind reasons in terms of body and soul. This is incorrect, as Genesis 2: 7 shows: when God breathes the breath of life into the nostrils of the human being he has formed from the dust of the ground, the human being becomes a living *being* (נְפֶשׁ, *nepeš*) (OBC, 2007: 364; Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 73-74). Modern translations tend to use various alternatives for the term ‘soul’, by using, for example, the pronoun ‘I’, or words like ‘life’, ‘heart’ or ‘will’, in order to return to the original meaning (OBC, 2007: 364), or by translating as ‘living being’ (Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 88-89). The Semitic world view contrasts ‘the inner self’ and ‘the outer appearance’ (something not found in Greek thinking). The inner person is נְפֶשׁ (*nepeš*) while the outer person is שֵׁם (*šém*), most frequently translated with ‘name’ (Strong H8034) (Vine, 1996: 237-238).

Genesis 2 narrates that a human being is created and that God has placed him in the Garden of Eden to till and keep it (Gen. 2: 15); ‘garden’ here stands as *pars pro toto* for creation itself.

Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner’ (Gen. 2:18 NRSV). עֲזָרָה (*‘ēzer*) helper (Strong H5828); נֶגֶד (*neged*) before, in front of, opposite of, beyond (Strong H5048): ‘a helper corresponding to him/according to him’ (Brayford, 2007: 231-232; Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 32).

God proposes a ‘helper’ as the human’s partner (Gen. 2: 18), expressing a relationship between humans and animals. It has been assumed that a עֲזָרָה (*‘ēzer*), ‘helper’ (*in casu* animals and the woman) is inferior to the one who is helped (*in casu* ‘adam). The word עֲזָרָה (*‘ēzer*), ‘helper’ is used more often for God as helper than for inferiors helping superiors (e.g., Ex. 18: 4; Deut. 33: 7; Psalm 121: 1-2). (For God as a subject of ‘*zr*’, see Jenni and Westermann, 1976: II, 257-259). Therefore, the translation of ‘companion’ is proposed, because this rendering better reflects the actual usage of עֲזָרָה (*‘ēzer*). God has formed animals from the same ground, and animals are just like אָדָם (*‘ādām*) breathing creatures, which could be thought of as ‘corresponding to ‘*ādām*’; a perceived superiority, inferiority or neutrality of a helper, however, depends on other factors, outside the act of helping (van Wolde, 1994: 18; Brayford, 2007: 232).

The naming of animals (Gen. 2: 19-20) suggests ownership (OBC, 2007: 44). However, Old Testament texts hold that animals are owned by God (e.g., Psalm 50: 11). ‘The act of naming the animals recognizes precisely what “value-free” science does not: their inner meaning and intrinsic worth’ (Spanner, 1998: 218-219). ‘[God] brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name’ (Gen. 2:19

NRSV). The other creatures formed by God do not provide the desired partnership, which God then creates from *'ādām*'s own nature.

Conclusions from a non-anthropocentric reading of the second (Jahwist) creation account (Genesis 2) follow:

- i. Human beings and animals are both created from the same (dust of the) ground, both infused with God's *rûah*, and both called *nepeš*, indicating a close kinship between the two categories of beings. Animals are created as companions, so that human beings are not alone.
- ii. This kinship does not imply a right to exploit fellow-creatures, but suggests a duty of respect to other creatures under God.
- iii. Since God's breath is in all creatures, all creatures have intrinsic worth to God.
- iv. As God's *rûah* is infused in all creatures, all creatures deserve human respect and awe.
- v. Although both human and non-human species are indicated in the mentioned biblical text as *nepeš*, this word traditionally has been translated differently when relating to humans and when relating to animals, herewith widening a conceptual gap between humans and animals.
- vi. Human beings are created to care for the garden, symbolising creation as a whole.

4.2.3. Killing after the Flood

The practice of killing animals after the creation accounts and the Flood stands in contrast to the vegetarian diet, prescribed in the first creation account, and the companionship, as depicted in Genesis 2. Therefore, one cannot conclude an analysis of the creation accounts of the book of Genesis, without making reference to killing of animals.

The Hebrew Bible uses various words for 'to kill': *שָׁחַט* (*šāḥaṭ*), *הָרַג* (*hārag*), *רָצַח* (*rāṣaḥ*) and *נָכַח* (*nāḥâ*). The word *זָבַח* (*zebah*) is used for 'sacrifice'. I will examine these words in turn.

שָׁחַט (*šāḥaṭ*): 'to slaughter, kill' (Strong H7819): The most frequent use of *šāḥaṭ* (51/80) is 'slaying' for sacrifice. Sometimes *šāḥaṭ* implies the slaughtering of animals for food or sometimes of the killing of people (Vine, 1996: 127-128). In Genesis, this verb is used only in Genesis 22: 10, in connection with the divine command to Abraham to sacrifice his son. The verb is most frequently used in the book of Leviticus and (less frequently) in Exodus, all in connection with an offering.

הָרַג (*hārag*): 'to kill, slay, destroy' (Strong H2026) expresses the idea of taking the life, whether of an animal or a human, or of violent killing and destruction. This verb is often used for wholesale slaughter, both in and after battle, rarely for premeditated killing (Vine, 1996: 127-128). In Genesis (Gen. 4: 14; 12: 12; 20: 2, 11; 26: 7; 27: 41, 42; 37: 20, 26) the verb is only used for people.

רָצַח (*rāṣaḥ*) ‘to kill, murder, slay’ (Strong H7523) is primarily used in legal material of the Old Testament, notably the books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Prophets use *rāṣaḥ* to describe the effect of injustice and lawlessness in Israel (e.g., Jer. 7: 9; Hos. 6: 9). (The meaning of this verb in modern Hebrew has evolved exclusively into ‘to murder’.)

נָכַח (*nākā*)[Hiphil] ‘to kill, slaughter, destroy, defeat’ (Strong H5221): In Genesis the word is used in 4: 15 and 37: 21, both times for killing a person (Cain and Joseph). In Genesis 14: 17 the word **נָכַח** (*nākā*) is used for defeat (of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him).

זָבַח (*zēbah*) ‘sacrifice, offering’ (Strong H2077) is used in Genesis 31: 54 (where Jacob offered a sacrifice); **זָבַח** (*zābah*) is ‘to offer a sacrifice, to slaughter, to butcher’ (Strong H2076).

דָּבַח (*dēbah*)(Aram.)(Piel): ‘to present a sacrifice as an act of worship’ (Strong H1684).

דָּבַח (*dēbah*)(Aram.)(n.m.): ‘sacrifice’ (i.e. animal) (Strong H1685).

4.2.3.1 Killing animals for sacrifice

The book of Leviticus depicts animal sacrifice as part of Old Testament worship, with complex rituals for slaughter developed by the priestly class. The significance of animal sacrifices in this specific biblical context may be viewed against the broader context of a priestly belief in a sacrificial practice, often as atonement for guilt (Schochet, 1984: 18-21, 46; Rogerson, 2008: 16-17; Metzger and Coogan, 1993: 667). However, the practice of animal sacrifice may not have been depicted as unchallenged in the Old Testament: many passages from the prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah), as well as Psalm 50, voice a condemnation of animal sacrifice.

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. (12) When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? (15) When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. (16) Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, (17) learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow (Isa. 1: 11-12, 15-17 NRSV).

Here, and in other comparable passages of the latter prophets, it is ‘probably not sacrifices *per se* that is rejected’, but hollow worship (OBC, 2007: 575). Here OBC represents the traditional view, that prophetic condemnation of animal sacrifices has not been an objection against animal sacrifices as such, but has been directed against a formal ritual, unconnected with true commitment to justice and compassion for those in need (see, e.g., OBC, 2007: 575; Farmer, 1998: 1013; Wennberg, 2003: 296-297; Young, 1999: 69-71). Others opine that the latter prophets also have called for the end of animal sacrifices (Hyland, 2000: 7-14; Metzger and Coogan, 1993: 667; Linzey, s.a.). The question may be raised whether the foregoing text of Isaiah and the following texts of the prophets Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea could not in some way

imply the prophetic condemnation of animal sacrifices as such (Metzger and Coogan, 1993: 667).

According to Jeremiah, when people do not live a just life, they may, as far as God is concerned, eat burnt-offerings, ‘that part of the sacrifice reserved to YHWH’ (Jer. 7: 21) (Farmer, 1998: 1013). God rejects all burnt offerings (as part of a sacrificial cult instituted by humans) because they have never been required: He has never commanded those offerings (Jer. 7: 22). Likewise God has never commanded ‘to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire’ as performing by people at Topheth (Jer. 7: 31); God commands obedience. For these ritual child sacrifices they deserve to die (Jer. 7: 32) (OBC, 2007: 496).

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. (22) For on the day that I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to them or command them concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices. (23) But this command I gave them, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you, so that it may be well with you... (30) For the people of Judah have done evil in my sight, says the Lord; they have set their abominations in the house that is called by my name, defiling it. (31) And they go on building the high place of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnon, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire – which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind (Jer. 7: 21-23, 30-31 NRSV).

The prophet Jeremiah places the killing of innocent animals next to the oppression of the alien, the orphan and the widow:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. (4) Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’ (5) For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, (6) if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, *or shed innocent blood in this place*, and if you do not go after gods to your own hurt, (7) then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors for ever and ever (Jer. 7: 3-7 NRSV, my italics).

Jeremiah’s preaching against this cult may be seen against the background of the dichotomy between the acts of Israel and its worship. Jeremiah makes clear that God takes no interest in sacrifices alone, which the prophet sarcastically qualifies as misplaced confidence in cultic acts (Farmer, 1998: 1013).

Amos, referring to the years spent in the desert, when animal sacrifice was not yet practised, prophesies:

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. (22) Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. (23) Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. (24) But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (25) Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? (Amos 5: 21-25 NRSV)

This passage is clearly meant as a divine rejection of Israel’s cult (Farmer, 1998: 1138). See also Hosea 6: 6 and 8: 11, 13.

Psalm 50 expresses that God, as the Creator of life and the owner of the universe, does not need sacrifices, because all life belongs to Him:

Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your god. (8) Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt-offerings are continually before me. (9) I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. (10) For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. (11) I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine (Psalm, 50: 7-11 NRSV).

God here rejects a sacrifice that is not offered in the right spirit (OBC, 2007: 381). Further on in the Psalm, the prophet urges the people to ‘make thanksgiving your sacrifice to God’ (Ps. 50: 14), rather than to replace thanksgiving with animal sacrifices (OBC, 2007: 381). This Psalm text implies that the function of sacrifices has been misunderstood: there is no need for sacrifices; instead, God says, people should ‘Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me’ (Psalm 50: 15). All God asks in return is to be thankful (Psalm 50: 14, 23) (Farmer, 1998: 829).

Conclusions:

- i. God does not need sacrifices, as all life belongs to Him.
- ii. The latter prophets’ call to justice, mercy and compassion encompasses the weak and helpless, including animals.

4.2.3.2 Killing animals for food: vegetarianism as God’s original plan

The composition of the primeval history (Genesis 1-11) is a testimony to the permanently widening gap between God and humans, corresponding to ‘a hidden increase in grace’ (*ein heimliches Mächtigwerden der Gnade*) (von Rad, 1952: 15). The book of Genesis leading up to the account of the Flood narrates a growing human rebellion against God (humans trying to achieve divine status for themselves and with violent intentions towards one another); God comes to regret that He has made humankind on the earth (Gen. 6: 6) and He decides to eliminate the humans and the animals from the earth. Here human actions are interpreted as having negative consequences for animals: rather than ‘ruling over’ animals and having responsibility for them, humans cause animals to be eradicated from the earth. In the Flood story itself, material from both P and J is found (OBC, 2007: 17), with J relating the negative influence of human behavior on other living creatures, while P focuses on the negative impact of ‘all flesh’ on the earth. According to P’s thought, human corruption infects ‘all flesh’ and thus has to be punished and purified (Brayford, 2007: 263). God’s grace increases with human regression; he punishes, but does not destroy (Hyland, 2000: 27; OBC, 2007: 40).

While in the Priestly creation account a vegetarian diet is prescribed (Gen. 1: 29-30), and in the Yahwist paradise story the relationship between *’ādām* and the animals is one of companionship (Gen. 2: 18), this changes after the Flood: God now gives humans all *that moved* for food (with

only the prohibition of consuming blood), and the relationship of animals with humans from now on is one of 'fear and dread' (Gen. 9: 2). Mutual relationships are here depicted as they actually are, not idealized as in Genesis 1 and 2 (Murray, 1992: 34). In the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. (7) The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. (9) They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11: 6-9 NRSV).

Isaiah does not consider a situation of meat-eating (with the restriction of the life-blood) to be persisting forever: what he offers here is a forward-looking vision of a return of a primeval, peaceful state, as intended in God's original plan, without violence between humans and animals or between the animals, as at the time of the creation. The paradisiacal way uses the picture of peace *with and between* wild animals as a metaphor for cosmic and social peace; the realistic way sees peace *from* wild animals as symptom of the desired harmonious order (Murray, 1992: 34; Linzey, s.a.; OBC, 2007: 47).

After the Flood, the peaceful reign (Gen. 1: 29-30) is overruled by the reality of a world in which humans and animals eat each other (Gen. 9: 2-6) (Murray, 1992: 99). While God's original intention has been a peaceful, vegetarian creation (Schochet, 1984:49), God permits from now on killing for food, as 'a concession to human weakness' (Linzey, s.a.; Hyland, 2000: 21-28; Young: 1999:56), but

God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. (2) The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. (3) Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything' (Gen. 9: 1-3 NRSV).

Yet there is a restriction: 'Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood' (Gen 9: 4 NRSV).

Humans are not allowed to consume the blood of animals (Schochet, 1984: 46-47). Thus, although killing after the Flood is allowed, the right to kill is severely limited. Hence, 'while humans may sometimes kill animals in times of necessity, they must never assume that the life (symbolized by blood) of animals is something they own: they must never, in other words, misappropriate what belongs to God alone' (Linzey, s.a.). By the prohibition 'to eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood', ancient human beings, equating life with blood, were forbidden to eat creatures that were still alive. Draining the blood ensures that the animal is dead (Schochet, 1984: 58; Hyland, 2000: 27-28).

The creation accounts, read from a non-anthropocentric or theocentric perspective, do not justify a view of absolute domination by humans, based on the belief that only humans are spiritual

beings, as found in later Christian theology. The biblical creation accounts transmit the notion that the value of animals cannot be judged by the relation of animals to humans only. The creation accounts according to Genesis narrate that animals and humans are both called נֶפֶשׁ (*nepes̄*), are both recipients of a God-given life, sharing the ‘breath of life’ or the רוּחַ (*rûah*) of God and thus that both categories of beings are valuable to God. As created by the Creator, from the dust of the ground, animals (and humans) may reveal something of the Creator-God (as a work of art reveals something of the artist). The Creator is also reflected in the presence of God’s breath or Spirit (*rûah*), the life-giving principle in animals (and humans) that sustains them. When He withdraws His breath, they die.

4.3 God’s covenant with the created order

The Bible presents different forms of the concept ‘covenant’, in the Old Testament expressed by the word בְּרִית (*b^erît*) – ‘covenant, treaty, compact, agreement, an association between two parties with various responsibilities, benefits and penalties’ (Strong H1285), in the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament by the word διαθήκη (*diathēkē*) (Strong G1242). The word ‘covenant’, which appears 287 times in the Old Testament, may refer to any agreement made between God and his people in the Old Testament or to the New Covenant in Christianity. A covenant may be conditional or unconditional in nature (Jenni and Westermann, 1971: I, 339-351). P refers to four periods of revelation, beginning at creation, followed by the eras of Noah, Abraham and of Moses; therefore P has been called in Old Testament exegesis the Book of the Four Covenants (OBC, 2007: 28). But because P speaks of בְּרִית (*b^erît*) only in the case of Noah and Abraham, and because other common characteristics (e.g., the presence of a ‘sign’) are difficult to identify, this view is not generally accepted (OBC, 2007: 28). I will, however, argue that P presents in Genesis 1 an implicit covenantal vision of creation (Murray, 1992: 33).

Murray holds that בְּרִית (*b^erît*), as a way of thinking about relationships between God and human beings, is not a single model, but a complex of models, including the Davidic concept of covenant and the Noahic eternal covenant (Murray, 1992: 172). The concept of covenant as ‘cosmic harmony’, found in many cultures including ancient Israel, Egypt and Mesopotamia (Murray, 1992: xix-xx) provides a useful model for thinking about harmonious relations of humans with God and other creatures. God’s creation is the establishment of order by imposing his will on the elements at creation. Although the creation stories of Genesis do not use the covenant language, the term בְּרִית עוֹלָם (*b^erît ‘ôlām*) ‘everlasting covenant’ is used when God renews the created order after the Flood (Gen. 9: 16). Examples of God’s establishment of cosmic order are Psalm 72, Psalm 89, and Isaiah 11. The ideal picture of cosmic harmony, as reflected in the biblical material, includes animals (Murray, 1992: 14).

The themes of cosmic order, its breach and its renewal, appear in various contexts, for example, in Hosea 2 and Isaiah 54 (Murray, 1992: 27-32). In Genesis, these themes have been integrated

into a 'mythical history', narrating creation, disorder punished by the Flood, and the covenant with Noah. P depicts the beginning of the Flood as the undoing of creation: 'on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened' (Gen. 7: 11 NRSV). 'In a sense, the cosmos was returning to its original condition, and creation was being undone' (Brayford, 2007: 266-267).

Then God said to Noah, and to his sons with him, (9) 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, (10) and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. (11) I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a Flood, and never again shall there be a Flood to destroy the earth.' (12) God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: (13) I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth' (Gen. 9: 8-13 NRSV).

The Covenant after the Flood is formally established in Genesis 9: 8-17 (Jenni and Westermann, I, 1971: 348), with the Priestly writer preparing us in Genesis 6: 18 ('But I will establish my covenant with you') and in Gen 8: 20-22:

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. (21) And when the Lord smelt the pleasing odour, the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. (22) As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease' (NRSV).

In creation there is an emphasis on the relationship of humans with God and with the animal world (Gen. 1: 26-27). By declaring the Flood because of the wickedness of humankind (Gen. 6: 5-7), God revokes the relationships and blessings of Genesis 1. But after the Flood, God clearly repeats the image-relation (Gen. 9: 6) and reconsiders the judgement of Genesis 6: 5-7, that He will never again curse the ground because of humankind, as He did in the case of Adam, while recognizing that 'the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth' (Gen. 8: 21). God's command after the Flood, when Noah, with all his family and animals came out of the ark to 'be fruitful and multiply on the earth' (Gen. 8: 17; 9: 1, 7) alludes to his earlier command in Genesis 1: 22 and 28, and thus indicates a new beginning (OBC, 2007: 47). God promises never again to destroy every living creature (Gen. 8: 21), and promises cosmic stability: 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease' (Gen 8: 22 NRSV), suggesting a more covenantal vision of creation than the Priestly author makes explicit in Gen. 1 (Murray, 1992: 32-33).

In the section officially establishing the covenant (Gen. 9: 8-17), the covenant is called an everlasting covenant between God and living creatures of all flesh that is on the earth. '[T]he form is a unilateral promise by God not to repeat a disturbance of cosmic order, and the sign [the rainbow] is a cosmic phenomenon' (Murray, 1992: 33-34).

In Hosea 2, the promise of the covenant of Genesis 9: 8-11 is reiterated, stating that the covenant will imply peace for all creatures:

I will make for you a covenant on that day with the wild animals, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety (Hos. 2: 18, NRSV).

The covenant will be with Noah and every animal of the earth with him, and will thus bring safety. The elements of 'lying down in safety' and the relation with animals are also present in Genesis 9: 8-17, Leviticus 26: 3-6 and Ezekiel 34: 25-31 (Murray, 1992: 38-43). The concept of covenant used here is the cosmic covenant, not the Sinai one (Murray, 1992: 32).

Parallel to Genesis 1, where the charge to rule over animals is granted to humans created as God's image and where a vegetarian diet is prescribed, in Genesis 9, after the Flood, limitations are imposed on killing, by the prohibition to eat 'flesh with its life, that is, its blood' (Gen. 9: 4).

Murray's work attempts to trace and clarify the themes of creation, order and disorder in the Hebrew Bible. Before the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, שָׁלוֹם (*šālôm*) was maintained on earth by sacral kings bestowed with divine righteousness (שֶׁדֶק , *šedeq*) and by the performance of rituals. This cult, based in the temple, was extremely concerned with שֶׁדֶק (*šedeq*) 'righteousness, justice, rightness, acting according to a proper (God's) standard, doing what is right, being in the right' (Strong H6664). *Šedeq* has a broad scope of meanings that encompasses cosmic, social and ethical, with the establishment of שָׁלוֹם (*šālôm*) 'peace, safety, prosperity, well-being; intactness, wholeness; peace can have a focus of security, safety which can bring feelings of satisfaction, well-being, and contentment' (Strong H7965) (Murray, 1992: 93). This cosmological concept is distinct from the Mosaic Torah tradition: in the Hebrew Bible there exists a general disconnection (e.g., in language features) between the texts relating to the law-giving at Sinai and the texts concerning sacral kingship (Murray, 1992: 66-67). The Mosaic covenant (of Law-giving) has absorbed and transformed the older forms of covenantal thinking (Murray, 1992: xxiv). Although Murray's reconstruction of the ancient theme of cosmic covenant is based on relatively recent Priestly and Isaiah material, this material also contains older mythical material, which is relevant for the reconstruction of the theme of cosmic harmony (Murray, 1992: xxi). Although the 'Priestly' theology leaves no remnants of kings in the Old Testament texts, in other biblical texts the royal character can often still be distinguished. Especially in the prophetic books and the Psalms traces of texts of a ritual nature can be recognized (Murray, 1992: 43; 74). After the destruction of the temple, when there are no more kings, mediation of divine שֶׁדֶק (*šedeq*) and the maintenance of שָׁלוֹם (*šālôm*) are transferred to the realm of devoutness and righteous life through worship, prayer and the practice of שֶׁדֶק (*šedeq*).

In conclusion, the Old Testament refers to harmonious relations of humans with God and with other creatures. In some texts the idea of kingship is explicit; in other texts (as in Genesis 1-2) kingship is implied for what is said about harmonious relations between humans and animals.

