During the academic year 1993–94 it was my honor to serve as president of the American Society for Value Inquiry (ASVI). The duties of this office are blessedly few; none is onerous, and all have the active support of the exceptional group of people who have made the society one of the jewels in philosophy’s crown. I am very grateful to the members of ASVI not only for the professional honor they bestowed on me but also for motivating me to answer some of the more important objections raised against my book *The Case for Animal Rights*, first published in 1983.

The occasion to offer my answers was the society’s annual Presidential Address, which I presented on December 29, 1993, in conjunction with the Eastern Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association. Had it not been for the need to prepare something special for this event, I am not sure I would have taken up the issues I address in these pages. I certainly did not want to spend my life defending myself against the criticisms of others; like anyone with a glimmer of a creative spark, I wanted to explore new territory—new for me, in any event. I do not know whether I made a lasting contribution with the work I did during the decade after the publication of *The Case for Animal Rights*, much of it devoted to interpreting the moral philosophy of the early twentieth-century English philosopher G. E. Moore. What I do know, and what I knew at the time, is that I needed to step back from the animal rights debate for a good long while.

Along with several other contributing causes, the obligation to present the 1993 ASVI Presidential Address a decade after publication of *The Case for Animal Rights* proved to be incentive enough to revitalize my interest in that debate. As I note in my opening remarks, ten years has the feel of an anniversary. What better time, then, to undertake what I had been postponing? Although I could not reply to all my philosophical critics, I understood the obligation to reply to some. Indeed, without a willingness to respond to
thoughtful critics, those who advocate a cause, whether animal rights or any other, risk sinking into unexamined zealotry, a charge often made against advocates of animal rights and one that I did not want to invite by remaining forever silent. For providing me with the occasion to offer my reply, and for much else besides, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the officers, advocates of animal rights and one that I did not want to invite by remaining forever silent. For providing me with the occasion to offer my reply, and for much else besides, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the officers, members, and traditions of the American Society for Value Inquiry.


Ten years have now passed since the publication of The Case for Animal Rights. Sweet and bitter ink, generous and grim appraisals, and sympathetic and salacious sentiments have characterized the decade’s responses. During this time I have read much, but not all, of what others have had to say, filing some of it away as worthy of reply and discarding the rest. Like any philosopher whose work is discussed and (even more) condemned, the temptation to respond has been both real and constant. With one notable exception (Regan 1991c), however, I have been able to resist, and—with what good results, others must decide—I have instead directed my attention elsewhere (Regan 1986a, 1986b, 1991b).

Anniversaries, however, even philosophical ones, should mean something, which is why I have decided to mark a decade’s passing by using this unique occasion in my life as the time and place to answer some of my philosophical critics. I hope it is a proper choice. I especially hope it does not seem too self-indulgent. This is not my intention; rather, my intention is to help forward the general debate about the moral status of nonhuman animals—to help keep this debate alive and well. Before turning my attention to my critics, a few retrospective words about that one notable exception to which I have just alluded are in order.

“Animal rights” is more than a philosophical idea; it is also the name of a social-political movement: the animal rights movement. Ten million strong in the United States and among the fastest-growing progressive causes in America, this movement espouses uncompromisingly abolitionist goals; judged by contemporary standards, they may seem “radical” to most people, including most philosophers. The movement seeks, for example, to bring an end to the use of nonhuman animals in biomedical research rather than satisfy itself with increasing the size of laboratory cages. “Not larger cages,” the movement declares, “empty cages.” Understandably, those who speak for the world’s powerful biomedical interests have challenged the idea of animal rights and the philosophy that informs it, just as, for reasons particular to their respective interests, representatives of the fur industry and the meat industry have publicly expressed their general disagreement with a philosophy that, were its goals to be achieved, would put them out of business.

All this is understandable—laudable, even. After all, truth should be decided on the basis of the fair, informed clash of ideas. If animal rightists bid the world listen to and act on the truth as they see it, it is only fitting