Relevant conclusions arising from this investigation of the theme of covenant include the following:

- i. God includes in the Noahic cosmic covenant, and in the implicit covenantal vision as presented in Genesis 1, not only humans but also animals and creation at large, implying that God is not interested only in the wellbeing of the human species.
- ii. Since both animals and humans are included in the Noahic cosmic covenant with God, and in the implicit covenantal vision as presented in Genesis 1, humans and animals are considered to be God's partners in this covenant. Hence there exists a kinship between both categories of beings.
- iii. Although after the Flood humans are allowed to eat flesh (as God's 'concession' to human weakness), killing of animals remains restricted by the condition to respect the life-blood.
- iv. In the royal metaphor (in its original concept), the Bible transmits a model for thinking about responsible, harmonious relationship with God and other creatures, incorporating the dignity of the image of God and the divine endowment, and entrusting humans to bring about *ṣedeq* and *šālôm*. The aspect of dignity is lacking in other models, for example, in stewardship.

4.4 The incarnation

By 'incarnation' I understand the doctrine (in the formulation of the Council of Chalcedon) that God the Son, the Logos, the second person of the triune God, 'became flesh', that is, took on a human body and nature and became both fully human and fully God simultaneously, in order to live among his creation, as proclaimed in John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being (4) in him was life ... And the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1: 1-4, 14 NRSV).

John's Prologue refers to the creation story; the first word is 'beginning', as in Genesis. John's Prologue, considered against the background of the creation story, 'illustrates the theme of a new creation through the coming of Christ' (Muddiman, 1998: 32). The Logos does not merely become human, but becomes flesh, 'the term which defines the solidarity of humanity with the rest of creation in its bodiliness' (Muddiman, 1998: 32). John perceives the creation story as fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, with Christ as the *Logos*, the Co-Creator with God the Father Who expresses the divine origin of all life. By becoming flesh, the *Logos* is identified with all creation composed of flesh and not only with human beings (Linzey, 1998: xv-xvi). Incarnation, understood in a broader (i.e., non-anthropocentric) sense, may provide a different perspective on animals: namely as creatures, in which Christ incarnate, God the Father's co-eternal, Creator *Logos*, constituting the source and destiny of each *logos* in creation, acts as a cosmic presence drawing all things (including animals) towards God (Barsam, 2008: 45).

Incarnation, understood in a non-anthropocentric sense, as God's affirmation of the whole of creation, has a cosmic dimension as Paul indicates in Romans 8: 18-25: 'the whole creation (that) has been groaning in labour pains' (Rom. 8: 22) 'will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God' (Rom. 8: 21). Paul's vision of the suffering of creation and creation's destiny (Rom. 8: 18-23), explicitly refers to 'the whole creation' and thus may imply that the redemption Christ brings may have relevance for animals.

Paul presents in Colossians and Ephesians the vision of the Cosmic Christ, through whom God is pleased to reconcile to himself 'all things', that is, the entire creation:

With all wisdom and insight (9) he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, (10) as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians 1: 8-10 NRSV).

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; (16) for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible... (19) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, (20) and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross (Colossians 1: 15-16, 19-20 NRSV).

Paul considers Jesus' life to have meaning not only for human beings, but for the whole of creation. He sees Jesus as the *Logos*, as God's principle and destiny of all creation (Linzey, s.a.; Cobb, 1998: 175). I therefore pose the question whether these Pauline texts could not in some way imply the redemption of animals? Paul's vision of the suffering and destiny of creation has had a profound influence on Schweitzer's thought (see Chapter 3).

Relevant conclusions/implications from the incarnation, understood in a non-anthropocentric sense, are:

- i. As the *Logos* became flesh (John 1: 14), this could perhaps in some way imply that the *Logos* was identified with all creation composed of flesh, and not only with human beings.
- ii. Christ the *Logos*, the Co-Creator with God the Father, acts as a cosmic presence drawing 'all things' towards God.
- iii. Paul has provided in Romans 8: 18-25, Ephesians 1: 8-10 and Colossians 1: 15-16, 19-20 indications that the redemption Christ brings may have have relevance for animals, since *ktisis* ('creation') implies the whole created universe.

4.5 Animals as metaphor

'Metaphor' is defined here as 'a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance' (Strobel, 2006). As the comparison is unexpressed, the words 'like' or 'as' are not used (Virkler, 2007: 148).

The Bible represents both the theme of human care for animals (especially expressed in the laws of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy) and the theme of God's knowledge and care for all creatures (Murray, 1992: 118-121). As the focus of this research will be on animal spirituality, I will mainly concentrate on those biblical texts expressing the relation between God and animals, and less on texts concerning human-animal relations. Therefore, I analyze in this section on the one hand biblical texts that give testimony to God's love and care for all creatures, and on the other hand biblical texts that give testimony to animals' response to God's love and care.

In the interpretation of biblical texts that concern animals there are on the one hand a number of straightforward texts that may be interpreted in a non-metaphorical way, for example, texts concerning the common status of humans and animals as God's creatures, texts relating to human duties towards the needs of (domestic) animals, and texts about God's care for wild animals. On the other hand there are texts that in metaphorical language mention human-animal relations. In some texts creatures may be personified, for example, the elements as obedient to God, animals showing human qualities (either virtues like understanding and affection, or evil like the serpent in Eden), or the image that all creatures praise God (e.g., Psalm 148, Daniel 3 (LXX)). In other texts references to other creatures may have a more metaphorical function, like plant life for human mortality, vineyard for Israel, wild animals for God's anger or human enemies, peace with animals for paradise myth or social peace; peace from hostile animals for security from enemies; naming of animals for exercise of royal wisdom; shepherd for God, king, messiah; flock for people; care for animals for God's love (Isa 40: 11) or human love (2 Sam 12:1-5) (Murray, 1992: 94-96).

4.5.1 Biblical laws and texts concerning human care and sympathy for animals

One category of laws laid down in the Pentateuch illustrates human duties and responsible rule over creatures. In this category of texts, there is hardly any metaphor used. These laws are formulated in the law-code sections of Exodus (Chapters 22, 23 and 34), Leviticus (Chapters 22 and 25) and Deuteronomy (between Chapters 14 and 26). From the subject matter these may be categorized as laws concerning the wellbeing of (mainly working) animals and laws placing limitations on the killing of animals for sacrifice (Murray, 1992: 114; Schochet, 1984: 148-157).

Some straightforward texts speak about the obligation of bringing back an enemy's ox or donkey having gone astray, or about the obligation of setting free a donkey that is succumbing under its burden while owned by someone who carries a personal hatred against you (Ex. 23:4-5); about the Sabbath rest, including rest for animals (Lev. 25: 6-8); about taking back your neighbor's ox or sheep that have strayed away (Deut. 22: 1); about helping to lift up your neighbour's donkey or ox that has fallen on the road (Deut. 22: 4); about not taking both the mother and the fledglings or eggs from a bird's nest (Deut. 22: 6-7); about not to plough with an ox and a donkey yoked together (because that would be too heavy for the donkey) (Deut. 22:

10); about not muzzling an oxen while it is treading out the grain (in order to prevent it from eating) (Deut. 25: 4). All these texts express a moral concern for animals, as part of the Jewish law.

Another category of texts concerns laws about newborn animals in relation to their mothers: the seven-day law, according to which a newborn male calf or lamb must be allowed to live with its mother for seven days before it may be offered in sacrifice (Ex. 22: 30 and Lev. 22: 27); against killing a mother animal and her young on the same day (Lev. 22: 28); about not boiling a kid in its mother's milk (Ex. 23: 19 and Ex. 34: 26). These laws express a) that compassion is considered a religious duty, and b) the concept of order as 'holiness', requiring the keeping of these distinctions as reverence to the Creator in all his creatures (Murray, 1992: 114). That mercy and not only right order is a motive, is also exemplified by the general statement of principle, 'the righteous know the needs (Hebrew: נְפִשׁוֹת [nepeš]) of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel' (Proverbs 12: 10, NRSV). With this proverb, the Hebrew virtues *sedeq* and *rahāmim*, which are used for divine-human relations and relations amongst humans, are here brought into the sphere of human ethics in relation to animals (Murray, 1992: 113).

Although responsibility and affection for other creatures are commanded in the Torah, Christian thinkers (predetermined by Stoic notions and medieval ideas about the place of animals in God's creation order) have a tendency to interpret biblical passages, which appear to take the interests of animals seriously, in an allegorical way. An early example is the metaphorical interpretation of the text, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain' (Deuteronomy 25: 4 NRSV). Although this text appears to imply (in its literal sense) compassion for the laboring ox, an allegorical (rather than literal) interpretation can already be found in the New Testament reading: Paul first quotes this text about not muzzling the ox, and subsequently poses the rhetorical question: 'Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake?' (I Corinthians 9: 9-10 NRSV). This Pauline interpretation does not concern animals, but the right to material support for those who serve the community spiritually, like himself and Barnabas (I Cor. 9:4).

I support Humphry Primatt's interpretation of this passage relating to God's care for oxen:

Doth God take care for Oxen? Some might infer that the Apostle meant to set aside or weaken the precept; or that it is only to be interpreted in a figurative or typical sense. To me it appears in another light, and that the inference of the Apostle is an establishment of the commandment... This then was the force of the Apostle's argument, not to infringe the duties of humanity and tenderness of the brutes, but to confirm them, and thereupon to build an argument of similar nature. To suppose otherwise, is to accuse the Apostle of weak reasoning. It is to suppose him to lay a foundation, and then to dig it up as soon as he begins to erect his building (Primatt, 1776: 168-171).

Conclusion:

- i. A number of biblical laws command responsibility for animals.
- ii. The Judeo-Christian Scripture contains numerous passages expressing sympathy and affection for animals.

4.5.2 Biblical texts that give testimony to God's love and care for animals

The theme of God's love and care for all creatures is well represented in the Bible (e.g., Job 38-42, Psalm 50, Psalm 104, Psalm 147, Jonah 4, Numbers 22: 21-33) (Schochet, 1984: 144-148). Here I evaluate some of these biblical passages.

- i. A frequently used metaphor for God's love is the care of shepherds for their sheep:

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. (16) I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice (Ezek. 34: 15-16 NRSV).

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep (Isaiah 40: 11 NRSV).

These two passages can be interpreted as a metaphor for God's loving care for people, while at the same time sensitivity for animals is apparent.

The parable of the poor man and his little ewe lamb in II Samuel 12: 1-6 also speaks with sensitivity about animals.

The rich man had very many flocks and herds, (3) but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meagre fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him (II Samuel 12: 2-3, NRSV).

- ii. In chapters 38-39 of the book of Job, God describes his creation and his creatures Behemoth and Leviathan proudly to Job, who is humbled by the magnificence of these animals. God did not answer Job's demand for the specific wrongs he had committed, nor did He respond to the issue of suffering of the innocent, but instead praised the wonders of creation. God's first speech (Job 38: 1 – 39: 30) focuses on the Divine Plan of the Universe, the cosmos and the wild animals. God is seen as sovereign (Job 38-42) and as Creator (Job 38: 4-14) (Osborne, 1991: 193). God emphasizes the limitations of human understanding of the wonders of God's creation and its mystery; neither God nor His creation can be grasped by the human intellect. Only God understands his creatures (Linzey, s.a.). In God's second speech (Job 40: 6 – 41: 34), Job is challenged to conquer his self-importance. Both Behemoth (Job 40: 15) and Leviathan (Job 41: 1) show Job's helplessness. Behemoth (probably a reference to a hippopotamus) is better formed and more powerful than humans. Behemoth is called

the first of the great acts of God—only its maker can approach it with the sword. (20) For the mountains yield food for it where all the wild animals play. (21) Under the lotus

plants it lies, in the covert of the reeds and in the marsh. (22) The lotus trees cover it for shade; the willows of the wadi surround it. (23) Even if the river is turbulent, it is not frightened (Job 40: 19-23, NRSV).

Leviathan (most likely personifying a whale) shows that God has created beings outside the sphere of human influence and more powerful than humans: ‘On earth it has no equal, a creature without fear. (34) It surveys everything that is lofty; it is king over all that are proud’ (Job 41: 33-34, NRSV). Here God is interested not only in human beings (Linzey s.a.). Job is humbled by the description of the power and beauty of Leviathan and Behemoth. Job admits that he has uttered what he did not understand (Job 42: 3) and sees his own insignificance against the majesty of Behemoth and Leviathan and God’s creation and therefore he despises himself and repents in dust and ashes (Job 42: 6).

iii. Psalm 50 has already been discussed in connection with animal sacrifices (section 4.2). The Psalm indicates that God does not require sacrifices, because all life belongs to him. This Psalm also reveals that God appreciates each creature individually: ‘For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine (Psalm 50: 10-11, NRSV).

iv. That God knows every individual creature and is concerned about their wellbeing is also expressed in Jesus’ sayings about sparrows:

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father... (31) So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows (Mt. 10: 29, 31, NRSV; see also Luke 12: 6, 7).

Even if it is presupposed that humans are of more value than sparrows, God still esteems each of them. Sparrows and oxen are objects of care and providence by God. The apparent insignificance of the creature in the judgment of humans is no obstruction to the love of God towards it (Primatt, 1776: 174).

v. Psalm 104:

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken. (6) You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains... (27) These [creatures] all look to you to give them their food in due season; (28) when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. (29) When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. (30) When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground (Psalm 104: 5-6, 27-30, NRSV).

This hymn, praising God as Creator, Who created order over the water of chaos (vv. 5-9) bears similarities with Genesis 1 (a similar general order of creation and vocabulary), but also differences (a lack of mythological traces in Genesis 1; no direct mention of sun and moon in Genesis 1, but of lights, while in Psalm 104 the sun and moon are mentioned by name in verse 19 as establishing the rhythm of seasons and days). In the Genesis section on creation the P writer has removed these mythical traces, the interest of the P-writer being the establishment of

the liturgical calendar. Verses 27-30 narrate how all creatures depend on their Creator for their sustenance and life (OBC, 2007: 394; Osborne, 1991: 183; Farmer, 1998: 845-846).

God, who is celebrated as Creator, also sustains his creatures. God's Spirit is acknowledged as the Creator of all life, not only of human life.

vi. Psalm 145:

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (9) The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made... (10) All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord... (21) My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name for ever and ever (Psalm 145: 8-10, 21 NRSV).

The Psalmist celebrates the Creator as compassionate over all that He has made (v. 9), but also that all creation shall give thanks to God (v. 10). God, the transcendent sovereign, is also presented in this psalm as a loving parent (v. 15-16). 'The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season, You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing' (Psalm 145:15-16, NRSV). In other Psalms, several phrases also occur, possibly derived from a common liturgical tradition or direct borrowing. Verses 15-16 of Psalm 145 are comparable with Psalm 104: 27-28 (see above). There is uncertainty whether Psalm 145 has ever been part of cultic worship or may be considered purely poetic (OBC, 2007: 404; Farmer, 1998: 857).

vii. The theme of God, the Creator, Who has to be praised, because he sustains and cares for all living beings, equally appears in Psalm 147. This Psalm consists of three sections, each in the form of a complete hymn of praise. For this reason, there exists uncertainty concerning the unity of the Psalm (OBC, 2007: 404). Especially the second section shows God's love and care for creation: 'Praise the Lord! (8) He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills. (9) He gives the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry' (Psalm 147: 1, 8-9, NRSV). This Psalm is divided by the LXX (and later by the Vulgate) into two Psalms (146 and 147). This Psalm can be dated post-exilic, because it combines the themes of creation and history, which is a Deutero-Isaiah motive (Farmer, 1998: 858).

viii. In Jonah 3: 10 God decides not to carry out his original intention to destroy the city of Nineveh for its wickedness, because its inhabitants show repentance for their misdeeds. God's decision displeases Jonah for the non-fulfillment of his prophecy. While Jonah is waiting outside the city to see what will happen to the city, God makes a bush to grow, to provide shade for Jonah. Jonah is angry when the bush the next day has disappeared again. God replies to him:

Is it right for you to be angry about the bush? ... (10) You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. (11) And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals? (Jonah: 4: 9-11, NRSV)

God's compassion towards innocent animals turns aside His initial decision. 'Brutes were the Mediators between the Vengeance of an offended God and the Provocations of sinful Men' (Primatt, 1776: 265-266). Farmer (1998) does not comment on the compassion for animals; OBC (2007: 595) only mentions God's care for people 'and their livestock' (thus reducing the animals' worth to people's property).

ix. The story of Balaam (Numbers 22: 21-33) narrates God's intervention on behalf of an abused donkey, by opening the mouth of this donkey. This is one of the few biblical texts depicting a speaking animal (cf. Gen. 3: 1-6, depicting a speaking snake, and Judg. 9: 7-15, depicting speaking trees). Although God's angel has come for another reason, he waives this reason and first corrects Balaam for his cruelty to an animal that has served him for a lifetime. The angel asks, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary, because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times.' Balaam responds: 'I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me' (Numbers 22: 32-34). Apart from God's compassion for the donkey, the story states that the donkey has the spiritual capacity to see God's angel, before Balaam can see him. The donkey thus challenges Balaam's assumed power. Balaam's handling of the donkey is a sign of his infidelity, as he does not see God and does not react appropriately (OBC, 2007: 127). According to Primatt, the story teaches people by 'divine interposition' the duty of mercy and the sin of cruelty to animals (Primatt, 1776: 233).

These few biblical texts are some possible examples for God's love, compassion and care for animals. Some conclusions follow:

- i. The Bible contains numerous texts that acknowledge God's love and care for all creatures.
- ii. God has created creatures outside the sphere of human influence and more powerful than humans, implying that a) God takes an interest in other creatures than just humans, and b) the worth of these other creatures does not depend on their utility to humans.
- iii. The understanding of God's creation and its mysteries is limited for human reason. Especially the book of Job criticizes human superiority over other creatures.
- iv. God knows and values each creature individually.

4.5.3 Biblical texts that give testimony to animals' response to God's love and care

There are a number of texts giving testimony of animals responding better to God's call than humans do, for example: 'The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand' (Isaiah 1: 3, NRSV); 'Even the stork in the heavens knows its times; and the turtle-dove, swallow, and crane observe the time of their coming; but my people do not know the ordinance of the Lord' (Jer. 8: 7, NRSV).

There are further a number of Psalms testifying that all creatures praise God. This idea is further developed by Deutero-Isaiah and in the apocryphal/deuterocanonical *The Song of the Three Jews*, a Greek additional hymn to the book of Daniel, inserted between Daniel 3: 23 and 3: 24, in which three young men sang in the burning furnace (OBC, 2007: 404; Murray, 1992: 121).

i. In *The Song of the Three Jews* the composition of creatures praising God moves from the heavens (e.g., sun and moon, stars), via the elements (e.g., wind and fire, frost and cold) to the earth (e.g., mountains, plants, springs of water) and then to animals.

ii. One of the texts testifying of animals as created and filled with the Spirit is the already discussed Psalm 104, with verses 29-30 mentioning that God's Spirit is the Creator of all life.

iii. Psalm 96, one of the Enthronement Psalms, starts with a call to praise God (v. 1-3), which is repeated in verse 7-10; in the last section (v.v. 11-13), the whole creation is called to rejoice and sing for joy.

iv. Psalm 98, also one of the Enthronement Psalms, notes that 'all the earth' is called to praise God, that is, people, the sea and all that fills it, the floods and the hills.

v. Psalm 148 is often compared with Genesis 1 (and with thematically less similar passages of Job 38); the composition moves from the heavenly bodies, praising creation, to twenty-three features of the earth (e.g., animals, mountains, trees and human beings) summoned to praise God for his transcendence (Ps. 148: 13) and his closeness (Ps. 148: 14), and finally to what is almost a little hymn to God in itself. This chorus aims to praise all creation as a harmony willed by God; all creation responds in praise to God. This Psalm has the following structure: the call to praise is expressed with imperatives in verses 1-4 and 7 and with jussives ('let them praise') in verses 5a and 13a; a description of God's nature and deeds (normally the main content of hymns of praise) is limited to verses 5b-6 and 13b-14a; in verses 1-4 the imperative 'praise him' introduces every line, while in 7-12 the opening verb is followed by a series of vocatives, indicating that sea monsters, fire and hail, mountains, wild animals and cattle, creeping things and flying birds but also kings and all people are being directly addressed by the speaker (OBC, 2007: 404; Farmer, 1998: 858). [Text deleted—you already described the content.]

According to this Psalm animals and all creation respond in praise to God, implying that animals have their own spiritual relationship with God. Influences of this Psalm as well as *The Song of the Three Jews* can be found in Francis of Assisi's *Canticum Fratris Solis* (Fontes, 39-41; Armstrong, 1999: 113-114; Sorrell, 1988: 98-105; see Chapter 2).

vi. In Deutero-Isaiah the whole creation is summoned as a witness to God's past and future work (OBC, 2007: 470):

Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel (Isa. 44: 23, NRSV).

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands (Isa. 55: 12, NRSV).

Conclusion:

The Bible contains a number of texts testifying to the interaction between God and animals: animals look to God and are described as praising God; God sustains them and enters into a covenant with them (Gen. 9: 8-13; see also section 4.3); this implies that animals maintain a relationship with God.

4.5.4 Jesus' relationship to creation and early Christian interpretation

The New Testament, read from a non-anthropocentric perspective, may reveal new insights on how the first Christians interpreted Jesus' role in relation to animals and creation.

Jesus, as a Jew, follows the Jewish tradition of religious and moral attitudes towards animals (Vermes, 2001: 194-197; Vermes, 2003; 1-13). He confirms God's care for creation in his sayings about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (Mt. 6: 26-30), and in his saying about sparrows (Mt. 10: 29-31, and parallels). Jesus describes his own service as caring for others, and in doing so he often refers to animals, for example in the saying cited above about the sparrows (Mt. 10: 29, 31; Luke 12: 6, 7). Jesus' concern for sparrows indicates that God is concerned with each individual. Even if it is assumed that humans are of more worth than sparrows, God still values each of them.

A relationship between shepherd and sheep plays a role, when Jesus compares that relationship to his own calling. Thus he continues in the tradition of the prophet Isaiah, who uses this metaphor to express God's loving care for animals:

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep (Isa. 40: 11, NRSV).

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (8) By a perversion of justice he was taken away (Isa. 53: 7-8, NRSV, interpreted in Acts 8: 32).

Jesus takes up the biblical shepherd image (Lk. 15: 3-6; Mt. 18: 10-14) and applies it, according to John's Gospel, explicitly to himself: 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10: 11, NRSV). The evangelist John also uses the metaphor of the 'Lamb of God' in relation to Jesus himself (John 1: 29) (Murray, 1992: 126-127).

The following passages show sensitivity to animals, expressing God's concern with every individual creature:

Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. (33) In his humiliation justice was denied him' (Acts 8: 32-33, NRSV).

I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10: 14 NRSV).

Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. (12) What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? (13) And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. (14) So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost (Mt. 18: 10-14, NRSV).

So he told them this parable: ‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices’ Lk. 15: 3, NRSV.

Jesus alludes to the capacity of animals to show qualities of love and concern (Hyland, 2000: 53) by comparing his own dedication to protect and care for his people to the desire of a mother hen to care for her young: ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!’ (Matthew 23:37, NRSV). The hen shows moral qualities, which humans should follow.

Concerning the question whether Jesus was a vegetarian, as some scholars claim: these might easily be accused of an eclectic reading of biblical texts (Young, 1999: 2-9). The hypothesis that Jesus belonged to the Essenes, an ascetic group that practised vegetarianism, is refuted by modern interpretations of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Vermes, 2011: 44, 143).

Conclusion:

- i. Jesus stands in the religious and moral Jewish tradition.
- ii. Jesus applies the metaphor of the Good Shepherd, who gives his life for his sheep, explicitly to himself.
- iii. According to Acts 8: 32-33 Jesus applies the metaphor of lamb and sheep to himself (Isa. 53: 7-8).

4.6 Summary

This chapter’s aim has been a) to demonstrate that a moral concern, which includes animals, can find biblical support, and b) to investigate biblical perspectives on animal spirituality. This chapter has proposed a non-anthropocentric reading of biblical texts about creation, covenant and incarnation and of biblical texts explicitly referring to animals. On this point the Bible shows a number of passages about animals and creation and our (human) relation to both, which is dictated by the image of God and the vegetarian diet prescribed in Genesis 1: 29-31, and thus carrying responsibilities to other creatures and excluding abuse.

From my research it appears that in Genesis 1: 26-30 *רָדָה* (*rādā*) is more adequately rendered by ‘to rule over’ and that both *רָדָה* (*rādā*) and *שָׁבַע* (*kābaš*) ‘subdue’ are to be interpreted in their direct context: in this context both verbs are ruled by the *שֵׁמֶל* (*šelem*) ‘image’ and *דְּמוּת* (*dēmut*) ‘likeness’ and the vegetarian diet. Humans are to exercise dominion in a way that expresses the image of God, who is loving and compassionate. Furthermore, I have indicated that the common notion of ‘soul’ in Christian theology (as reflecting the immaterial, immortal part of humans), does not find support in biblical thought. In Hebrew thought one does not have an opposition of the terms ‘body’ and ‘soul’. The basic meaning of the word *נֶפֶשׁ* (*nepeš*) refers to the essence of life, possessed by both animals and humans; the frequent rendering of the word *נֶפֶשׁ* (*nepeš*) as ‘soul’ where it refers to humans, and as ‘creature’, ‘beast’ or ‘brute’ where it refers to a non-human has confounded its basic meaning and has thus contributed to further widening of the conceptual gap between the two.

The book of Genesis indicates a deep kinship between animals and humans. Both are created from the (dust of the) ground and both are recipients of a God-given life; both contain *רוּחַ*, God’s *rūah* and are called *נֶפֶשׁ* (*nepeš*), indicating a close relationship between these two categories of beings. Furthermore, God includes both humans and animals in the cosmic Noachic covenant and in the covenantal vision as presented in Genesis 1, implying that God is not exclusively interested in the wellbeing of humans. Genesis points out that humans and animals together are recipients of God’s covenant promises. After the Flood, meat-eating, according to Genesis, was allowed as a concession to human weakness, but still restricted by the prohibition to consume the blood, meaning an animal’s life.

The Bible presents two models for thinking about the relation between humans and animals: one paradisiacal (how it once was and will be) and one actual (how it is). The ideas of the Stoics, and also Augustine and Aquinas (that other creatures exist to serve human needs and have no intrinsic value of their own) have led to unjustified deductions from Genesis. Against this instrumental perspective, biblical texts like Job 38-41, Psalm 104 and 148 offer a perspective of the world not arranged to serve the needs of people but to manifest God’s glory. In the foregoing, it has been observed that responsible rule over animals, as understood in Genesis 1: 26-28, is illustrated by a number of laws in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. However, a number of texts have largely been overlooked or interpreted allegorically, so that, according to many exegetes, those passages actually do not speak about animals, but exclusively about humans. The theology following this exegesis has not been favourable for the development of a loving and caring approach to animals.

The model of ancient kingship has presented a possible paradigm for responsible rule and resultant harmonious relations, before it was transformed and degenerated during the course of history. God, the supreme King, makes humans his viceroys, to rule in justice. This model reflects the dignity of the image of God, entrusted to humans to bring about the desired

harmonious relationship with God and other creatures. This model is fully realized in Jesus, the Servant King and Good Shepherd, who gives his life for his sheep. Jesus' example illustrates that the higher is to sacrifice himself or herself for the lower.

Christ incarnate, Who is at the same time God's co-eternal, Creator Logos, constitutes the source and destiny of each *logos* in creation, and thus acts as a cosmic presence drawing 'all things' towards God.

Furthermore, I have looked at a number of biblical texts that give testimony to God's love and care for animals. These texts reveal that they have intrinsic worth as God's creatures and are not merely instrumental to the needs of humans. I have also made reference to a number of biblical texts testifying to the interaction between God and animals: animals look to God and are described as praising God and responding to God's love; God sustains them and enters into a covenant with them (Gen. 9: 8-13). Although it can reasonably be assumed that animals do not have a notion of the divine, they nevertheless may have a thankful heart for their existence. It may be difficult for human reason to conceptualize animals' response to God: as the book of Job indicates, human reason is too limited to understand the mystery of God's creation; only God understands His creatures.

Animals, as God's creatures, may reveal something of the Creator-God (as the work of art does of the artist). Because animals (like humans) are infused and sustained by God's *rûah* their life should be treated with respect and awe for the presence of God's Spirit and His work. From a religious viewpoint, it is therefore not indifferent how we treat animals, as our attitude to and treatment of animals involves our relation with God. In the next chapter I deduct from Francis' and Schweitzer's example and life ethical implications for human-animal relations for our time.

CHAPTER 5

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A NEW SPIRITUALITY

5.1 Introduction

Animals, understood in Scholastic thought as irrational beings without an immortal soul, have been largely excluded from western Christian ethical discourse, giving way to the instrumentalist view that animals exist to serve human needs. In Francis' and Schweitzer's alternative approach towards animals and nature in general, I have identified mystical qualities that may be taken as the point of departure for a spirituality in which animals are contemplated as kindred creatures with their own worth from the Creator's perspective. The preceding chapter has argued for a biblical perspective on such an animal spirituality. In this chapter I argue for ethical implications following from a spirituality that centers on animals as God's creatures.

When Schweitzer defines mysticism (see section 3.2) he considers ethics as a personal response to the search for meaning—for harmony with the primal Source of being to Whom we already belong as part of nature:

Mysticism alone corresponds to the ideal of a world view. All other world views ... lay down precepts about the universe to instruct man about what part he ought to play in it, instead of providing a solution of the fundamental question how man is to become spiritually one with infinite Being and from this solution as a beginning deciding in detail what is to be his attitude to himself and to all things in the universe (Schweitzer, 1935a: 7).

Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life does not instruct people in detail about the role they ought to play in relation to the world. For Schweitzer, 'an ethic which only commands is incomplete, while one which lets me live in communion with the Will of the Creator is a true and complete ethic' (Schweitzer, 1936: 235). Schweitzer is more interested in the formation of a 'new consciousness' (*neue Gesinnung*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 199), rather than in prescribing ethical rules and how to act in ethical dilemmas: he holds that we are compelled to care for other life not through a doctrine nor through an authoritative ethical system from outside, but that our ethics has to come 'from inner compulsion' (*aus innerer Nötigung*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242; 1999: 288):

From an inner compulsion, without understanding the meaning of the world, I exert myself in producing values and practising ethics in the world. For in world- and life-affirmation and in ethics I carry out the will of the universal Will-to-live which reveals itself in me. I live my life in God, in the mysterious ethical God-person, whom I do not know in the world, but only experience as mysterious Will in me (Schweitzer, 1923b: XV-XVI).

As illustrated in Chapter 3 through quotations from Schweitzer's autobiography and letters, 'reverence for life' as the basic principle of ethics had come to Schweitzer as a revelation during his voyage on the Ogowe river, while passing a herd of four hippos and their young. He arrived at ethical knowledge from the mystical experience of the Mystery of life, by the revelation of

the Will-to-Live in himself. He expresses the knowledge derived from this experience as ‘good is to preserve and promote life, evil is to destroy and hamper life’. Schweitzer writes:

Ethics alone can put me in true relationship with the universe by my serving it, cooperating with it; not by trying to understand it ... Only by serving every kind of life do I enter the service of that Creative Will whence all life emanates. I do not understand it; but I do know (and it is sufficient to live by) that by serving life, I serve the Creative Will. It is through community of life, not community of thought, that I abide in harmony with that Will. This is the mystical significance of ethics (Schweitzer, 1936: 234).

For Schweitzer the aim of ethics is two-fold: self-perfection (*Ethik der Selbstvervollkommnung*) and self-devotion to other life (*Ethik der Hingebung*), an aim also expressed as passive and active self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923b: 224-225): an ethic is only complete when it combines an ethic of active and passive self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923b: 224). As self-perfection includes self-devotion to other life, it includes social ethics. Thus one’s ethical consciousness (of reverence for life) has importance for society and contributes to civilization (Schweitzer, 1923b: 262-264). Schweitzer stresses that civilization can only come about through thought: there is need of a profound individual thought about the meaning of life to develop ethical ideals and to orient one’s actions deeply and consistently towards these ideals. When a sufficient number of people think and live the idea of reverence for life, this ‘new consciousness’ (*neue Gesinnung*) may work out as a moulding force (*gestaltende Kraft*) in church and society (Schweitzer, 1923b: 262, 268, 272; 2003: 399). Ethical ideals coming from outside, not resulting from ‘inner compulsion’ (*innere Nötigung* [Schweitzer, 1923b: 242]) or *innerliches Müssen* [Schweitzer, 1999: 288]) are superficial and unsustainable (Schweitzer, 1923a: 427-428). A society serves ethics by expressing its basic principles in legal codes, but cannot teach individuals what is good and evil, as this knowledge can only come from deep individual thought (Schweitzer, 1923b: 260). ‘The essence of civilization is that reverence for life, struggling in our will-to-live, gains importance in the individual and in mankind’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 263).

Francis himself wrote for his Order two Rules: an Earlier Rule (without a Papal Seal: *Regula non bullata*) and a Later Rule (with Papal Seal: *Regula bullata*). The source of this Earlier Rule was apparently an unpreserved basic ‘form of life and a rule’ (*vitae forma et regula*) (1C 32.1 [Fontes, 305; Armstrong, 2004: 50]), which Francis presented to Pope Innocent III for his (oral) approval in 1209/1210 in a double attempt a) to have his community included within the Church (against accusations of forming a heretic movement) and b) to put the text of a community rule under papal authority (thus safeguarding a rule against possible future changes by individual brothers) (Esser, 1966: 109-110). This orally approved document developed further until 1221 into the Earlier Rule. In subsequent years a re-working took place and the Later Rule was approved in 1223 by Pope Honorius III (Armstrong, 1999: 63, 99). This foundational document ‘was not so much a written law standing over the friars as an instrument closely linked to their life, helping them correspond as a group to their high ideal’ (Flood and Matura, 1975: 18). The

Earlier Rule offers guidelines such as how to live without any possessions and in obedience, how to clothe themselves and to fast, how to preach and to pray, how the brothers should behave and correct each other and care for sick brothers, how to refuse even a single coin of money, how to beg, how not to interact with women, etc. The shorter Later Rule offers a re-worked, more succinct version of the Earlier Rule (Armstrong, 1999: 99).

Francis is concerned with creating a change in the hearts of people, expressed in a new spirituality, rather than with moral rules. The preserved sources by and about Francis do not elaborate the relation between individual and social ethics, but assume that when people live the gospel way of life that he preached, the Church will be renewed in interpersonal relations and in relations to other creatures. The desire to know ‘how is my will in the will of God’, as seen in Schweitzer (Schweitzer, 2001: 1194), also characterises Francis’ life, starting from his early conversion. Francis deeply longed to ‘direct his will to God’s ... He prayed with all his heart that the eternal and true God would guide his way and teach him to do His will’ (1C 6.1; 6 [Fontes, 281-282; Armstrong, 2004: 27]). This will was revealed to him: o seek ‘the kingdom of heaven’ (1C 7.7 [Fontes, 283; Armstrong, 2004: 28]), leading to renunciation of the world of Assisi with its urban power and possessions, and to inner freedom (1C.13-14.5 [Fontes, 288-290; Armstrong, 2004: 32-33]). This freedom resulted in a new relation of praise towards the ‘Creator of all’ and to creation. As Celano narrates, he filled the woods with praise to the Creator and his heart with compassion for the lepers (1C 16.1-5 [Fontes, 291; Armstrong, 2004: 34]; 1C 17.1-5 [Fontes, 292; Armstrong, 2004: 35]) (Hellmann, 2007: 68).

Francis’ conversion and his longing to know the will of God is expressed in terms of awe and wonder for the mystery of God. After his conversion, the sources narrate that he lived for some time as a hermit and among the lepers (1C 17.1-5 [Fontes, 292; Armstrong, 2004: 35]), and in the same period he rebuilt dilapidated churches and chapels (1C 18.1-4 [Fontes, 293-294; Armstrong, 2004: 36-37]; 1C21.1-5 [Fontes, 295-296; Armstrong, 2004: 41]). Only when he heard ‘[O]ne day the Gospel was being read ... about how the Lord sent out his disciples to preach’ (1C 22.1 [Fontes, 296; Armstrong, 2004: 41]), he discovered therein ‘God’s will’; his initial longing to know God’s will and the desire ‘to follow the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and to retrace his steps completely’ (1C 84.1 [Fontes, 350; Armstrong, 2004: 94]) became one (Hellmann, 2007: 70; le Goff, 1999: 112). After hearing the gospel, Francis started to preach penance (1C23.1 [Fontes, 297-298; Armstrong, 2004: 42]). ‘Being in penance’ or ‘doing penance’ implies living according to the Gospel and refers to an inner conversion and spiritual way of life continuing till death; ultimately the kingdom of heaven will be the reward for all this (*Regula non bullata* 21.7 [Fontes, 204; Armstrong, 1999: 78]).

Celano writes that Francis ‘prostrated himself with his heart as much as his body in prayer to God’ (1C 92.6 [Fontes, 368; Armstrong, 2004: 102]), expressing the intensity of his prayer and the mutual relationship between his life and prayer, so that his prayer finds expression in his life

and his life in his prayer. The term ‘moral spirituality’ may qualify the deep connection between Francis’ spirituality and morality (Pansters, 2012: 25). Francis’ prayers and the two Rules especially express this close connection (Blastic, 2007: 3-29).

As elaborated in Francis’ Mystic Way (Chapter 2), after the period of Illumination, he aimed for an even deeper conversion and ‘he set out on the way of full perfection’ (1C 90.1-2 [Fontes, 365-366; Armstrong, 2004: 100]). To attain that goal, Francis retired to the ‘blessed solitude of contemplation’ (1C 91.2 [Fontes, 367; Armstrong, 367]), and ‘through unceasing prayer and frequent contemplation, he reached intimacy with God in an indescribable way’ (1C 91.4 [Fontes, 367; Armstrong 2004: 101]). As in the beginning of his conversion, Francis desired to know how he ‘would be able to cling more perfectly to the Lord God, according to His counsel and the good pleasure of His will ... this was the highest desire that always burned in him as long as he lived’ (1C 91.5-6; Fontes, 367; Armstrong, 2004: 101).

Francis understood that his desire to cling more perfectly to God’s will would imply suffering: that he would have ‘to enter into the kingdom of God through many trials, difficulties and struggles’ (1C 93.3 [Fontes, 369; Armstrong, 2004: 102]) and to enter ‘into the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Hellmann, 2007: 81). Francis, seeing ‘in the vision of God a man ... affixed to a cross’ (1C 94.1-4 [Fontes, 370; Armstrong, 2004: 103-104]), reacted with wonder and awe, and ‘[S]igns of the nails began to appear on his hands and feet (1C 94.7 [Fontes, 370; Armstrong, 2004: 104]). He endured these things for nearly two years, with complete patience and humility. But his longing remained consistent: ‘I desire to be found always and completely in harmony with and obedient to God’s will alone in everything’ (1C 107.3 [Fontes, 384; Armstrong, 2004: 115]). Francis came to understand that he could only come closer to God and follow His will by tracing the footsteps of Christ (Lapsanski, 1974: 49-59). Francis teaches that through obedience the brothers have to become free from their selves, while laying their will completely in the will of the Father (*Regula bullata* 10.2 [Fontes, 179; Armstrong, 1999:105]).

Schweitzer’s ‘reverence for life’ as a way of thinking about ethics and Francis’ Rules (*Regula bullata* and *Regula non-bullata*) and Letters may come close to ‘virtue ethics’. The primary focus of the two authors is ‘on what kind of person one should be’ and less on ‘how one should act’ (Baggini, 2011: 94). For Schweitzer, the creation of ‘a new consciousness’ (*eine neue Gesinnung*) (of reverence for life) is more important than the attainment of immediate ‘facts’ (*Tatsachen*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 259). This new consciousness finds expression in spirituality and in ethical conduct (Schweitzer, 1923b: 276). Francis’ spirituality results from following the Gospel way of life and is not confined to what we *do*, but primarily what we *are* and *what we become* in our relation with God and with God’s creatures. What we *are* determines how we live the Gospel way of life and what we *do*. Thus, neither Schweitzer nor Francis are interested in the application of ethical principles and rules, but in the development of character, in the attainment of virtues and in being virtuous, even when not confronted with an ethical problem.

Being virtuous (having a virtuous character) is expressed in (for example) a compassionate, caring and respectful attitude toward other living beings. Cruelty to animals is an expression of a bad character.

Schweitzer appears to maintain that virtue is established and enforced mainly through reason and feeling, though habit (personal projects of love) plays a role as well. Yet Schweitzer deviates from traditional virtue ethics in significant ways. For example, he expresses his admiration for Plato's thought, for his experience of the presence of the ethical in people as something mysterious (Schweitzer, 1923b: 41), but he cannot follow Plato where Plato considers the immaterial world of the form of the Good as the only real world, as if only thinking and acting directed to this immaterial world have ethical value (Schweitzer, 1923b: 40-41). Schweitzer praises Aristotle for redirecting us to the material world, but criticises Aristotle where he presents a theory and list of virtues instead of providing a unified ethic that may offer guidance in actual circumstances (Schweitzer, 1923b: 43). Schweitzer admires Stoic thought for its elementary thinking, starting from the fundamental questions of the relation of humans to the world, the meaning of life and the essence of the good; and he agrees with the basic Stoic insight that humans may achieve a spiritual relation to the world and become one with it (Schweitzer, 1935b: 194). Unfortunately, Stoicism does not overcome resignation and fails to develop into an ethics of moral engagement (Schweitzer, 1923b: 38). By attributing a role to feelings like empathy, sympathy and compassion in developing virtues, Schweitzer also differs from Stoic thought, which focuses mainly on reason in the formation of virtue (Baggini, 2011: 96). Schweitzer praises Kant for his finding that the ethical is a will that transcends us above the natural world and lets us belong to a higher world order, but criticizes him also for a complete separation of rationality from feeling in his method of impartial moral reasoning and for limiting the ethical domain to the relation of humans to humans. Kant renounces the cruel treatment of animals merely because this may lead to insensitivity to the suffering of people (Schweitzer, 1923b: 103-106; 226).

Schweitzer's thought also differs from modern virtue theorists where he considers virtues in themselves not morally basic (as virtue theorists would argue [Wennberg, 2003: 169]): virtues derive their significance from the morally basic principle of 'reverence for life'. For Schweitzer virtues are those character traits that induce a person to behave in accordance with the principle of reverence for life, that is, to maintain and promote life, to solve the self-division of the will-to-live and to create wholeness. Thus reverence for life does not intend to replace virtues, but provides an overarching framework from which other virtues grow (Schweitzer, 2001: 1260), including all those virtues contributing to active and passive self-perfection, and thus contributing to what he understands as civilization.

Thus, though Schweitzer's ethic of reverence for life does not prescribe in detail how to act, it may provide ethical guidance through virtues and ideals like compassion, gratitude, humility,

perseverance, patience *et cetera* (Schweitzer, 1923b: 255). Schweitzer considers these virtues essential for self-perfection, since they give direction to our lives and are to be developed and expressed in one's life, for example, as personal projects of love (*Nebenamt*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 254), that is, activities in service to what we most care about.

Ethical priorities need to be established in a concrete context and cannot be captured in general rules. Schweitzer holds that 'thought fears such an ethic' (as reverence for life), because thought wants to impose regulations that can be systematized. And the ethic of reverence for life cannot fit in such a system (Schweitzer, 1936: 231). However, Schweitzer rejects pragmatism, as this derives behaviour from what is 'current' in society, instead of striving towards ideals.

Francis' Rules and Letters also express minimal instructions and leave considerable freedom in living a life according to the Gospel (Boff, 2007: 89-91). For Francis, to follow a path of simplicity and humility in the footsteps of Jesus Christ would be enough. Allowing the brothers freedom for personal decisions, the Rules and Letters contain expressions like: 'if he (an aspirant brother) wishes and is capable of doing so spiritually' (i.e., sell all his belongings and give everything to the poor) (ER, II. 4 [Fontes, 186; Armstrong, 1999: 64]); 'if they cannot do this, their good will may suffice' (LR, II. 7 [Fontes, 172; Armstrong, 1999: 100]); 'In whatever way it seems better to you to please the Lord God' (*Epistola ad fratrem Leonem* (Editio Esser) [Fontes, 89; Armstrong, 1999: 122]). Yet, he does not leave his brothers (and us) without guidelines. For example, in *The Prayer Inspired by the Our Father*, he expresses the will of God:

... by exerting all our energies and affections of body and soul in the service of Your love and of nothing else; and may we love our neighbors as ourselves by drawing them all to Your love with our whole strength, by rejoicing in the good of others as in our own, by suffering with others at their misfortunes, and by giving offense to no one (Armstrong, 1999: 159).

Along both Francis' and Schweitzer's Mystic Way the exercise of virtues can be discerned: for example, poverty (in Francis' asceticism, and in Schweitzer's austerity) and obedience, expressed in a 'holy indifference' to the accidents of life (in Francis' last verses of a *Salutation of the Virtues* [Fontes; 224; Armstrong, 1999: 165], and in Schweitzer's emphasis on resignation). These aspects of perfection

tend to make the subject regard itself, not as an isolated and interesting individual, possessing desires and rights, but as a scrap of the Cosmos, an ordinary bit of the Universal Life, only important as a part of the All, an expression of the Will Divine (Underhill, 2008: 204).

Schweitzer speaks in this respect of 'just a speck of dust' (Schweitzer, 1936: 229), Francis of 'lesser brother' (*frater minor*) (1C 38.1-4 [Fontes, 312-313; Armstrong, 2004: 507]). In Francis' life, an attitude of rigorous exercise of virtues and asceticism can be discerned, more than in Schweitzer's life. With Schweitzer, we see partial negation of the will-to-live, so that the will-to-live does not live itself out unhindered, but is conscious of other wills-to-live. In Francis'

case, the preserved sources remark that he so loved creation that only through the most severe asceticism could he become free from desires for the world. He showed that poverty is key to a different relation with other creatures and with God, as poverty enables us to be detached from all material goods ‘that possess us or that we possess’ (Delio, 2007: 46) and be open and receptive to God. Therefore, poverty for the brothers not only implies living without possessions, but also abandoning their own will while preparing to follow Christ. Poverty is not an aim in itself, but a way of purification, a renunciation of the self in order to attain union with God. This spiritual attitude is the deeper meaning of poverty implied by Francis (Pansters, 2012: 142-143).

For Francis virtues are gifts from God, through the grace of the Holy Spirit and springing from our love for God (e.g., *A Salutation of the Virtues* 4 [Fontes, 223; Armstrong, 1999: 164]). Virtues are ideals and the way to salvation (Pansters, 2012: 39). Francis indicates that principal virtues as wisdom, simplicity, poverty, humility, charity, obedience come from God and that humans cannot acquire these virtues without dying first, that is, without purification of the self (*Salutation of the Virtues, passim* [Fontes, 223-224; Armstrong, 1999: 164-165]). Francis shows how these various virtues may overcome vices; exercise of virtues leads to ethical qualities. As all good and virtues come from God, they should be referred to Him (*reddamus*) (*The Praises to be said at All the Hours* 11 [Fontes, 142; Armstrong 1999: 162]) (Pansters, 2012: 39, 83). In the last verses of the *Salutation of the Virtues* Francis refers to ‘the vision of the paradise, which man can restore, not through his own power, but through the holy virtues that come from God’ (Freeman, 2006b: 175). Francis also talks about the virtue of obedience that makes the mortified body

submissive to everyone in the world, not only to people but to every beast and wild animal as well, that they may do whatever they want with it insofar as it has been given to them from above by the Lord (*Salutation of the Virtues*, 14-18; [Fontes, 224; Armstrong, 1999: 165]).

As maintained, it was only after a long process of purification that Francis and Schweitzer reached a level of detachment that enabled them to observe the world in a non-instrumental way.

5.2 Dialectic relationship between spirituality and ethics

This section deals with the relation between contemplation and ethics in Schweitzer’s and Francis’ thought respectively.

Schweitzer holds that the ethic of ‘self-perfection’ (*Selbstvervollkommnung*) and the ethic of ‘devotion’ (*Hingebung*) to other life only together constitute the real basic principle of the ethical (Schweitzer, 1923b: 224). He maintains that the ethics of self-perfection is universal, because self-perfection can only mean that a human being enters into a real relation to Being that is within and outside him. In order to give meaning to his life he wants to make from the

natural, external belonging to Being, a spiritual, inner devotion to Being and strives for his relation to the world to be determined by this devotion. Because human beings cannot discover motives for ethical action in the world (as every will-to-live wants to live itself out), they only reach a passive, inner devotion to Being. And as this ethics of self-perfection is directed to an abstract ‘Essence of Being’ (*Insbegriff des Seins*) instead of to real Being, the ethic of self-perfection remains passive. Thus the active and passive ethics cannot integrate into each other and bring forward a complete ethics. This ethics of self-perfection only reaches an ethic of resignation, of inner liberation from the world, not at the same time an ethic of action in the world (Schweitzer, 1923b: 228-229; 1999: 154-165). Here, the relationship with the Absolute, without quality and need, has nothing more to do with self-perfection. This relationship becomes a pure act of consciousness and leads to a spirituality that is as much without content as the assumed Absolute, resulting in a dead spirituality (Schweitzer, 1923b: 232).

A content receives the union (*einswerden*) of the finite will with the Infinite (will) only when it is experienced in ourselves as quiescence *and at the same time* as being seized (*ergriffensein*) by the will-to-love, which in us comes to consciousness of itself and wants to become act in us (Schweitzer, 1930: 368, my translation and italics).

Thus, in Schweitzer’s ethical mysticism, there is on the one hand in the act of devotion (service) to other life the experience of union with Being; on the other hand, in the act of contemplation (self-devotion to Being inside), we *at the same time* feel or are urged to an inner compulsion to devotion to other life. This is understandable from the two-fold experience of infinite Being (as elaborated in Chapter 3, that is, as Will-to-love or ethical Personality inside and as Will-to-live in manifestations of Being outside): the God who calls us to self-devotion to Being inside, urges us *at the same time* to devotion to other beings (as manifestations of Being) outside. In a footnote Schweitzer states

The highest world view is thus the mysticism of ethical life and world affirmation, in which a human being experiences spiritual union with infinite Being not only as submission to it, but also as devotion to it in ethical attitude and action (Schweitzer, 1999: 378 [footnote 263], my translation).

Contemplation and devotion to other life have a dialectical relationship between each other: contemplation needs action (devotion to other life) in order to have content and to lead to a living spirituality; devotion to other life needs contemplation in order to be founded deeply and sustainably. Thus, we will only be able to live in a profound way when we arrive at a spirituality that is ethical and an ethic that includes spirituality (Schweitzer, 1923b: 233). Therefore, Schweitzer holds that human thought has to go through the contradiction of the Will-to-love of God (as ethical Personality) to his infinite, mysterious creative Will (Will-to-live) and transcend it. For this to happen human thought has to overcome dualism, which can only take place when it ‘leaves everything that cannot be grasped behind to find the Eternal as Will-to-love’ (Schweitzer, 1930: 367-368) and therein human thought receives peace and inspiration for ethical action. As indicated in Chapter 2, I call such experiences, where thought ‘leaves everything that cannot be grasped behind to find the Eternal’, ‘pure consciousness events’

(Forman, 1990: 39). In this way Schweitzer manages to bring about a synthesis between the contemplative (spiritual) and ethical dimension. However, the contemplative dimension on its own keeps its value as it ensures that devotion to other life is sustainable and deep.

Francis' life shows an alternation between periods of praying and fasting in solitude and periods of preaching penance and caring for the lepers and the poor. This corresponds with the two poles in Francis' life, of contemplation and of devotion to others. Francis felt a 'deep attraction to the eremitical life' (Doyle, 1980: 16) and though he and the friars received papal approval for an active life of preaching the gospel, he afterwards had doubts whether this was the way for him to go (1C 35. 2-6 [Fontes, 309-310; Armstrong, 2004: 54]). He used to retire to solitary places for fasting and praying from the feast of All Saints until the Nativity and from the Epiphany until Easter (ER, III. 11 [Fontes, 188; Armstrong, 1999: 66]). Thus in Francis the contemplative and the ethical have two different centres, 'while Schweitzer tries to draw the one contemplative centre so to speak into the other' (Günzler, 1990: 220). Thus, in Francis we may observe that 'spirituality and ethics are two things', as Schweitzer holds for medieval mystics (Schweitzer, 1923b: 235). However, I do not agree with Schweitzer where he argues that in traditional mysticism contemplation and service to other beings stand alongside each other without inner relation: the 'excess' gained in solitary contemplation may thereafter be shared with others: '*contemplata aliis tradere*' ('to give to others the fruit of contemplation') (Baers, 2003: 202). In the Earlier Rule, the stipulated way of life for Francis and his brothers is described as 'to follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ' (ER, I. 1 [Fontes, 185; Armstrong, 1999: 63-64]). As the Incarnation is Francis' starting point for union with God, his ascent to God is depicted as different from the Neoplatonic ascent (which Schweitzer apparently has in mind when he refers to traditional mysticism), represented by the image of a ladder (although, as elaborated, this is how Celano and Bonaventure, trained in mystical theology, actually present Francis' Mystic Way). This Neoplatonic ascent, with the emphasis of spirit over matter, is a movement away from the natural world (Delio, 2007: 41-42), while Francis never rejects the world, with his ascent passing through the created world. Francis did not attain union with God by transcending the natural world, but creation brought him into immediate contact with God. His notion of ascent is novel, in the sense that interaction between Francis and animals takes place at a level transcending the here and now, elevating Francis directly to an ineffable experience of mystical union with the divine (Sorrell, 1988: 82) without any theological or philosophical reflection (as is the case in those schooled in mystical theology (see section 2.2.2). Moreover, Francis' conversion came about in the world, and not in solitude or contemplation: as Francis himself indicates in his *Testament*, there is first his conversion to the suffering lepers, and from those to the crucified Jesus Christ (*Testament*, 1-3 [Fontes, 227; Armstrong, 1999: 124]). Apparently, the suffering lepers made present the suffering Jesus Christ. Thus while in Francis' mysticism the contemplative and ethical dimension are interrelated and/or the ethical dimension follows from the 'excess' gained in contemplation,

Schweitzer brings about a synthesis in the ethical action itself, as a mystical experience may occur simultaneously and/or the compulsion to action springs from the mystical experience itself.

Yet, solitary praying is essential to sustain Francis on his mission of preaching; for perseverance (in his and the friars' mission of preaching), prayer is essential. Likewise, for Schweitzer contemplation and resignation are essential for devotion to other life to be profound and sustainable.

5.3 Ethics of respect and awe

Francis was able to perceive the Creator in all creatures, animate and inanimate, filling him with an attitude of awe, wonder, respect and praise. He recognized God as the Source of all things, and finally called all creatures his brothers and sisters. The *Earlier Rule* contains a prayer in which the brothers pray about giving back to God what belongs to God. Because they recognize that everything belongs to God, giving thanks to God implies 'giving back to God through a lifestyle that respects the material goods of creation as God's property' (Blastic, 2007: 11). Thus, the ethical implication is that the brothers live in ways that 'refer (*reddamus*) all good to the Lord' (ER, XVII. 17-18 [Fontes, 201; Armstrong, 1999: 76]), that is, their Source, rather than taking for themselves more than they need (with reference to 1 Timothy 6: 8, 'if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these' [NRSV]). This lifestyle implies fair use of the earth's resources for all creatures. Concerning eating meat, the hagiographers transmit that Francis, although freeing all animals given alive to him, was not a stern vegetarian. Francis and the brothers ate 'of all the food that is placed before them' (ER, III. 13 [Fontes, 188; Armstrong, 1999: 66]) Possibly this tradition was an attempt to distance the nascent Franciscan movement from early 13th century movements qualified as heretical and persecuted at the time, such as Catharism, whose representatives were considered rigorous vegetarians (Spencer, 1993: 166-168; Läßle, 1988: 108, 110; Müller, 2005: 150-154; Sorrell, 1988: 77-79).

The same attitude of respect and awe can be observed in Schweitzer. As elaborated, *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben* (reverence, awe for life) came to Schweitzer as a revelation. For him, 'All understanding is astonishment, amazement over the Mystery of life' (*Alles Erkennen ist Staunen über das Rätsel des Lebens*) (Schweitzer, 2001: 1237).

As God is the infinite Life (Schweitzer, 2001: 1236), reverence for God means devotion to other life. Schweitzer expresses with the phrase 'reverence for life' the experience of the sacredness of life, and at the same time an active attitude of devotion to life in need of help:

A human is really ethical only when he obeys the constraint laid on him to help all life which he is able to succor, and when he goes out of his way to avoid injuring anything living. He does not ask how far this or that life deserves sympathy as valuable in itself,

or how far it is capable of feeling. To him life as such is sacred (Schweitzer 1923b: 240; similarly 2001: 1248-1249).

By 'life' Schweitzer means humans, animals and plants, and occasionally he includes even inanimate nature (e.g., a snowflake) (Schweitzer, 2001: 1238), because he holds that 'in and behind all phenomena there is Will-to-live' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 237) which must be revered. Schweitzer holds that science can only describe natural laws, but for the ultimate Mystery of life, humans can only stand in awe (Schweitzer, 2001: 1237).

For Schweitzer all life is sacred as every will-to-live is part of the universal Will-to-live. He uses a concept of life which makes no distinction between higher and lower life forms. 'To judge them whether they are closer or further from humans ... is a completely subjective (human) standard' (Schweitzer, 2003: 398), 'as we cannot know the meaning of other life in itself and from the perspective of the cosmos' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202). The ethical implication of such a notion of life is that reverence for life requires that we maintain and encourage the development of life according to its nature as intended by the Creator. In this view, sin is all that hampers the development of life according to the Creator's plan. Schweitzer holds that the ethical human 'tears no leaf from its tree, breaks off no flower, and is careful not to crush any insect as he walks' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 240). Thus reverence for trees and plants implies not to cut them unnecessarily and to preserve them whenever we can; this parallels Francis' order to his brothers when cutting trees, to leave part of the stem, so that it may hope to sprout again (2C 165.11 [Fontes, 590; Armstrong, 2004: 272]). As all life is sacred, reverence for life prohibits killing, except in extremely necessary cases, such as, for example, 'when a human has to decide which life he must sacrifice to preserve the other' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202). Martin poses the question whether 'reverence for life' commands vegetarianism. 'Schweitzer's refusal to make differential judgments about sentient and non-sentient species obscures the urgency of this question' (Martin, 2007: 39). Martin holds that as Schweitzer makes in his judgements no distinction between higher and lower life, one would expect that eating sentient beings would not raise more ethical reservations than eating non-sentient beings like plants. However, Martin overlooks that although Schweitzer rejects general ranking, he does not state that all beings have equal moral worth, but only that 'I must regard other life than my own with equal reverence (*die gleiche Ehrfurcht*)' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138; Schweitzer, 1936: 230). In practice Schweitzer does make distinctions between higher and lower life, for example, in the case of an animal in pain and when there is no hope for recovery, one should redeem it from its suffering, while he holds that one is not allowed to shorten the life of a suffering human being even with one hour (Schweitzer, 2001: 1256). Martin suggests that 'responsible decisions about eating meat depend on motives and intentions, as well as on situational factors about meat production. In particular, are animals raised and killed in humane ways?' (Martin, 2007: 39-40). I hold that in the current situation of intensive livestock farming these conditions are absent and, since there exists meanwhile a wealth of scientific information concerning nutrition and clothing, vegetarianism

has become an alternative option. One can no longer hold that killing animals for food is ‘under the compulsion of necessity’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202, an observation most likely made in an African context). Schweitzer appeals to us to take responsibility for the maltreatment of animals on transport and in slaughter houses (Schweitzer, 1923b: 250); he strongly condemns killing for amusement or ‘sports’ (Schweitzer, 2001: 1249-1250). Schweitzer himself became a vegetarian towards the end of his life, which might point to an evolving insight in this matter (Free, 1993: 40; Barsam, 2008: 152).

In conclusion, for Francis and Schweitzer, all life is sacred. Respect and awe are built on this recognition but (as elaborated) they also regard creatures as having worth in their own right as they spontaneously react with awe and wonder to the existence and beauty of life.

5.4 Ethics of boundless solidarity and responsibility

Responsibility and solidarity are important notions in Schweitzer’s ethics of reverence for life and in Francis’ life and writings. For Francis solidarity is based mainly on the recognition that all that exists has the same Origin, coming from the same life-giving Source (LMj 8: 6.1 [Fontes, 847; Armstrong, 2000: 590]). In the encounter with the lepers it was revealed to Francis (through God’s grace) that all human beings are sacred creatures of the same Creator God. During his life, this insight gradually extended to all creatures, animate and non-animate, finally including also Sister Moon and the stars, rocks, stones, and Sister Water. All creatures are united by a sacred bond. In this view, every action that violates this sacred fraternity is sin. In his stigmatization, as ultimate experience of union, Francis received confirmation of himself as obedient to the values of Jesus, as revealed to him in the encounter with the lepers: values of love and humble service (Cusato, 2009: 244-245). For Schweitzer, solidarity is demanded as I experience myself as will-to-live surrounded by other wills-to-live, who are yearning, like myself, for continuation of life and for enjoyment and who, like myself, fear destruction and pain (Schweitzer, 1935: 137). Schweitzer also refers to solidarity between people who have experienced suffering, called ‘the fellowship of those marked by pain’, while suffering humans and animals are united by ‘the community of suffering’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 168). The other reason for the requirement for solidarity is the sacredness of life (as we are all will-to-live, sharing in the universal Will-to-Live (as elaborated in Chapter 3).

Responsibility is contained in the disposition of reverence for life, as Schweitzer writes:

... forces in it are working, which compel us to a revision and ennoblement of our individual, social and political disposition (Schweitzer, 1923b: XVIII). Reverence for life works with restless vitality in the consciousness it has entered, and throws it in a restlessness of a never and nowhere ceasing responsibility (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242). Ethics consists in responsibility towards all that lives—responsibility which has become so wide as to be limitless (*Ethik ist ins Grenzenlos erweiterte Verantwortung gegen alles, was lebt*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: 241).

As elaborated, the ethic of reverence for life does not prescribe exact rules, but stresses responsibility of the individual in decision-making and the development of an attitude of responsibility in an ever-widening circle for all that lives:

To the human who is truly ethical all life is sacred, including that which from the human point of view seems lower in the scale. He makes distinctions only as each case comes before him, and under the compulsion of necessity (*unter dem Zwange der Notwendigkeit*), as, for example, when he has to decide which life he must sacrifice in order to preserve the other. But all through these decisions he is conscious of acting on subjective grounds and arbitrarily, and knows that he bears the responsibility for the life which is sacrificed (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202).

In addition, Schweitzer maintains that solidarity and responsibility are boundless in scope. Schweitzer holds that the major mistake of all ethics up till his day has been an exclusive concern with the relation of human to human. For Schweitzer ethics is universal as it concerns humanity's attitude to the world and to all life that humanity comes in contact with. Humans are ethical only when they devote themselves to all life, including that of plants and animals. And because we do not know the lower boundary of conscious, sentient life, every life is sacred (Schweitzer, 2001: 1248). Only the universal ethic of responsibility in an ever-widening circle for all that lives can be considered to be valid. Thus the ethic of the relation of humans to humans is only a particular part of the universal ethic. For widening the circle, Schweitzer uses the argument of moral consistency: ethics requires that I experience the necessity of practising the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live as toward my own (Schweitzer, 1936: 230).

If the ethics of devotion to other life (*Ethik der Hingebung*) concerns only the devotion of humans to humans, it cannot be consistent with the ethic of self-perfection (*Ethik der Selbstvervollkommnung*), since the latter ethic deals with the relation of humans to Being and to the world and is thus universal. The relation of humans to humans is just an expression of those relations, in which a human being stands to Being and to the world, that is, to the manifestations of Being. Only by including all creatures and all life can the ethics of devotion meet and connect with the ethics of self-perfection (Schweitzer, 1923b: 225).

Schweitzer maintains that the European thinkers excluded animals from ethical considerations ('like the housewife who has scoured the floor, takes care that the door is closed, so that the dog does not come in and distort by the traces of his feet the work done' (Schweitzer, 1923b: 225), because an ethic that includes animals cannot fit into a thought system that wants to impose regulations (Schweitzer, 1936: 231).

The ethical consequences of such universal solidarity and responsibility imply another way of relating to creatures and the world: Schweitzer created a new consciousness (*neue Gesinnung*) of reverence for life, and Francis held that creation is for the sustenance of all. The consequence of such responsibility and solidarity implies another lifestyle by sharing the fruits of creation and not using more than what one needs.

5.5 Ethics of inclusive compassion and care

Compassion plays a key role in both Schweitzer's and Francis' lives: they consider that their life of devotion to other beings is in harmony with Jesus' compassion and works of mercy. Francis' spiritual way is profoundly evangelical as it focuses on the Incarnation and union with Christ. To follow Jesus implies not mimicking Him, but becoming His image and expressing this in compassion, in a life of poverty and humility. Schweitzer calls reverence for life, with its encompassing empathy, sympathy and compassion with suffering living creatures around us, the beginning and foundation (*der Anfang und das Fundament*) of all that is ethical (Schweitzer, 2001: 1238; 1245).

Compassion, for both Schweitzer and Francis, means active caring to alleviate suffering or active engagement to prevent suffering. Schweitzer holds that sometimes, when the suffering of a living creature cannot be alleviated and there is no hope for healing, it is more ethical to end its life by killing it mercifully. Hence he holds that the principle of not-killing and not-harming is secondary to compassion. However, as stated, this is only applicable to animals (Schweitzer, 2001: 1256). Thus, what exactly compassion entails may depend on the circumstances.

Schweitzer holds that people who have experienced suffering are 'united by a secret bond' which he calls 'the fellowship of those marked by pain' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 168). People marked by pain are motivated toward reciprocal care for other suffering beings, as gratitude obligates them to return benevolence received from others. Suffering humans and animals are united by 'the community of suffering'. Nevertheless, Schweitzer is aware that often people do not give helpful responses to suffering for several reasons: God as revealed in nature cannot be brought into harmony with the God of love as experienced in ourselves; they may fear that involvement in compassion for others will mean suffering; they may be overwhelmed by the magnitude of suffering, of which we can only alleviate a tiny part (Schweitzer, 2001: 1246). Yet compassion is of extreme importance in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism, because compassion moves us to self-devotion to other life, which is a necessary part of self-perfection. As compassion motivates us to help animals, this constitutes an important emotion to be strengthened and developed in religious teaching and liturgy: in religious teaching, there should be more emphasis on the role of compassion in creating an overall moral sensitivity that includes and condemns animal suffering. Moreover, once compassion has become profound, it 'culminates in spiritual union and harmony with the Creative Will which is in and through all' (Schweitzer, 1936: 239).

Nevertheless, at the same time Schweitzer holds that compassion is not broad enough to be the basic principle of the ethical (Schweitzer, 1923b: 241). In a sermon he does not ask only for compassion for animals, because that would not be comprehensive and sustainable. He asks something more general: reverence for life, that is, a consciousness from which compassion for animals grows (Schweitzer, 2001: 1246).

In conclusion, compassion is of extreme importance in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism and in Francis' nature-mysticism, because: 1) compassion ensures that we do not live unhindered, but are conscious of others; 2) compassion tries to heal the self-division of the will-to-live against itself, the disintegration of life; 3) compassion is a powerful source of motivation to alleviate the suffering of animals (and people); 4) compassion moves us to self-devotion to other life, which is a necessary part of self-perfection; 5) finally, in the service to other life union with life and with Life may be experienced. Therefore, without compassion we would not be able to give meaning to our lives.

For Francis, the healing of the division of life is clearly discernible in his own life, through Francis' compassion and care for others and at the same time severity and asceticism regarding himself. In him existed at the same time gentleness and strength.

If there had only been strength, he would have been a hard saint, inflexible and heartless. If there had only been gentleness, he would have projected the image of a sentimental saint, sweet and formless (Boff, 2007: 137).

Francis was able to integrate these opposing qualities in himself, as he was also able to integrate life and death, when he welcomed 'Sister Bodily Death' (*Canticle* 12).

5.6 Ethics of redemption of guilt

Guilt plays an important role in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism. In Francis' life and work the concept of 'doing penance' is prominent.

Schweitzer holds that every human being has to pay off part of an infinite guilt for a number of reasons. First, no matter how ethically one tries to live, one lives only at the cost of other life. One cannot exist without incurring again and again the guilt of destroying and injuring life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 247-248). Especially those, like himself, who have received 'more than others good health, natural gifts, working capacity, success, a beautiful childhood, harmonious family circumstances, must pay a price for them. They have to show more than average devotion of life to life' (Schweitzer, 1923b, 253).

Second, we owe advances in medical science largely to animals. Therefore, whatever 'good' we do to other animals, is not more than paying off an immense debt to them (Schweitzer, 2001: 1254).

Because the animal, as a victim of research, has in his pain rendered valuable things to suffering humans, and has itself created a new and unique solidarity between him and us, a constraint (*ein Zwang*) is laid on each of us to do as much good as we possibly can to all creatures. When I help an insect out of his troubles all I do is to attempt to pay off some of the ever increasing new guilt against animals (Schweitzer, 1923b: 250).

Although Schweitzer strongly denounces the sacrifice of a life in the name of a 'higher good' and although he states that research on animals burdens us with guilt, he is not categorical against animal experiments. He stresses that researchers have to ponder in every individual case

whether it is really necessary to sacrifice an animal for humanity, and should assiduously try to minimize pain to the lowest level possible (Schweitzer, 1923b: 249).

Schweitzer holds that animal suffering is everybody's responsibility, even when it is not his or her animal. Whenever it occurs, all of us are guilty:

When there is so much maltreatment of animals, when the cries of thirsting creatures go up unnoticed from the railway trucks, when there is so much roughness in our slaughter houses, when in our kitchens so many animals suffer horrible deaths from unskilful hands, when animals endure unheard-of agonies from heartless men, or are delivered to the dreadful play of children, then we are all guilty and must bear the blame (Schweitzer, 1923b: 250).

Third, there is guilt for the wrong and injustice done by colonization. Schweitzer considers his self-devotion to the suffering people in Africa as a kind of atonement for this harm committed. We are burdened with a great debt (Schweitzer, 1935b: 164); anything we give them [the Africans] is not benevolence but atonement (Schweitzer, 1935b: 168).

In Schweitzer's ethic devotion to duty plays an important role as motivation for self-devotion to other life. This self-devotion to other life Schweitzer considers not so much as stemming from deontological ethics, but from devotion to what seems to be one's duty as a part of self-perfection: it [heroism] is not 'doing something special', but it is the undertaking of what seems to be one's duty 'with sober enthusiasm' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 76). The ethical implication is that we become guilty every time we kill:

Whenever I in any way sacrifice or injure life, I am not within the sphere of the ethical, but I become guilty, whether it be egoistically guilty for the sake of maintaining my own existence or welfare, or unegoistically guilty for the sake of maintaining a greater number of other existences or their welfare (Schweitzer, 1923b: 257).

Schweitzer's feelings of guilt seem to function as a source of ethical motivation for his striving to alleviate suffering. Though guilt can function as a source for ethical motivation, if feeling of guilt becomes excessive, it might paralyse people. Such feeling of excessive guilt is implied in Schweitzer's metaphysical concept: because the universal Will-to-Live is the basic metaphysical reality underlying all wills-to-live in the universe, all individual wills-to-live share in the universal Will-to-Live. And as the universal Will-to-Live is equated with God (as elaborated in section 3.3), killing life implies committing sacrilege against Life itself. Yet Schweitzer holds that there exists also 'justifiable' killing as when we kill in defence of (and reverence for) our own life or when we kill one life in order to save another life (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202). But although such killing may be justifiable, Schweitzer considers that killing is always outside the ethical domain and thus it burdens us with guilt. Though such claim of guilt is understandable from the perspective of moral consistency, one might question the reasonableness of the claim (Martin, 2007: 40).

In Francis' life and writings 'to do penance' (*facere poenitentiam*) is a central theme. In his *Testament* Francis narrates as the decisive moment of his conversion his encounter with the

lepers which changed his life forever; before this encounter, he was in sin (*in peccatis*), unable to realize God's vision for creation. Sin means every human action that violates the sacred bond between creatures and frustrates God's plan for creation. In the encounter with the lepers, values of love and humble service were revealed to Francis. After this encounter he began to do penance (*facere poenitentiam*), rejecting such actions that disintegrate the fraternity of creatures. To do this on a daily basis for the rest of one's life is to 'produce fruits worthy of penance' (Cusato, 2009: 56). Ethical implications of 'doing penance' and 'returning all good things to God' (ER, XVII: 17-18 [Fontes, 201: Armstrong, 1999:76]) imply in practice the adoption of an attitude of tender service to the most in need (e.g., of lepers and animals, to show the loving service of Christ), rejection of the use of violence (e.g., for the friars in defence of their places, because of the awareness of the vicious cycle of violence) and refusal to own land and property, because the friars considered creation (and thus the earth) as owned by God. God intends creation for the sustenance of all, and so to claim ownership of land and to exclude others from using it to fulfil their basic needs is to do evil to the Creator. Thus poverty for the Franciscan friars is about living in a way which uses creation on the basis of honest human need, as stated in the Early Rule (Cusato, 2009: 57-63). 'Doing penance' therefore constitutes 'a way of life out of a virtuous habit' in which the will of God is followed in everything, and therefore refers ultimately to a spiritual way of life (Pansters, 2012: 153- 157). Francis' motivation to go among the Saracens (according to 1C 55.2 [Fontes, 329; Armstrong, 2004:69]) to 'preach the Christian faith and repentance' is also a consequence of boundless solidarity and responsibility, though the theme of the desire for martyrdom is also mentioned, but more as a standard hagiographic *topos* than historical fact (Cusato, 2009: 64, 107). Thus Francis' preaching penance is about calling on people as *fratres et sorores* of the same Creator God to live in accordance with the original intentions of God for his creation, and to witness 'to a vision of the human fraternity created by God' even by risking their own lives (Cusato, 2009: 65).

In summary, Francis' testimony in his *Testament* that God gave him to 'begin to do penance' means to live in a way 'respectful of the integrity of the universal fraternity of all creatures'. This attitude started with the leper, extended to all people (including non-Christians) and finally included the whole of creation; it induced him 'to embrace not only the leper but the whole manner of evangelical living which honors the sacrality of the universal fraternity of all creatures' (Cusato, 2009: 66-67).

5.7 Summary and conclusion

Both Francis and Schweitzer consider ethics as a response to the search for meaning, for harmony with the Will of God. Devotion to other life is an expression of this search. Their endeavour for self-perfection is not aimed at union with an 'abstract Essence of being', but their ascent to union with God is through the created world. It is in the material world that they attain

harmony with the Will of God, not through transcending the world; life as such is the mysterious, sacred value that meets us within natural life. Their respect and reverence for life is therefore applied to natural life and spiritual life alike. Because the way of perfection of both authors includes working in and towards the world, it works out in society and Church.

Further characteristics are that in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism, mystical union comes about in service to other life, while Francis (through alternating periods of praying with periods of active service) is able to meet the suffering Christ in the face of the leper, gradually extending this recognition to all individual creatures. Both authors sustain their working in the world through contemplation and prayer. From the living contact with the Source of all life they receive strength to continue their devotion to other life in perseverance and patience. Furthermore, both consider this working in the world not as a sacrifice of their inner self, but as the realization of the compulsion and love that they feel inside and that leads to the inner perfection of their own personality.

Another typical feature is that both authors include in their service to other life all living creatures (including plants and trees) as a possible way to reach harmony; Francis even includes inanimate creatures (though Schweitzer also does this occasionally, as he holds that in all phenomena there is 'will-to-live'). Yet, as elaborated, both do not 'use' creatures as a means to reach union with God, but they appreciate creatures in their own right and they sense the animals' own relationship with the Creator, outside their relation with human beings.

Both Schweitzer and Francis do not elaborate on ethical guidelines at the level of practical decision-making, but they leave it to personal responsibility and provide ethical guidance through virtues and ideals. Both put emphasis on virtues leading to self-perfection, and as self-perfection includes self-devotion to other beings, they give spiritual perfection content. The starting point for both is the moral example of Jesus Christ: 'following the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus' (ER, I: 1 [Fontes, 185; Armstrong, 1999: 63-64]), 'Jesus has simply taken me prisoner since my childhood ... My going to Africa was an act of obedience to Jesus' (Schweitzer, 1931: 824).

For Schweitzer, whose illumination is mainly of the inward-looking type (see 3.4.2), it is also a becoming aware of God as ethical Personality inside. The more he recognizes the Mystery of life in himself, the more he senses the sacredness of all life; service to other life becomes service to Life itself, and the ethical deed becomes a spiritual deed; in the endeavor to solve the self-division of life against itself he realizes union with all life and union with the Primal Source of being (Schweitzer, 1935a: 193), obtaining at the same time moral encouragement. The new consciousness of reverence for life, and Francis' renewed way of life as '*facere poenitentiam*', constitute a new attitude towards oneself, other creatures and God. This new consciousness throws one into a never-ceasing restlessness.

From this consciousness of reverence for life and of the *forma vitae* of Francis, the following ethical implications for human–animal relations today may be formulated:

Action directed towards the world a) strives to maintain life and to help all life to develop according to the intention of the Creator; b) engages in the prevention of suffering and the alleviation of suffering; c) desists from killing, except in very exceptional cases like self-defence or the need to save another life or lives.

Francis' hagiographers have reported that Francis freed all animals given alive to him, and we know that Schweitzer became a vegetarian towards the end of his life. With the current status of medical science it is untenable that humans, especially in Western societies, are 'under the compulsion of necessity' to eat animals or their products for their health; on the contrary, there is growing evidence that animal foods are not entirely beneficial for people's health, and furthermore are detrimental to the earth's eco-system. I do not deny that there may exist circumstances where eating of meat is a necessity for human survival, for example, in arctic or African settings.

The use and killing of animals for food, clothing or amusement implies that we treat animals as things, as means to our ends, which is certainly contrary to an attitude of reverence for life or to Francis' perception of animals as his brothers and sisters, worthy of respect. The implication of Francis' and Schweitzer's message is that we humans are not morally justified in using animals as our property, for they testify that animals are God's property. The notion of animals as human property implies that nearly all animal interests can be sacrificed for people's 'benefits'.

In the same way, there is no moral justification for animal experimentation, however appealing the benefits derived from it (for humans) might appear. Animal experimentation takes for granted that animals have only instrumental value, as existing for our use. Instead, development and utilization of alternatives to the use of animals appears more in line with the moral message of Francis and Schweitzer and with their view that God's providential care concerns all species and not merely the human. Arguments for experimentation on animals can be established only if we accept a total difference in kind between humans and animals. Since Darwin, and in light of the current status of science, it may be argued that there is no difference in kind, only in degree, between humans and animals.

CHAPTER 6

FRANCIS' AND SCHWEITZER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANIMAL SPIRITUALITY AND TO CONTEMPORARY ANIMAL DISCOURSE

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first evaluate Francis' and Schweitzer's contributions to animal spirituality. In chapter 1 I have discussed prominent positions in the contemporary animal protection debate (Peter Singer's utilitarian perspective, Tom Regan's deontological view, Francione's critique of animal welfarism, Paul Taylor's environmental/protectionist perspective, and Andrew Linzey's protectionist Christian perspective) and I have further observed in the same chapter the limitations of those approaches. In this chapter I will propose to complement these contemporary approaches with elements of Francis' and Schweitzer's thought.

6.2 Francis' and Schweitzer's contributions to animal spirituality

From the accounts of the lives of mystics, it appears that mysticism is directed at integration and wholeness:

Mysticism is the experience of the oneness and wholeness of life. Therefore, mysticism's perception of life, its vision, is also the unrelenting perception of how fragmented life is. Suffering on account of that fragmentation and finding it unbearable is part of mysticism (Sölle, 2001: 302).

Francis and Schweitzer both suffer from the disunion of life. Following his conversion, Francis embarks upon a life of seeking to 'do penance' (*facere poenitentiam*), to heal the broken bond of the fraternity of all creatures, fractured through sin, for example, through violence against other creatures. Schweitzer refers to the 'self-division' (*Selbstentzweiung*) of life against life, the cruelty of nature, where one life exists at the cost of other life. The mystical quest for 'mergence and union of the soul with the Absolute' (Underhill, 2008: 401) finds expression in Schweitzer's writings as 'resolving the self-division' of life against life: the yearning of the will-to-live (in a person who has become thinking) to union with itself and to become universal (Schweitzer, 1923b: 242). Francis, categorized as a mystic, mainly of the outward-looking type, is able to see God in the whole world, even in the negative. As Boff observes, in Francis there is not only striving upward in search of the Mystery:

Transcendence alone does not reveal the total truth of the human being, because it only finds light, the splendor of goodness, absolute positivity, God. It is certainly fullness, but it is not yet integration. In order to arrive at a fullness of integration it is necessary to have the experience of trans-descendence (Boff, 2007: 22).

Francis' search for wholeness finds expression in an integration of the negative, where even death becomes for him a sister as he welcomes 'Sister Bodily Death' (*Caticum Fratris Solis*, 12

[Fontes, 41; Armstrong, 1999: 114]). In this section I will discuss how Francis and Schweitzer each managed to resolve the dualism between the spiritual and the material dimension of reality.

One finds in Francis and Schweitzer the importance of empathy and compassion as a healing force that dissolves the *Selbstentzweigung* of life against life. The sensitivity for ‘a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself’ cannot be developed in an abstract way, but in a concrete encounter with an animal in need of our devotion or care we may experience union with a transcendent Reality. In order to receive guidance in our search for more righteous human-animal relationships than currently prevail, I elaborate on this sensitivity by enumerating Francis’ and Schweitzer’s relevance for animal spirituality.

Schweitzer (1999: 155) holds that it is difficult for mysticism, as an internal philosophy of nature, to converge with world- and life-affirmation. Mysticism, when it is world- and life-affirming, has to make understandable how the working of human beings contributes to the meaning of world events. Where humans fail to understand the meaning of nature events and the forces of nature, they can only perceive themselves as dependent on these forces, not as active in them. Moreover, what a human perceives as ethical, he or she cannot find in inexplicable nature events. Because these difficulties appear to be insoluble, he or she tends to avoid them by resignation and abandonment of world- and life-affirmation. When mysticism’s only concern is the project of passive union of human beings with the infinite Being, then these difficulties no longer exist; the spiritual union of the individual being with the Infinite is thought as an absorption (*Aufgehen*) in Him (Schweitzer, 1999: 155).

This line of thought offers no real solution to the problem of spiritual union of a human being with the infinite Being when it replaces the real, living being by an unreal and lifeless one, since in world- and life-negating mysticism a human being only reaches a passive (and unreal) inwardness. In late Antique Gnostic and Neoplatonic mysticism a resignation of mysticism in world- and life-negation is attained. This mysticism concerns a detachment from the human physical nature and from the world of senses, in order to safeguard one’s union with the Source of all that is spiritual, and in order to participate in the return of the human spirit into its divine Source. In general, Christianity intends to reject this pessimistic mysticism in its Gnostic form because this Gnostic mysticism contradicts Christian teaching regarding humanity’s fall from the spiritual into the material world; it also ignores the importance of Jesus’ role in humanity’s return to the spiritual. However, Neoplatonic mysticism allows entrance into a relation, because Neoplatonism is primarily concerned with an *exitus-reditus* movement, the idea of the going out and returning of the true existence into God, the Source of being. A doctrine of the origin of the material world does not connect with this kind of mysticism. Neoplatonic mysticism has entered mainstream Christian thought mainly through Augustine who (influenced by the Neoplatonic thought) succeeded in transforming Neoplatonic thinking into a Christian one. Subsequently the 6th century writings of Dionysius the Areopagite have been responsible for the reception of

Neoplatonic thought in mainstream Western Christianity as we have come to know it (Schweitzer, 1999: 154-159).

Since Plotinus, Christian mystics have concentrated on the soul's inner journey. A mystic's desire to escape the natural world may have hampered the attainment of nature-mystical experiences. Starting from abstract contemplation of the beauty of creation, mystics have attempted to attain mystical stages (e.g., expressed by the classical concept of the 'ladder', also present in Celano's and Bonaventure's particular interpretation of Francis' experience) rather than from immediate observation of nature as in Francis' case. Although early Hebrew Scripture clearly establishes the spiritual value and usefulness of creation, the notion of a transcendent God, Who does not tolerate religious devotion to His creation but solely to Himself, does not provide a conceptual foundation for nature-mysticism (Sorrell, 1988: 84). Schweitzer holds that if God is not to be equated with the primal Source of Being, but to be regarded as Creator of the world—as is the case in Jewish and Christian thought—then for human beings religion does not concern an endeavour to experience union with God, but is concerned only that a human being, as a creature, pays obedient homage and affection owed to the Creator. While a monistic world view has thus inherently a mystical nature, a dualistic one actually opposes mysticism (Schweitzer, 1999:158).

This dualism between the spiritual and the material dimensions cannot be harmonized rationally. I maintain that both Francis and Schweitzer have demonstrated in their lives how this dualism could be resolved: Francis by integration of the negative (praising his Lord for 'our Sister, Bodily Death'), Schweitzer by resignation and by active devotion to other life, where in devotion to other life union with the Infinite may be realized: 'In this union with all life he realizes the active union with the primal Source of Being, to Whom this life belongs' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 193).

For Schopenhauer, while life means suffering, the goal of human life is to renounce one's will-to-live through resignation in order to become detached from the world. For Schweitzer, only a partial negation of the will-to-live is required for self-perfection, but life has to be affirmed by ethical action and resignation. Resignation, as 'the experience of freedom from the destinies of life, as a feeling of spiritual independence' and of 'wonder and awe for the Mystery of life' is needed to gain awareness of our inward relation to Being as ethical Personality and acquire strength for persistent devotion to other life (Schweitzer, 1935b: 244, 199-200). Schweitzer strives for 'abandonment of knowledge concerning the world and establishment of the primacy of the experience of the Will-to-Live inside', that is, the Will-to-Love or Being as ethical Personality (Schweitzer, 2006: 430-432).

Schweitzer argues that the dualism between world view and life view, between 'knowledge' and 'will' cannot be solved rationally (Schweitzer, 1923b: 199-205): the only solution to dualism is not trying to solve it, but experiencing it in ourselves, and then as something that can no longer

harm us. So the problem of world view, posed in ‘unconditional rationalism’ (*voraussetzungslosen Vernunftdenken*) may be formulated as a question concerning the relation of my will-to-live, when it becomes thinking, to itself and to the world (Schweitzer, 1923b: 206-213). Schweitzer holds that from an internal urge, in order to remain faithful and consistent to itself, our will-to-live starts relating to our own being and to all surrounding manifestations of will-to-live, determined by the disposition of ‘reverence for life’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 244-246).

In another passage, however, Schweitzer mentions how ‘to conquer dualism’ by resignation, by leaving behind everything that cannot be grasped and by devoting oneself to other life, in order to solve the *Selbstentzweiung* (the self-division) of life:

Because human thought cannot grasp the Eternal (*das Ewige*), how it is in itself, a human being is equipped to reach dualism and to transcend this dualism, in order to find the Eternal. But the consideration of all mysteries of being is cause for restlessness in the human mind. But ultimately the human mind may leave behind everything, which cannot be grasped, and goes the way of willing to know with certainty of God as the Will-to-Love and of finding peace and (inspiration for) action in Him (Schweitzer, 1930: 368).

In order to determine the relation of thought to experience and feeling and the role of thought in Schweitzer’s mystical experience, it is necessary to discuss Schweitzer’s concept of knowledge. In Schweitzer’s mysticism ‘thinking’ plays a prominent role, although he holds at the same time that scientific knowledge of nature and the world does not lead to knowledge of the meaning of the world. ‘Knowledge tells me that the will-to-live is present everywhere, as in me... Science can only lead me to the mystery of life, which is essentially in me’ (Schweitzer, 1936: 230).

In an unfinished and fragmented chapter written in 1932 Schweitzer elaborates on the concept of God in the world: ‘*All spiritual is depicted in matter, and all matter is only appearance of a Spiritual*’ (*Aller Geist stellt sich in Materie dar, und alle Materie [ist] nur Erscheinungsweise eines Geistigen*, italics by Schweitzer) with a side-note: ‘Unity of the spiritual and material’. ‘All searching and thinking necessarily lead to deeper understanding of all being as a unity of the spiritual and the material ... I cannot conceive Being otherwise than in analogy to my [being], as mysterious unity of spiritual and material’ (Schweitzer, 1999: 413-414).

When rationalism thinks itself out till the end, it arrives at mysticism, as a ‘necessity of thought’ (*denknotwendig*) (Schweitzer, 1923b: XVII). This ‘necessity of thought’ is not to be understood as a logical-deductive argument, but as an ‘inner compulsion’, based on the union with the infinite Will. Not from knowledge of the world, but from the thinking experience of the will-to-live, we may pass beyond knowledge of the world:

The path to real mysticism passes through rational thinking to a profound experience of the world and of our will-to-live. We all have to pass through knowledge, until where it passes into experience of the world. We all have to become religious through thinking (Schweitzer, 1923b: XVII-XVIII, my translation).

Thus, Schweitzer holds that from contact with reality and particular experience of that reality thinking penetrates ever deeper to an understanding of reality/universe, our being and the

meaning of life. Through this ever deeper thinking humans attempt to arrive at the divine Mystery, to the primal Source of all things, which, however, is something that cannot be fully realized. Therefore, Schweitzer holds an agnostic position regarding the metaphysical: thinking, having reached its limit, passes into experience of the divine Mystery, that is, to mysticism as union (in will and action) with God.

All thinking that goes deep ends in ethical mysticism. The rational passes on into the irrational. The ethical mysticism of reverence for life is rationalism thought to the end (Schweitzer, 1935[2]: 174).

As we cannot grasp the Infinite through rational knowledge, we have to pass the limits of science by means of experience. Schweitzer explains how knowledge passes into experience:

All true knowledge turns into an experience. The nature of the manifestations (of the Will-to-Live) I do not know, but I understand it in analogy to the Will-to-Live, which is within me. Thus my knowledge of the world turns into an experience of the world. *The knowledge which is becoming experience does not allow me to remain just a knowing subject to the world, but forces me into an inner relation to the world and fills me with reverence for the mysterious (geheimnisvollen) Will-to-Live, which is in all things.* By making me think and wonder, it leads me ever upward to the heights of reverence for life. There it lets my hand go. It cannot accompany me further. My will-to-live must now find its way in the world by itself (Schweitzer, 1923b: 238, my italics).

The highest knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) is that everything around us is Mystery (*Geheimnis*). No knowing and no hoping can give our life hold and direction. Only through the fact that we let us capture by the ethical, in us revealing God, and (that we) offer our willing in His (willing), does it (our life) receive its determination (*Bestimmtheit*) (Schweitzer, 1922: 712-713, my translation).

Thus for Schweitzer ethical mysticism has a positive relationship with the knowledge of the world's reality (Schweitzer, 1999: 377, note 259). 'It knows that all knowledge gained from experience (*Erfahrungswissen*) leads ever deeper into the great mystery (*Geheimnis*) that all that is, is will-to-live' (Schweitzer, 1935a: 194). True mysticism does not pass over the knowledge and understanding and the objective thinking which is based on it, but goes through it.

The spiritual act is not unrelated to the objective thinking. It is preparing itself in it. But it must be done. Somehow, an experience has to come finally from deepest thinking. Somehow the gathered fire wood has to catch fire (Schweitzer, 1999: 378, my translation).

From this experience of the mystery of life Schweitzer arrives at ethical knowledge, not by studying nature or world processes, but by the revelation of the Will-to-Live in himself. The knowledge from nature and the world is knowledge from outside and is thus incomplete. Only the knowledge from within is immediate and goes back to the mysterious primal Source of Being. On the basis of the experience of the Will-to-Live, Schweitzer arrives at the fundamental ethical principle that good is enhancing life and evil is destruction of life (Schweitzer, 1923b: 239-240), and at the knowledge that, by serving life, one serves the eternal Will-to-Live, the primal Source of Being.

On the specific issue of Schweitzer's perception of knowledge, Kraus *et alii* criticize Schweitzer for claiming to arrive at ethical knowledge derived from non-scientific sources, thus being non-

scientific in nature. Therefore, Kraus speaks of a ‘groundless optimism’ (Kraus, 1944: 40), holding that Schweitzer’s mysticism is not more than an instrument of his own ethical will, with Jesus as an example or a shortcut to a desired end (Kraus, 1944: 50). According to Kraus ‘it is impossible to profess an affirmative attitude towards the ethical Will of the universe, and at the same time to deny the intellectual interpretation of the universe on the basis of truth’ (meaning through its first principles or by inference) (Kraus, 1944: 71). Clark arrives at a similar conclusion, remarking that Schweitzer reasons as if no coherent, rational hypothesis about the whole were possible, while at the same time arguing as if the world view elaborated from his life view were ‘a necessity of thought’. This seeming contradiction centres on the issue whether ‘knowledge’ that occurs from inner experience is of the same status as knowledge that arises from empirical inquiry of external phenomena. Clark maintains that Schweitzer believes so much ‘in the testimony of inner experience’, that is, of ‘the higher revelation of the Will-to-Live, which I find in myself’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 257) ‘that he will not admit that his ethical world view is merely a hypothesis’ (Clark, 1962: 141).

My contention, however, is that Schweitzer’s knowledge—that good is to preserve and promote life, and that evil is to hamper and destroy life—stems from a mystical experience. Apparently, Kraus and Clark do not acknowledge the validity of knowledge derived from mystical experience; both critics preceded by some decades the debates between Katz (1978; 1983) and Forman (1990), concerning, amongst others, the cognitive validity of mystical experiences.

Schweitzer does not use traditional or dogmatic concepts elucidating the Infinite. He arrives at an experience of union with the primal Source of Being by resignation (in regard to knowledge): if there is a meaning in this world (at all), we cannot discern it.

Schweitzer’s mystical claim for (moral) knowledge is of the ‘pure consciousness’ or ‘deconstruction’ type of experience ‘associated with experiencing the world in a way progressively freed from the ordinary constructions of consciousness’ (Forman, 1990: 190). A naturalistic approach, aiming at empirical explanation excludes *a priori* the possibility of this way of knowing (Forman, 1990: 189). This conclusion finds its confirmation in Schweitzer’s emphasis on resignation concerning knowledge and his reference to the ‘*docta ignorantia* of the learned man’:

Only for ethical mysticism this is not, as for the other mysticism, something alongside and above the knowledge drawn from experience, but is what results from that knowledge. Ignorance is the enlightened ignorance of ethical mysticism in so far as it admits how absolutely mysterious and unfathomable the world and life are. It is knowledge in so far as it does know the one thing which we can and must know in the sphere of this mystery: namely that all being is life and that in loving devotion to other life we realize our spiritual union with infinite Being ... and thereby becomes enriched and finds peace (Schweitzer, 1935a: 194-195).

Francis also demonstrates how dualism between the material and spiritual might be resolved. In Francis’ approach, there is no absolute divide between humans with their purported immortal

soul and animals (and nature). There is no devaluation of the material, but profound connection and solidarity with nature and other creatures (e.g., his wish to die naked on the ground [2 C 214.6 [Fontes, 629; Armstrong, 2004: 304]; LMj 14:3.2 [Fontes, 901; Armstrong, 2000:642] in contact with Sister, Mother Earth). Francis perceives other creatures and creation not as foreign, but as something of which he is part. In Francis, there is openness to animals, earth, sky, God and people and even to sickness and death. We may in that sense call Francis' spirituality 'ecological', as it affirms the continuity of human with non-human life and the interconnectedness of all that exists (Boff, 1995: 52-54; McDaniel, 1990: 6). For Francis, creatures and the earth are not matter to be exploited, but 'Brother' and 'Sister', expressing a relationship of nearness and familiarity between human and non-human creation. Through direct contact and empathy with an animal, Francis perceives God's immanence in the animal and moves beyond the perception of the creature towards contact with the divine. As discussed previously, and contrary to Celano's and Bonaventure's interpretations, there is no theological/philosophical reflection at play here, but an immediate feeling of empathy (identification with) and sympathy (feeling with). Through his conversion Francis comes to perceive the face of the suffering Christ in his meeting with the lepers (2 C 9.9-12 [Fontis, 451; Armstrong, 2004: 166-167]); from there develops in him the vision of universal kinship of all creatures as created by the same Creator God. He perceives in the innocent suffering of creatures Christ's suffering in the world. In this encounter, Francis does not 'use' the lepers or animals to reach union with Christ, as this would reduce them (again) to 'instruments' to human ends (Cusato, 2009: 55-56). As discussed in Chapter 4, such intrinsic interrelation and solidarity between humans and animals is in line with various passages in the creation narratives (Gen. 1-2), the liturgical Psalms (especially Psalm 148, Psalm 19, Psalm 66 and Psalm 99) and the *Canticum of the Three Young Men in the Fiery Furnace* (Daniel 3: 51-90).

After a long period of sacrifice and purification, Francis and Schweitzer achieved a level of perception through which they apprehended the Essence and Origin of all that is, and thus the profound link between themselves, other creatures and God. They experience and recognize nature, the universe and other creatures in God, and God in nature, universe and other creatures, as (in Underhill's words) mystics perceive 'the whole world in God and God in the whole world'. Because they approach other creatures in an disinterested, non-instrumental but concerned way, other creatures may reveal their Essence and their own relation with their Creator. In the perception of their kinship with animals and nature, they both meet themselves and the Mystery of life. They perceive all creatures as a theophany or appearance of God, leading to the experience of mystical union. Francis experiences union in animate and inanimate nature, in Sir, Brother Sun and Sister Moon and the Stars, Brother Wind and Sister Water, Brother Fire and our Sister, Mother Earth (*Canticum Fratris Solis* [Fontes, 39-41; Armstrong, 1999: 113-114]); for Schweitzer such an experience of union occurs in resignation and in active, compassionate devotion to other life.

Because of our dominantly technical-scientific approach, animals and nature have become an object of our knowledge and technology, leading to an instrumental use, directed to satisfy human needs. Such instrumental use obscures a spiritual dimension, present in animals and nature as a whole. In Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical experience, such dualism is overcome where they perceive animals and nature as a union of the spiritual and material.

I defined 'animal spirituality' in Chapter 1 as a sense of connection to a Reality greater than the physical world and oneself: a sense of connection experienced in the encounter with animals and explicitly focused on in the contemplation of faith. A new spirituality may result in a different approach toward other creatures. Investigating Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical path and experiences (Chapters 2 and 3), I have noted different levels of appreciation of animals originating from that experience, such as kinship, interdependency, utility, aesthetics, ontology and theophany. These features may lead into a new spirituality by focusing on these levels of appreciation of animals: in the celebration of faith and in contemplating animals as God's creatures, with their own worth and their own relation to God, independent of their relation to humans, for which Chapter 4 has provided a biblical perspective. This spirituality centers on a kinship of life instead of on the distinction between humans and animals. The following notions by Francis and Schweitzer may contribute to a new spirituality.

6.2.1 Contact with the natural world (animals and nature)

Both in Francis' and Schweitzer's life, mystical experiences originate in contact with the natural world, not in escape from it. Through contact with nature and the work of the Holy Spirit, Francis and Schweitzer perceive the Essence, Origin and Source of things surrounding them: the experience of kinship with other creatures and the experience of the Mystery of life, named by Francis 'Most High, all-powerful, good Lord' (*Canticum Fratris Solis I* [Fontes, 39; Armstrong, 1999: 113]), and by Schweitzer 'the creative Will', 'universal Will-to-Live', 'Will-to-Love' or 'primal Source of being'. In the history of mysticism efforts to reach mystical union have occurred most often through world- and life-negation, aiming at immediate immersion in Being through escape from the material world. In Francis' and Schweitzer's case, however, detachment from nature and the factual reality of the world is absent. Experiences to be qualified as 'mystical' do not arise out of an abstract contemplation of creation, but in Francis' case from immediate observation of nature. I maintain that—by analogy with the mysticism of the historical event, as defined by Cousins (1983: 166)—in and from the encounter with nature and animals Francis draws spiritual energy, eventually moving beyond this encounter with nature towards union with God. Animals and creation are thus a mode of God's manifestation and a mode of our union with God. Our union with nature may become a mode of God's communication of Himself to us through His creation and of our union with Him by perceiving His presence in the physical world (Cousins, 1983: 167-168). Schweitzer, starting from the

outside of being or of a phenomenon and subsequently penetrating being or the phenomenon ever more deeply—not through evading reason, but through ‘thinking itself out till the end’—approaches ever closer to the Mystery of life (Schweitzer, 1936: 230). However, Schweitzer himself acknowledges that an attainment of the Mystery of life cannot be achieved by the intellect only (Schweitzer, 1923b: 238), but has to be completed by experience and feeling.

6.2.2 The deepest source of knowledge is not reason, but experience and feeling

Through his basic experience (‘I will-to-live’) Schweitzer understands, by analogy with his own basic experience, the essence of other manifestations of life. This knowledge gained from experience leads him into a deepening relation with other creatures, which ‘fills me with reverence for the mysterious (*geheimnisvollen*) Will-to-Live, which is in all things’ (Schweitzer, 1923b: 238), leading to an ever deeper understanding of the Mystery of life. As discussed above, Francis grasps creatures directly as theophany (through which God’s presence is revealed) and moves beyond the creature towards the experience of union with God. Therefore, I hold that in the approach to reality and in the development of knowledge more emphasis is to be placed on feeling, as through experience and feeling we come closer to the Mystery of life. Through feeling we achieve knowledge of reality by empathy (identification with) and by sympathy (feeling with). Only from such a genuine connection can union with other beings come about, and one may discover his/her uniqueness in the Creator’s eyes. Only when we feel, not only ‘know’ our kinship with other beings, will the suffering of other beings really hurt us, not in a rational way but in our heart. From Francis’ and Schweitzer’s life and work, we may learn that it is not primarily through processes of thought that we may achieve real contact with other creatures and with the primal Source of being, but through immediate experience. Schweitzer holds that knowledge forces me into an inner relation to the world, but in order to penetrate into the Mystery of life, experience has to take over. At this level, more profound than reason, we share with other living beings the Mystery of life. Such contacts are unknown to those who only lead the life of sense (Underhill, 2008: 259). It is not by reason, but under the urge of empathy, sympathy and compassion that the ‘whole personality rises in the acts of contemplation and ecstasy to a level of consciousness at which it becomes aware of a new field of perception’ (Underhill, 93-94), gazes into ‘the deepest foundations of things’ (Underhill, 2008: 256) and perceives an ‘added significance’ in all natural things (Underhill, 2008: 254). Animal spirituality is about perceiving God’s activity in every part of creation, recognizing the divine power hidden in all that exists. Therefore, I propose to focus on character traits and virtues like sympathy and compassion rather than on rational arguments, in order to sensitize people for animal suffering and thus bring about a more ethical approach towards animals. Through God’s grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, reverence, empathy and compassion, as primordial divinely bestowed attributes, may be engendered within us. We have been

immunized through our culture against suffering of non-human creatures; rational arguments about rights will most likely not persuade people who have no sensitivity for animal suffering and no respect for the life of animals. Only when we experience our kinship and interdependency with other beings will such sensitivity and respect and consequently ethical behaviour towards animals be engendered. Schweitzer thus builds his ethical mysticism on empathy, sympathy and compassion, and in this way goes back to a more basic level than that of cognitive capacity and rationality. This may lead to a different understanding of our position and the place of animals in this world, and in this way may offer a possible alternative to the present almost global situation of institutionalized exploitation of animals.

I hold that animal spirituality may use as a starting point the innate empathy humans may feel, and from there may sensitize such feelings and cultivate a disposition aided by the Holy Spirit, ultimately enabling the experience of kinship with all suffering life. From this inner empathy and sympathy arises compassion as active devotion to other life.

6.2.3 Resignation, reverence and worship

The human intellect imposes its own concepts on reality. Interpretation of reality becomes more a matter of control than of submission to a given reality. The human mind no longer perceives the essence of things as a mystery. Instead of imposing a rational model on animals and nature, Francis and Schweitzer suggest and show an attitude of respect and reverence. Schweitzer argues that the dualism between knowledge and will, between the spiritual and the material, cannot be solved rationally. In addition to an analyzing approach which tries to describe the natural processes, resignation is needed, that is, a feeling of wonder and awe for the Mystery of life. Francis and Schweitzer have been able to perceive through their purified view that in the depth of all that is, at a level deeper than reason, ‘the mystery of the creature coincides undivided with the Mystery of God’ (Schillebeeckx, 1989: 95). ‘The actual truth of a thing’s existence, what its mystery truly amounts to’ cannot be articulated in a rational way, but only in wonder at the mystery of existence: ‘An authentic approach to mystery has to be mystical and contemplative’ (Boff, 1995: 146). Composed under the influence of liturgical Psalms (especially 148, 19, 66 and 99), Francis’ *Canticle of Brother Sun* expresses a theophany of creation; all creatures testify of their Creator. Francis came through his conversion experience to perceive the suffering Christ in the leper and gradually extended this view to include all creatures (which constitutes the basis of his spirituality). For him suffering creatures became the privileged places of theophany, of encounter with the Creator of all. From his conversion experience Francis ‘penetrated ever more deeply into the existence of God, until he reached the highest form attainable on earth, the mystical vision of God’ (Doornik van, 1979: 177). In the *Canticle*, Francis praised God, immanent in creation, yet all-transcending. Resignation—this ‘knowing ignorance’ or ‘enlightened ignorance’ about the ultimate nature of the universe—liberates by

putting us in contact with moral and spiritual reality (Schweitzer, 1935a: 194). Where this is experienced as a direct relation, a dogma or doctrine of the mortal souls of animals does not interfere. Therefore, animals are not devalued as ‘things’ but valued instead as unique created living beings and thus they reveal something of their Creator. The ever continuing discussion on the mortal/immortal soul has distorted our view so that we are unable to perceive that ‘every visible and invisible creature is a theophany or appearance of God’ (Underhill, 2008: 259-260). ‘Reverence for life brings us into a spiritual relation with the world which is independent of all knowledge of the universe’ (Schweitzer, 1935b: 200). What is needed is sensitization for the spiritual dimension of reality by responding to other life with respect and reverence, as in him or her exists the eternal Life. We have to enter with the other being into conversation, as Francis does: the other being then will reveal its deepest Mystery. For Schweitzer, reverence for life includes active devotion to other life. In the service to other life, Schweitzer perceives ‘an added significance and reality in the phenomenal world’ (Underhill, 2008: 254). Schweitzer’s ethical mysticism is not a mysticism of contemplation but primarily a mysticism of activity in which Will-to-love and Will-to-live unite; at the same time, he emphasizes that individual contemplation is needed for ethical action to be deep and sustainable. From the living contact with the Source of all life humans may acquire strength to continue in perseverance and patience their devotion to other life: Francis receives, during his periods of contemplation, an ‘excess’ of strength, enabling him to go back to his mission of preaching penance.

Therefore, from Francis and Schweitzer we may learn that we have to let contemplation take its course and ‘cultivate disciplined practices of being engaged by God’ (Jones, 1997: 3-28), celebrating other living beings as fellow creatures of the same God and perceiving their value from the perspective of God. In our worship of the Creator of all that exists, we have to include animals and creation, as in the Psalms. Rituals have importance in human life, especially when we are confronted with things that are beyond our understanding, like the ‘human greed and thoughtlessness that have brought the world entrusted to our race into a crisis which may be terminal’ (Murray, 1992: 172). We need such rituals in order to respond to a current and persisting environmental crisis, to affirm the sacredness of life and to commit ourselves to a new attitude. In our celebration of the Eucharist as the Christian Covenant, we may commemorate Jesus ‘as the cosmic Lord, who is hymned in the letter to the Colossians (1:15-20)’ (Murray, 1992: 172). Thus, resignation may bring us closer to reverence for life and to the harmony with other creatures and with God that we are yearning for.

6.2.4 Kinship between creatures

Schweitzer holds that humans are special. For example, in a sermon he writes:

The world, subjected to unknowing egoism, is like a valley lying in darkness; only above in the heights is light. We all have to live in darkness; only one may

see upwards the light: the highest, the human being. Man may attain to knowledge of reverence for life; he may come to the knowledge of empathy (*Mitleben*) and compassion (*Mitleiden*), and he may come out of the ignorance, in which all other creatures languish (Schweitzer, 2001: 1243, my translation).

However, this exclusive position does not lead to domination: the ethic of Reverence for Life makes no moral distinction between higher and lower life since Schweitzer holds that such a distinction would mean judging species in relation to ourselves, as a subjective, anthropocentric standard. Rather our exclusive position forces us to devotion to other life.

Francis accepts that humans may have dominion over animals, yet he interprets this in a Christ-like way, that is, dominion as service (Linzey and Barsam, 2005: 24-25), in mutual respect and love (LMn 3: 6.1-5 [Fontes, 983-984; Armstrong, 2000: 696-697]). This attitude may find a biblical basis: from a non-anthropocentric reading of Genesis 1 it follows that humans, created as God's image and as representing God in creation, are to rule over animals in a way that expresses the image of a loving and just God (section 4.2.1). And Christ, the perfect image of God, provides us with a concrete moral example of compassion. Francis and Schweitzer have finally reached, aided by the Holy Spirit, a level of perception at which they see 'with purged sight all things and creatures as they are in that transcendent order'; they detect in them too 'that striving of Creation to return to its centre which is the secret of the Universe' (Underhill, 2008: 258).

Because we cannot know (rationally) the contribution of individuals or species to the universe, we cannot argue that animals are inferior to humans, as this would imply that we know which role each has to play from the perspective of the universe or that we know the worth of other life from the Creator's perspective. I have also elaborated Francis' spiritual view of creation, perceiving all creatures as 'brother' and 'sister'. A view of the kinship of life has a biblical basis: animals and humans are created by God, from the dust of the ground, both infused by God's breath of life and included in the cosmic covenant (see sections 4.2.2 and 4.3). That fraternity places Francis on the same level as the creatures (Boff, 2007: 33). Celano narrates: 'Finally, he used to call all creatures by the name of 'brother' and 'sister' and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the heart of creatures' (1C 81.5 [Fontes, 357; Armstrong, 2004: 91]). Francis discerns animals' own unique relation with their Creator, outside the relation of animals with human beings. The Bible contains a number of texts that give testimony of the interaction between God and animals and of creatures praising God (see section 4.5.3). I hold that the relation between animal and Creator constitutes the animal's inalienable particularity and individuality, giving an animal worth on its own merits and thus prohibiting human beings from using an animal for their own ends. In terms of animal

spirituality, therefore, rather than emphasizing the difference and superiority of a human being, we have to emphasize the continuity of the human consciousness with that of animals. In this spirituality animals are to be appreciated in their inherent worth and autonomy, independent of human needs.

6.2.5 Sacrifice and devotion to other life

At the moment of mystical awakening, the self aspires to the Infinite and must be cleansed of all that stands between the self and goodness. The self has to put on the character of Reality instead of the character of illusion or 'sin' (Underhill, 2008: 199). Francis' identification with the poor is depicted by Celano as an attempt to step into Jesus' footprints (in 'being like', not in 'acting like' (Doornik van, 1979: 89). Francis considers material possessions as an obstacle to spiritual development. It is only after a long process of purification, 'of the denial of the desire for the possession and domination of things' (Boff, 2007: 34) and aided by the Holy Spirit, that Francis and Schweitzer are able to perceive the spiritual dimension of reality and finally attain an experience of mystical union.

From these mystics we may learn that detachment is needed to prepare the human spirit for the union with God to which it aspires. 'Poverty ... trans-valorates all values, and shows him things as they are' (Underhill, 2008: 207-208). For Schweitzer, ethics is higher than asceticism, while asceticism for Francis is no goal in itself but a means to self-perfection.

This indicates that sacrifice is needed. 'Sin' for Francis is everything that ruptures a universal fraternity between all creatures (Cusato, 2009: 245); sin represents 'all those attitudes, behaviors and actions' that frustrate God's plan and purpose for creation as set out in the creation account. In his *Testament* Francis tells us that before coming to this realization, he had been 'in sin' (*in peccatis*) and 'unable to realize and act upon God's vision' for the creation. But after the encounter with the lepers, he describes himself as 'beginning to do penance' (*Testamentum* 1 [Fontes, 227; Armstrong, 124]), that is, 'to consciously distance oneself from and reject all those attitudes, values, behaviors and actions that further fragment' the fraternity of creatures (Cusato, 2009: 56; 108-109). We need a 'penitential recognition of human hubris and greed that results in animal abuse' (Linzey, 2009a: 86).

Francis and Schweitzer manage to resolve the dualism between the spiritual and the material dimensions of reality. They manage to overcome the disunion and fragmentation of the bond between creatures and are able to experience union and wholeness of existence, not through an escape from the material world or through the intellect, but through direct contact with animals and nature, through respect and awe for the mystery of life, through a contemplative attitude, through a feeling of empathy, sympathy and a compassionate, sacrificial devotion to other life in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, the perfect image of God.

I hold that sympathy for animals has been suppressed since Greek Antiquity by a perception of animals as irrational and inferior. The result has been a cultural insensitivity to the suffering of non-human creatures. In animal spirituality it is essential to focus on and develop the capacity to feel empathy and sympathy with all living beings, leading to empathic ‘knowledge’ and ‘understanding’ of living beings. Only in such ‘disinterested’ relations do other living beings reveal their own Essence, their individuality and uniqueness, including their own relation with their Creator. In this way, an ‘uninterested’ (non-anthropocentric), non-instrumental and respectful, moral reaction to the need of any living being will be possible.

As feelings such as empathy and sympathy are ‘naturally’ present, they only have to be sensitized and developed and engendered by the Holy Spirit. To advance animal spirituality, appealing to such feelings may happen by stressing the similarities (as ‘will-to-live’ like ourselves), the interrelationship, the kinship, and the theophany (through which God’s presence is manifested by the creature) between animals and humans, as revealed by Francis and Schweitzer. In a concrete sense, such sensitization may be a task for religious educators in relation to public awareness campaigns, where specific religions are challenged to teach respect, reverence and compassion for all life.

Confrontation with animal suffering by exposing the cruelty of animal exploitation (instead of concealing it) might awake this natural sympathy and compassion and might thus create a ‘natural’ aversion in humans against inflicting pain and consuming beings that are so similar to humans. Moral philosophers and theologians can bring to the surface ideologies and institutions that create, perpetuate and obscure animal suffering and animal exploitation (e.g., animals as existing for our ends, the use of animals as divinely sanctioned, animals’ inferiority, or denying the harm caused to animals). Once we are made aware of animal suffering and perceive the similarity between animals and humans, exploitation and instrumental use of animals is more and more difficult to defend. Where animal abuse is mostly concealed (in factory farms, slaughter houses and laboratories) there is a need to reveal this suffering.

6.3 Contribution to contemporary animal discourse

In chapter 1.1.4 I discussed influential thinkers who made substantial contributions to the contemporary animal protection debate by providing systematic theories (utilitarianism, rights theory, abolitionism, environmental protectionism, Christian animal protectionism). I concluded that Singer and Regan ultimately maintain an anthropocentric view of the moral status of animals, as far as both appeal to cognitive capacities in order to possess inherent moral worth. Francione’s view regarding rights argues mainly against welfare approaches. Taylor’s theory allows current exploitative behaviour towards animals to continue in industrial environments. Linzey’s theory, situating the rights of animals in God, may carry a risk that believers assume that they have only indirect duties towards animals. Because of these observed shortcomings

and limitations, I suggest to complement these contemporary approaches with elements of Francis' and Schweitzer's thought.

Francis' and Schweitzer's contribution to the contemporary animal debate can now be outlined as follows: 1) a reappraisal of the value of life; 2) a non-anthropocentric approach to animal existence, 3) a supplementation to a merely rational approach; and 4) a rethinking of the animal protection versus environmental protection debate.

6.3.1 Reappraisal of the value of life

For utilitarians like Singer, sentience, that is, the capacity to feel pain and pleasure, forms the relevant criterion for consideration of moral worth. Utilitarians hold that although humans and animals both have an interest in how they are treated, that is, in not having to suffer, animals have no interest in continued existence, only in not suffering; only humans have a conscious preference for life. If animals may be killed painlessly, the creature replaced and other creatures not affected, then killing of animals is acceptable. Singer also accepts the loss of life as a means to the end of increasing what is regarded as intrinsically valuable: individuals (humans or animals) may be sacrificed for a greater good (Singer, 1990: 19-20; 2000: 85-91). Thus in Singer's theory individuals are replaceable and from this perspective his theory fails to value life in itself. In contrast, Francis and Schweitzer recognize the value of life: Francis buys animals destined for slaughter and sets them free; his hagiographers narrate that he does not eat animals offered alive to him, but releases them. For Francis animate and inanimate creatures are a sacred place where the Creator may be encountered. Schweitzer stresses the worth and sacredness of life, a sacredness not rooted in a doctrine, but in the experience of the sacredness of life in the act of devotion to other life.

On the point of killing of animals, Singer is criticized by Francione: 'To say that a sentient being—any sentient being—is not harmed by death is decidedly odd ... *Sentience is a means to the end of continued existence*' (Francione, 2010: 1; his italics). Also Regan maintains that animals have an interest *both* in continued existence *and* in not having to suffer. Only when these two interests are strongly conflicting, as in the case of severe suffering and without hope for recovery, we may decide to kill an animal in order to end suffering. Schweitzer holds the same view on euthanasia for animals (while he holds that the life of human beings may not be shortened by even one hour) (Schweitzer, 2001: 1256).

6.3.2 Non-anthropocentric approach to animal existence

Contrary to Immanuel Kant's Enlightenment perspective, Regan extends the category of holders of inherent worth to non-rational beings by stating that mammals over the age of one year have inherent moral value equal to that of humans and qualify for respectful treatment as implied in

the notion of rights. Respect for animals is, therefore, a direct moral duty, contrary to Kant's indirect duty. Over the past decades, research on the sentience and consciousness of (higher) mammals has advanced to a stage where it is difficult to doubt that they are self-aware (Griffin, 1984: 249) and that 'animals have a life of their own that fares better or worse for them, logically independently of their utility' for others (Regan, 2004(3): 178-179).

Francis and Schweitzer have shown that the worth of animals cannot be reduced to their utility for the human species. This view finds biblical support: before the creation of human beings, God declared his work 'good'; animals have their own relationship with their Creator, independent of their relationship with humans (see section 4.2.1). For that reason, Schweitzer refuses to attribute a hierarchy to living beings as this would imply judging whether they are closer or nearer to humans. This is what both Singer's and Regan's thought actually implies: Singer's theory grants moral preference to the lives of individuals with higher cognitive capacities (such as self-awareness), assuming that those may experience greater happiness; thus his line of thought is biased in favour of beings with humanlike qualities. For Regan 'subject-of-a-life' is the morally relevant similarity that grants an individual equal inherent value and moral standing. Regan's criteria for the 'subject-of-a-life' category (see the definition in 6.3.2) are unsatisfactory because they privilege beings with more complex awareness (while 'non-subjects-of-a-life' in certain circumstances might need more care) and only animals above one year of age qualify as 'subject-of-a-life', that is, when most animals are already slaughtered. Regan also holds that humans have more opportunities for future satisfaction than animals. With their appeal to cognitive capacities, both Singer and Regan remain anthropocentric in their thought, where only animals with particular humanlike features qualify for equal moral consideration.

Schweitzer's 'will-to-live' on the contrary offers a relevant and sufficient criterion for equal moral consideration, while Francis respects all creatures as his brothers and sisters, expressing kinship and nearness, and placing himself 'on the same level as the creatures' (Boff, 2007: 33). Although Schweitzer does not use the ethical term 'moral consistency', he does mention 'my attitude toward other life to be of a piece with my attitude towards my own life' because all life is like our own life, in a morally relevant way, that is, as will-to-live (with tendencies to survive and develop) (Schweitzer, 1936: 230). He also mentions the experience of an inner 'compulsion to show to all will-to-live the same reverence as I do to my own' (Schweitzer, 1935b: 138). And just as valuing my life means finding it good to preserve and develop my life, reverence for all life means valuing acts of sharing, saving, helping and enabling other life to achieve its highest development (Schweitzer, 1935b: 137-138).

Where animal welfare utilitarian approaches hold that animals have no interest in a prolonged life, animals remain subordinate to human interests. Since such approaches maintain the status quo in human-animal relations, they play no role in the abolition of the use of animals for

human ends. Taylor's moral theory is supportive of an attitude of respect for nature and builds on virtues like compassion and care, but limits protection to wild creatures and excludes domestic animals. Thus, his protectionist theory does not challenge the status quo of institutionalized animal exploitation for food, fur and experimentation. Taylor's theory also suffers from philosophical inconsistency and partiality, where he attributes rights only to human beings but denies basic rights to animals in the absence of a morally relevant distinction between human beings and other animals. Though Taylor holds that all entities with inherent worth are equally deserving of moral consideration (Taylor, 1986: 78), he favours human beings at the expense of other species, 'as the type of creatures that humans are' (see section 6.3.4). Moreover, his exclusion of domestic animals is inconsistent with his theory of the equal inherent worth of all teleological beings.

Francione's theory is based mainly on Regan's rights theory and also uses primarily rational arguments. When considering the use of sentient animals—a violation of their right not to be property—he argues against animal welfarist regulations. He holds that through such regulations people feel less guilt about animal exploitation, and thus welfare approaches contribute to the continuation of animal abuse.

In Linzey's approach, such anthropocentrism is absent. He bases the rights of animals in the rights of the Creator, to have His creation treated with respect; animals hold intrinsic value because they are valued by God. Though this believing approach to rights is not affected by human-centred criteria, I suggest that founding the rights of animals in God may hold the risk that animals are not valued because of the inherent value of animals themselves—that is, by virtue of what they are—but because of God. Thus religious persons may assume that they have only indirect duties towards animals (for the sake of God).

6.3.3 A supplement to a dominantly rational approach

Modern protectionist theories in general have in common the use of rational arguments to discourage people to use animals for their benefit. With the exception of Linzey, the mentioned authors primarily attempt to build a reasoned case for animal rights. For example, Regan argues against accusations of irrationality and sentimentality directed to those who endeavour to improve the lives of animals (Regan, 2004: lii): 'To explore patiently these and related matters (i.e., ethical theories) is the only way a *reasoned* case can be made for animal rights' (Regan, 2004: lii, my italics). This is because (in Singer's words), 'The portrayal of those who protest against cruelty to animals as sentimental, emotional 'animal-lovers' has had the effect of excluding the entire issue of our treatment of non-humans from serious political and moral discussion' (Singer, 1990: iii).

While acknowledging and appreciating these above-mentioned contributions of philosophical arguments for an ethical treatment of animals and concern for political impact, I hold that a

rights approach leaves space for a complementary perspective, because of the general insensitivity to the rational argument of consistency by justice-oriented ethical theories: animal farming and vivisection, for example, are generally considered acceptable practices for animals but not for humans. As animals are only partial identical with humans, I maintain that a rights orientation alone falls short of expressing sufficiently a moral obligation towards animals. To bring about a desired moral solicitude and better treatment of animals, efforts may be directed to sensitize within people a feeling of kinship with all living beings. Additional perspectives and direction are needed to complement rights theories: it may reasonably be argued that ethical engagement and theoretical arguments for the better treatment of animals are based on an *a priori* feeling of sympathy for and compassion with animals and that this dimension of sympathy and compassion might have greater appeal to people than solely theoretical arguments. It is the level of emotions, which we humans share with non-human beings more than the rational level, that makes animals qualify for equal moral consideration. I hold that further progress can be made in the ethical treatment of animals by appealing to feelings like empathy, sympathy and compassion, which stand at the basis of Francis' and Schweitzer's attitudes of concern towards animals and nature.

Schweitzer embraces empathy, sympathy and compassion as the source for ethical action, holding that the beginning of thought is human experience of life as something 'unfathomably mysterious' (*unergründlich Geheimnisvolles*). Where a human being experiences existence and 'will-to-live' not just as something given but as something 'unfathomably mysterious' (*unergründlich Geheimnisvolles*) his instinctive thought becomes conscious thought, and he begins to devote himself to his life with reverence. For Schweitzer, a human, having become a thinking being, feels the urge to treat other wills-to-live with reverence for life equal to his own, because he experiences the other life in his own (Schweitzer, 1935(2): 138). From there, he/she knows that this other life longs for fullness and development as deeply as he/she does. For that reason, evil is what annihilates or hampers life, and goodness is what enables life to develop. Schweitzer calls this the supreme essential principle of morality and a 'necessity of thought' (Schweitzer, 1935[2]: 137-138) since it is given inherently in the will-to-live (Schweitzer, 1936: 230-231). Thus natural empathy and sympathy are based on reverence for life and expand with thought (reason) (Schweitzer, 1936: 237-238; Schweitzer, 1999: 287). While Kant, Regan and Singer apparently hold empathy and sympathy as non-rational, for Schweitzer empathy and sympathy originate in thinking (about himself and the world) because he experiences the other life in his own, and as soon as a human affirms his will-to-live, his 'instinctive thought' becomes 'conscious thought'.

Thus for Schweitzer empathy and sympathy include a rational element, that is, an act of self-consciousness (as will-to-live) and of comparing this self-consciousness (as will-to-live) to other wills-to-live.

Furthermore, because a being, as a union of the spiritual and the material, cannot be fully understood in merely rational terms, I hold that rationalism and a dominant analytical modern science model as developed since Descartes is to be supplemented by ‘knowledge’ gained from empathy, sympathy and compassion. Schweitzer holds that reason leads ever deeper to the Mystery of life. But it falls short; feeling or experience has to take over; the knowledge which is becoming experience leads me into an inner relation to the world and fills me with reverence for the mysterious Will-to-Live, which is in every living being (Schweitzer, 1923b: 238). Feeling is a more inclusive form of ‘knowledge’ than rational comprehension: feeling achieves knowledge of reality and other beings by empathy (identification with) and sympathy (feeling with) with reality and other beings. Only such relatedness can bring about a real union with other beings.

Francis’ and Schweitzer’s ethical relations to animals are based on kinship, interrelatedness, theophany, *et cetera*, without asking the question which (rational) capacities of animals are equal with or differ from those of human beings. Francis’ and Schweitzer’s responses to animals commence with empathy and sympathy. Unlike rights theorists, in Francis’ and Schweitzer’s thought no guidelines or rules are offered, and their approach and decision-making relate to the specific context of a unique experience with a concrete animal, showing engagement with the animal in its own right. The encounter with a suffering animal evokes an immediate response, not mediated by a rational argument of consistency: Francis’ reaction to seeing an animal bound was, ‘Why are you torturing my brother lambs, binding and hanging them this way?’ (1C 79.3 [Fontes, 355; Armstrong, 2004: 89]); this expresses a direct appeal to feeling, where immediate revulsion is experienced because of mistreatment of an animal. Devotion to save an animal arises from empathy and sympathy for a suffering animal, without being explicitly based on a rational argument of inconsistency with the treatment of humans. I would argue that appealing to feelings for animals and their suffering may have a stronger impact than solely rational arguments.

From this position, animal ethics does not focus on the application of principles and rules to guide moral conduct toward animals, but on character traits and virtues like sympathy and compassion, engendered by the Holy Spirit, that are required for an ethical approach toward animals. One may object that Francis’ and Schweitzer’s virtue ethic has a limited practicability, as virtue ethics is always context-specific and does not provide in detail how to act in situations of moral dilemma. However, also in the case of Singer’s utilitarian approach and Regan’s deontological approach the issue of weighing and quantifying suffering or happiness in answering a moral dilemma is problematic.

Since Greek antiquity Western dualistic thinking in terms of the metaphysical and physical, of the spiritual and material, of reason and feeling, has resulted in exploitation of nature including animals, in areas of human acting and behaviour where the spiritual has been considered superior to the material and reason superior to feeling. A predominantly rational approach to

reality with scientific methods of analysis and description of natural processes in natural laws, in order to systematize and generalize, ignores elements or aspects of reality that do not fit into an analytical model, and so are classified as subjective and thus disregarded as non-scientific. Because a rational model, as used in the rights and utilitarian approaches, fails to catch other than (rational) verifiable dimensions, I hold that Francis' and Schweitzer's approach, guided by feelings like empathy, sympathy and compassion, is more suitable for expressing the full depth of the other being and of human-animal relations.

From Francis's and Schweitzer's life and work we learn that not primarily through processes of thought but through an immediate experience we may achieve real contact with other creatures and the primal Source of being. At a level more profound than rational explanation, we share with other living beings the mystery of life. The 'Mystery' or the 'heightened significance' in other manifestations of life cannot be known by 'knowledge', based on naturalistic or interpretative categories, but solely by knowing by 'communion' (Underhill, 2008: 36). Francis and Schweitzer have been able to experience in other life a 'Reality that transcends the physical world and oneself' (as I have defined animal spirituality) and they may have sensed an animal's own relation with the Creator God. Through a respectful attitude such as Francis' and Schweitzer's towards an animal, the animal may reveal his or her inherent worth and true essence, including his or her relation with the Creator. Thus, there need be no attempt to fit beings into instrumental categories; other beings are there 'for themselves and their Creator'. In this relation, the animal will also reveal (as will-to-live) that it wants to live like ourselves and not to be killed for food, fur, 'sports' or experiments. We may discover that animals teach us spiritual lessons of openness, sensitivity, beauty (Fox, 1999: 166-168), and of 'mercy and meekness, by their own forbearance and longsuffering' (Primatt, 1776: 58; Rowlands, 2009b: 216-223).

Therefore, I hold that deductive reason has limitations where the analytical, scientific model separates reality from the deeper meaning of reality, concealing the spiritual and theophanic dimension of this reality. Deductive reason fails to capture the particularities of reality and the spiritual dimension, that is, the transcending experience one may encounter, through God's grace, in the relation with animals, present in reality.

In summary, at the origin of both nature-mysticism and ethical mysticism stand empathy, sympathy and compassion, through which both mystics, Francis and Schweitzer, arrive at a direct relation with creatures and finally attain mystical relatedness to the divine Mystery of life. The spiritual dimension is both transcendent and immanent in all life, and perceivable for those that approach life with an attitude of reverence and respect. The value of life is revealed to Schweitzer through the immediate experience of the individual will-to-live with other wills-to-live and through life with Life itself. Both Francis and Schweitzer approach other life relationally and respectfully, instead of imposing a rational analysis. The perception of the

particularities and the spiritual dimension that cannot be caught in a rational model offers simultaneously the discernment of the value and sacredness of life, based on their experience of Life itself.

This argumentation does not imply that we do not need rights. I do not propose to do away with utilitarian and rights theories, where those theories have elaborated significant philosophical arguments for the moral status of animals and where the appeal to rights allows enforcement of this status in protective laws and thus provides a political basis for relevant ethical treatment. But I do argue that these moral theories may use as an alternative point of departure, an orientation based on feelings like empathy, sympathy and compassion. An explicit Christian approach, as in Francis' and Schweitzer's case, allows experiencing the real Essence of other beings, resulting in respect and awe for the Mystery of life and a non-instrumental approach. Schweitzer elaborates on the importance of feeling for moral decision-making. He also demonstrates that experience and feeling are a valid source of knowledge. So feeling may be incorporated in the development of ethical theory on human-animal relations. Such an orientation may well carry validity also in a secular environment: 'It is worth saying that there are people (among whom I number myself) who believe that our ethical impulses are pre-rational ... and that all that a rational ethics can achieve is to articulate and give form to ethical impulses' (Coetzee, 2009b: 121).

6.3.4 Re-thinking the animal protection versus environmental protection debate

Considering the tension between an animal protection viewpoint and an environmental protection viewpoint in the contemporary ecological debate, the question arises how Schweitzer's and Francis' views may contribute to this debate. This tension between the individual animal protection view and the environmental protection view centres on the issue whether the individual being or 'the whole' should be granted moral preference. Individual animal protection theories (e.g., Regan's and Singer's approaches) attempt to establish criteria to attribute moral status or inherent worth to each individual animal. In a holistic view, which locates inherent worth in ecosystems or nature as a whole, worth is not based on the possession of certain features of the individual, but on the basis of the contribution of the individual to the good of the whole. In this view endangered species (for example) enjoy preferential consideration while domestic animals are given a low priority. The individual (animal) is thus treated as the means to an end. The individual animal protection view (like Regan's and Singer's views) attempts to establish criteria of individual parts of the whole, like sentience, self-consciousness, and interests, to judge an animal's place in the hierarchy. Individuals are granted the right to moral consideration on the basis of these features. By focusing on sentience, for example, all non-sentient life and parts of nature such as plants, rivers and mountains are excluded from moral consideration.

Taylor's environmental ethic has attempted to bridge this divide by assigning inherent worth to natural teleological entities, including animals and plants. In his theory, any wild creature is protected 'as member of a biotic community of a natural ecosystem' (Taylor, 1986: 78-79). Unfortunately, his theory only protects the 'natural world' (where humans have not interfered) and excludes domestic animals, and hence does not contribute to the abolition of industrial animal exploitation.

Proponents of an environmental protection view and an individual animal protection view do not overcome a dualistic world view, as far as solely reason and rational criteria are used to value nature and its individual parts, while not considering the spiritual dimension: attribution of moral value to the whole and to individual parts is not feasible. Such an analytical approach is lacking in Francis and Schweitzer: instead of a dualistic view there is an emphasis on kinship and interrelatedness between beings and on the union of all that exists. From the experience of interdependence grows the feeling of union and unity with all that exists. In both mystics we notice a respect and reverence for each creature and for nature as a whole, while affected by its beauty and the mystery of life. Compassion for every living thing, including plants and trees, here includes empathic and sympathetic reaction to all sorts of suffering, not only pain.

Extending compassion to all life, including non-sentient beings and plants, carries the risk that this will 'weaken the moral significance of pain' (Martin, 2007: 60). However, from Francis' and Schweitzer's work and life we learn that both value non-sentient beings, but not in the same way as they do sentient beings; they are well conscious of the special moral claims sentient animals place on us, as is demonstrated (for example) by their special attention to suffering animals, and by their responses evoked by animal suffering. Such reactions are not present towards 'misfortune' of other parts of nature. Because their attitude of respect and reverence towards animals extends to nature and the environment, this specific approach by Francis and Schweitzer may, in the contemporary debate, bridge the existing theoretical gap between an animal protectionist view and an ecological view. For Francis and Schweitzer, all life is sacred (not creatures or nature, but life is sacred), because it originates from the same Source.

In their approach, the tension between an environmental protection view and an individual animal protection view is not present, since all that exists shares in the same primal Source of being. I have noted that Schweitzer refuses a Darwinian standard that attributes a hierarchical value to beings, as this would suppose valuing them whether they are closer or nearer to human beings, which is a subjective standard and because we cannot know their contribution to the whole. Schweitzer also refuses to draw a line between the living and the non-living (as he holds that in all phenomena there is will-to-live); life as such is sacred (Schweitzer, 1935b: 202). For Francis nature, animate as well as inanimate, is a mode of God's manifestation. Both Francis' and Schweitzer's spiritual views allow the attribution of value to the individual without excluding the whole, as well as the attribution of value to the whole without excluding the

individual. Though Francis and Schweitzer clearly show that sentient beings make special moral claims on us, the scope of their inclusion for moral consideration is broader.

Francis and Schweitzer do not contemplate consequences of our actions (in contrast to the utilitarian approach) nor consider rights and duties (as in the deontological approach), but argue in terms of virtues and vices, and thus are primarily concerned with reverence, respect, compassion, mercy, care, kindness, patience, perseverance, responsibility, generosity, humility, simplicity, and their opposites domination, disrespect, cruelty, selfishness, greed, callousness and irresponsibility.

Moreover, in Taylor's theory of environmental ethics, virtues are central, because the attitude of respect for nature is based in human character. The general virtue of moral concern for wild animals and nature consists of specific virtues of sympathy and care. Though these virtues offer direction for the protection of the 'natural' world in his theory, they may nevertheless provide guidance for a protective moral theory that includes domestic animals.

I have argued that a moral philosophy in animal ethics is better off without the concept of moral status as used by utilitarian and deontological approaches, because this underestimates the variety of features relevant for moral decision-making. Adherence by animal ethics to the concept of moral status may have contributed to the tension between environmental ethics and animal ethics; for this reason, the use of the concept of 'intrinsic value', which is context dependent, has been proposed; this is an approach closely related to virtue ethics (Hursthouse, 2011: 120-124). For Francis and Schweitzer, all creatures are morally worth something in themselves and therefore they include all creatures, animate and inanimate, in their circle of moral concern. This approach recognises that characteristics outside 'sentientness' may in certain circumstances have to be included in moral consideration. To approach animals, inanimate creatures and the environment with respect, reverence, humility and other virtues may be appropriate to solve the tension between environmental ethics and animal ethics (Hursthouse, 2011: 140-141). As 'animal plausible virtue ethics will preclude most of the ways we currently treat non-human animals', the virtue of mercy is central in virtue ethical defence of animals (Rowlands, 2009a: 113-117).

Francis' and Schweitzer's approach is context specific and they illustrate that no one feature or one set of principles can be sufficient as a guide in moral decision-making. This resembles the 'virtue ethics' that has recently regained attention (Rowlands, 2009a: 98; Wennberg, 2003: 168), though I have drawn attention in section 5.1 to deviations from traditional virtue ethics and modern virtue ethics.

The inclusion of Francis' and Schweitzer's thought may contribute to bridging the theoretical divide between environmental and animal ethics, because for Schweitzer it is not only sentient beings who matter morally, but all wills-to-live, including plants, and even 'all phenomena', as

he holds that there is will-to-live behind all phenomena. Francis includes even water, fire, the elements and creation as a whole.

This, however, does not imply that Francis and Schweitzer value sentient beings and non-sentient beings in the same way. Both feel compassion with other sentient beings, because this other life is like their own in a morally relevant way, that is, as will-to-live (Schweitzer), and because animals reflect something of their Creator (Francis and Schweitzer). Yet, because of their particular sensitivity to suffering, both also take into consideration misfortune (not only physical suffering) of other life, such as plants and trees, and thus may provide direction to bridge the gap between the animal protectionist and the ecological position in the contemporary debate.

In modern virtue ethics, built on Aristotle's moral psychology, human desires and emotions are informed and shaped by reason. The emotion of compassion, informed by reason, may develop into the character trait of compassion (Hursthouse, 2011: 128). Francis and Schweitzer hold that we have to develop compassion, and express this compassion in dedication to other life, because in this compassion we pursue self-perfection and become more ethical persons.

6.4 Summary

A Western dualistic world view separates reason from feeling, has detached the spiritual from the material and has thus estranged humans from nature, including animals. Such a dualistic view of humans and animals does not correspond with biblical thought (see Chapter 4). I maintain that reason falls short of discerning the spiritual dimension of reality. Where all beings are a unity of spiritual and material, only an approach considering the emotional and spiritual dimension may reveal the true essence and depth of the other creature.

In Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical experience, animals and nature are perceived as a union of the spiritual and material. Animal spirituality is about perceiving God's activity in all that exists, especially in animals. Advances in animal spirituality may be promoted by focussing (in the contemplation of faith) on those dimensions of animals that are revealed in Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical experiences, that is, kinship, interrelationship, theophany, ontology, magnificence and utility.

Francis and Schweitzer exemplify in their own unique way that we may arrive at the experience of the true essence of an animal and the union of life, not through a predominantly rational approach, but through direct contact with animals and nature, through respect and awe for the mystery of life, through a contemplative attitude, through feelings of empathy and sympathy, and a compassionate, sacrificial devotion to other life.

I maintain that an approach that appeals to empathy, sympathy and compassion may be a convincing alternative point of departure for and supplementation to the abstract rights and rules

of the utilitarian and rights based orientations, because we feel compassion for animals and their suffering, independently of whether they are considered to be equal to us or whether they have rights or not. The emotion of compassion, informed by reason, may ultimately develop into a character trait of compassion and may lead, aided by the Holy Spirit, not only to virtuous actions, but to virtuous persons.

Francis' and Schweitzer's contributions to contemporary animal discourse can be formulated in the areas of a re-appraisal of the value of life, a non-anthropocentric approach to animal existence, a revision of a predominantly rational approach, and a re-thinking of the animal protection versus environmental protection divide.

The significant contribution of Francis and Schweitzer to both animal spirituality and the animal discourse is the recognition of the necessity of experience and feeling (compassion): by combining reason and feeling, the scope of moral concern is expanded to include all life.

Instead of a discussion of the characteristics that separate humans and animals, as in the line of reasoning of Aristotle, the Stoics, Augustine and Aquinas, or of the characteristics that unite humans and animals, as in the modern debate with reference to rights and reason, a plea for and sensitization towards empathy, sympathy and compassion might be more appealing to people in order to adopt a vegan lifestyle. This direction might thus contribute to more just relations with other creatures, human and non-human, and with God.

An approach that highlights sympathy will require a rights approach for legal enforcement and political effectiveness. An orientation towards empathy, sympathy and compassion as well as the rights perspective are both needed in order to engage more people and to have greater political and legal impact. At the same time, a sympathy approach goes beyond how we should treat any living being according to his or her right.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The problem identified at the beginning of this thesis was the virtual total exclusion of animals in Christian ethics. From Antiquity until today reflections on human-animal relations have taken place with conflicting philosophical and theological views on animals. Where the notion of kinship and the belief in immortal souls of animals have been present, a positive attitude towards animals has been observed; based on this kinship justice has been owed to animals and has been expressed in denunciation of mistreatment and killing of animals. Thus sacrifice of animals and meat-eating has been considered as a decline from an earlier peaceful state. Contrasting with this belief of kinship between animals and humans we find the view that emphasizes the differences between animals and humans. Aristotle postulated the idea of the hierarchy of souls, where only humans are considered to possess rational souls and where the lower exists to serve the higher. His view of rationality as a prerequisite for receiving justice has been elaborated in Stoic thought. Augustine adopted Aristotle's view of the hierarchy of the souls and the Stoic view of the irrationality of animals and concluded that animals have no fellowship with humans and are, therefore, excluded from considerations of justice. While in Augustine's thought the criterion for valuing humans and animals consists in the difference between rationality and irrationality, in Aquinas' thought this becomes the criterion for discerning between immortal and mortal souls, thereby legitimizing human dominion over creation as an almost absolute right. These differences between humans and animals have been used in philosophical and theological discourse to legitimize differential treatment. Descartes located even sentience and consciousness in the rational soul, thus claiming that animals are not sentient and not self-conscious.

The contemporary animal discourse provides philosophical arguments for the moral status of animals. I have concluded that Singer and Regan ultimately maintain an anthropocentric view of the moral status of animals, as far as both appeal to cognitive capacities in order to possess inherent moral worth. Francione's abolitionist approach argues mainly against welfare approaches. Taylor's theory allows current exploitative behaviour towards animals to continue in industrial environments. Because of these shortcomings, the utilitarian and rights theories have limitations for the abolition of animal exploitation. Linzey's theory, situating the rights of animals in God, may carry the risk that a believer assumes that he or she has only indirect duties towards animals.

In the Christian tradition, both Francis of Assisi and Albert Schweitzer have shown an alternative approach towards nature in general and animals in particular. My aim has been to investigate whether both alternative approaches can be based in a mystical experience of Francis and Schweitzer, and, if so, in which way their appreciation for animals, as emerging from these

mystical experiences, may be used as opportunities for a more inclusive spirituality that embraces animals. As a consequence, ethics resulting from such spirituality may be conceptually widened to include animals. On the basis of this approach, we challenge an instrumentalist, anthropocentric approach towards animals as well as contemporary philosophical protectionist theories.

I have investigated whether Francis' and Schweitzer's alternative approach towards animals has a mystical basis, and whether certain mystical qualities may be taken as the point of departure for a new spirituality. I have applied to Francis' and Schweitzer's life and work the characteristics and different stages of the Mystical Way as defined by Evelyn Underhill and concluded that both qualify for the designation 'mystic'. From the recent debate between an essentialist position and a constructivist position on mysticism (the positions of Forman and Katz respectively), I have argued that Underhill's classification, drawn up more than a century earlier, may still be a valid one.

With some scholars I have concluded that Francis, through his conversion experience, came to see the suffering Christ in the lepers, an experience which confronted him with the poor and powerless. In that experience he came to the insight that all men and women are creatures of the same Creator God and all are granted the same grace of salvation. This insight was gradually extended, via the *Sermon to the Birds*, to all creatures, and reached its final expression in the *Canticle of Brother Sun*.

My research provides additional arguments in the continuing debate concerning Francis' intention in the *Canticle*, by holding that Francis' intention was not to exhort creation, but to urge ungrateful people to praise God. This explanation offers at the same time a possible reason for the puzzling fact that animals are not mentioned in the *Canticle*: Francis perceived animals and humans as one category of beings, unable to subsist without the inanimate creatures. Thus interpreted, Francis' intention was to thank God and His inanimate creation, Who provides daily for the needs of both humans and animals. In such an interpretation, the *Canticle* testifies of a primordial kinship between humans and other creatures.

For Schweitzer, the deepest pursuit of mysticism was self-perfection, implying both a spiritual relation to Being, and an active, serving devotion to all manifestations of Being, in need of care. God as ethical Personality inside moves us to compassion and service to manifestations of God outside. Compassion is of crucial importance in Schweitzer's ethical mysticism because compassion moves us to devotion to other living beings: only through devotion to Being inside and to Being outside, may a human being achieve self-realization and give meaning to his or her life.

Schweitzer's reverence for life bases ethics in our 'wills-to-live', which we share with animals. At this level, deeper than the *ratio*, the barrier between human and non-human life no longer

exists. Through Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical experiences of union with the Creator of all that exists, both have been able to perceive animals from the perspective of the Creator; through their purified view they have been able to perceive an animal's own relation with its Creator and its worth before God. From this perspective both Francis and Schweitzer have been able to notice a common ontological basis and kinship between humans and animals, the interdependence between all creatures, their magnificence, utility and theophany. For the advancement of animal spirituality, we have to focus explicitly on these dimensions in the contemplation of faith.

My research of Francis' and Schweitzer's work showed that not through *reason*, but through experience and feeling real contact may be achieved with other beings and the Source of being. Through empathy, sympathy and compassion and aided by the Holy Spirit, both Francis and Schweitzer arrived at 'knowledge' through communion and finally attained—through resignation and devotion to other life—mystical union with the divine Mystery of life.

After having outlined the mystical basis of Francis' and Schweitzer's attitude towards animals, I have explored whether such inclusive concern and spirituality may find support in the Christian biblical tradition.

The Scholastic idea that animals are created merely to satisfy human needs has negatively influenced the status of animals and the Christian interpretation of biblical texts. Such an instrumentalist view is challenged by a non-anthropocentric reading of biblical texts. I have demonstrated that moral concern for animals and animal spirituality, as lived by Francis and Schweitzer, finds biblical support. From a non-anthropocentric reading of Genesis 1: 26-30 I have noted that the verbs *rādā* ('to rule over') and *kābaš* ('subdue') have to be interpreted in the context of the *šelem* ('image'), the *dēmut* ('likeness') and the vegetarian diet prescribed, implying that humans are to exercise dominion in a way that expresses the image and likeness of God, Who is loving and compassionate. The model of ancient kingship reflects the dignity of the image of God, to bring about harmonious relations with God and other creatures. I also illustrated that a number of biblical passages do not support an absolute distinction between a rational and irrational soul. In Hebrew thought, body and soul are not opposed terms, but *nepeš* refers to the essence of life, possessed by humans and animals. The translation of *nepeš* mostly as 'soul' when referring to humans and as 'creature', 'beast' or 'brute' when referring to animals (implying immortality and mortality respectively) has further enlarged the conceptual distinction between humans and animals. I have noted that Genesis indicates a profound kinship between humans and animals, as both are created from the dust of the ground and both contain God's breath (*rūah*). I have also noted that God includes both humans and animals as partners in His covenant. While in Genesis a vegetarian diet is prescribed, meat-eating has been allowed after the Flood as God's concession to human weakness, but still limited by the prohibition to eat the blood (i.e., its life) and by the required reckoning for it. The Judeo-Christian Scripture

thus presents two models for the relation between humans and animals: one paradisiacal (how it once was at the beginning of times, as in Genesis 1-2) and ideally is to be in the future (Isaiah 11: 6-9) and one realistic (how it is). Although the book of Leviticus illustrates animal sacrifice as part of Old Testament worship, this practice has not gone undisputed: the Old Testament reveals numerous examples of prophetic condemnation of animal sacrifice, directed against a formal ritual, unconnected with true commitment to justice and compassion for those in need. The prophets' calls for compassion include the weak, incorporating also animals. I have raised the question whether the latter prophets' condemnation of animal sacrifices could not in some way also have implied the denunciation of animal sacrifices as such. The research also illustrated that the Bible contains a number of texts concerning God's love and care for animals and animals' response to God's love. Animals respond to God's love through praise and through realizing God's intention for them, though the book of Job (38-39) notes that human reason is too narrow to understand the mystery of God's creation.

Jesus also confirms God's love for creation and He indicates through metaphors the capacity of animals to show love and moral concern. With certain scholars I have interpreted the Incarnation as God's affirmation of all creation, not only of human beings. Christ incarnate, God's co-eternal Creator-Logos, constituting the source and destiny of each *logos* in creation, acts in animals—as creatures—as a cosmic presence drawing 'all things' (including animals) towards God. I have also noted that Paul's vision of the redemption that Christ brings may have a bearing on animals (Romans 8: 18-25; Colossians 1: 15-16, 19-20; Ephesians 1: 8-10).

Biblical texts, especially Genesis 1-2, the liturgical Psalms (especially Psalms 148, 19, 66 and 99) and the *Canticle of the Three Young Men in the Fiery Furnace* (Daniel 3: 51-90) have been of influence on Francis' *Canticle*.

From the preceding chapters it follows that each creature (human or animal) reflects the Creator in a twofold way: as created by the Creator and as animated by God's Spirit (*rûah*). First, as created by the Creator, from the dust of the ground, animals (and humans) may reflect something of God's attributes and glory (as a work of art reveals something about the artist). Second, animals are sustained by God's breath or Spirit (*rûah*), the life-giving principle that remains His property and can be withdrawn by Him. In this way God's transcendence is fully maintained. I hold that Francis and Schweitzer as mystics have perceived the world not merely as a reflection of God's attributes and glory, but, like Underhill (see Chapters 2 and 3), both have been able to perceive animals as theophany, that is, as 'appearance of God'. Their view has been purified through their striving for self-perfection and devotion to other life, as 'prejudice, selfhood, or other illusion do no longer distort their view' (Underhill, 2008: 259-260). The ability to perceive animals as theophany, therefore, may be considered as a characteristic of great mystics. While Francis and Schweitzer have been able to recognize God's immanence in creation, they hold simultaneously that God in an infinite way is transcending His creation.

God's immanence in creation implies that, in an encounter with animals, we may experience 'a sense of connection to a reality greater than the physical world and oneself' (as I have defined 'animal spirituality'). Thus animals may become a way of God's manifestation to human beings as well as a way of perceiving God's presence in the physical world. To perceive animals as manifestation of divine immanence, a certain sensibility, as demonstrated in high degree by Francis and Schweitzer, is needed. Animal spirituality concerns sensitizing people for the divine presence in His animal creation, contemplating animals as kindred creatures and discovering their worth from their Creator's perspective. The perception of animals as manifestation of divine immanence has ethical implications: because of the presence of God's Spirit and His work in animals, their life should be treated with respect and reverence. Such a view may function as a correction of the western Christian tradition, where there has been an overemphasis on human history to the detriment of creation's history, and on God's transcendence at the expense of God's immanence.

As the core teaching of the Holy Scripture encourages a respectful and compassionate treatment of animals, I maintain that exploitation of animals is not consistent with Christian religion: animals are not created to satisfy human desires, but to live 'for themselves and for God'; commercial farming hampers the realization of God's intention for animals; killing animals does not comply with respect and reverence for life and a compassionate treatment.

I have argued that a new spirituality, in which animals are contemplated as God's creatures, with their own worth and their own relation to God, may lead into a different attitude towards animals. For both mystics, Francis and Schweitzer, their highest desire was to live in accordance with God's Will and to achieve spiritual union with infinite Being. Only through purification of the self may we become free from the desires of the world. Both consider service to other life not as sacrifice of their inner self, but as the fulfilment of their felt urge to love, leading to inner perfection. Because of this detachment they were able to perceive the world (and animals) in a non-instrumental way. Their deep longing to live in accordance with God's will is expressed in resignation concerning knowledge of the world and in wonder and awe for the mystery of God. Francis' and Schweitzer's life contemplation and service to other life together constitute the precept of ethics. The relation between contemplation and service to other life gives ethics depth and strength for moral motivation and perseverance.

Moral rules on how to act in case of ethical dilemmas cannot be comprehensive. Francis and Schweitzer do not so much provide practical ethical guidelines but are primarily concerned with the formation of a new consciousness, with creating, through the Holy Spirit, a change in the heart of people, the development of virtues and an ethical personality. Having a virtuous character is expressed in a respectful, compassionate attitude towards other creatures. In developing virtues and a virtuous character, both attribute an important role to empathy, sympathy and compassion. I have referred to the fourfold importance of compassion in Francis'

nature-mysticism and Schweitzer's ethical mysticism: where compassion ensures that we live conscious of others; where it tries to heal the self-division of life; where it serves as motivation to help other life in need (animals and people); where it is necessary for self-perfection (as it moves us to self-devotion to other life). And in this service to other life we may experience union with life and Life. In other words, without compassion we would not be able to give meaning to our life. Not through a doctrine or a rational, authoritative ethical system (imposed from outside) are we compelled to care for other life, but from inner compulsion. In such a way, devotion to suffering humans or animals may become a way of life, and as such may be reflected in care for all parts of creation, animate and inanimate.

Animal spirituality relates to experiencing God's presence and activity in animals. In Francis' and Schweitzer's mystical experience, animals are perceived as union of the spiritual and the material. I have argued that the *ratio* is unable to perceive the spiritual dimension of reality. Francis' and Schweitzer's examples showed that we may arrive at the experience of the true essence of an animal and the union of life through direct contact with animals and nature, respect and awe for the mystery of life, a contemplative attitude, a feeling of empathy and sympathy, and a compassionate, sacrificial devotion to other life. I have also noted that in mystical experience, both have recognized in animal life kinship, interrelationship, 'theophany', ontology, magnificence and utility. In order to advance animal spirituality, we may focus on these dimensions in the contemplation of our faith.

I have maintained that contemporary animal protection theories, building mainly rational cases for animal protection, may become more persuasive by complementing these with an approach calling for empathy, sympathy and compassion. Such feelings, informed and articulated by reason and aided by the Holy Spirit, may not only lead to compassionate actions, but also to a compassionate character trait. Therefore, a significant contribution of Francis and Schweitzer to animal spirituality and contemporary animal discourse is the acknowledgement of the need of experience and feeling (compassion); by combining reason and feeling, the scope of moral concern can be expanded to include all life.

Instead of a discussion of the characteristics that separate humans and animals, in line with the reasoning of Aristotle, the Stoics, Augustine and Aquinas, or of the characteristics that unite humans and animals, as in the modern debate with reference to rights and reason, a plea for and sensitization towards empathy, sympathy and compassion might be more appealing to people in order to adopt a vegan lifestyle. This direction might thus contribute to more just relations with other creatures, human and non-human, and with God.

I have argued that Francis and Schweitzer may contribute to contemporary animal discourse in the following areas: a re-appraisal of the value of life; a non-anthropocentric approach to animal

existence; a revision of a predominantly rational approach; and a re-thinking of the animal protection versus environmental protection divide.

The significance of Francis' and Schweitzer's life and thought for today may be that more harmonious relations between humans, animals and nature at large and God, as narrated in the creation account, have been presented as a lived option. The *Canticle* is an expression of the healing of relations between humans and between humans and nature and God.

Such relationships as shown by Francis and Schweitzer may emerge as an alternative way and as a source of hope and encouragement for the present and coming generations in a world that is facing difficult choices for alleviation of suffering and future global survival. This way offers guidance on how to widen our circle of moral concern and thus develop more just relations in our contact with nature and animals; it also promotes openness for the spiritual dimension of reality, contemplation, worship, simplicity and sacrifice.

Both mystics show by their lives that devotion to other life constitutes at the same time a path to human self-perfection, that is, to becoming more perfect in spirit. Francis and Schweitzer encourage us not to accept the world as it is but to change it (in an attitude of reverence and respect for the mystery of life) on the basis of kinship, interdependency, utility, magnificence, ontology and theophany, that is, the dimensions of appreciation of creatures, revealed in their respective mystical experiences.

In conclusion, humans are to make changes and sacrifices in order to bring about a state of more harmonious relations according to God's plan as narrated in the creation account. Religion has an enormous potential to end animal exploitation, but to be effective in this way believers need conviction and the activity of the Holy Spirit to put religious teachings of compassion into practice. Christ as the perfect image of God provides us with a moral example of compassion. I hold that, in a religious context, the sensitization toward empathy, sympathy and compassion is a required step towards this change. In the interim, committed individuals may anticipate this state in their lives by abstaining from the use of animals and animal products. 'Animal spirituality' entails a new mode of relating to animals and reality: an attitude of sympathy and compassion, affection, respect and awe. Thus, a corresponding animal ethic may also be instrumental for an environmental ethic: expanding the same attitude of reverence and respect to Sister Mother Earth and to all creatures (animate and non-animate) should foster a lifestyle guided by compassion and somewhat more spiritual values, and should replace a lifestyle characterized by depletion of the earth and excessive consumption.

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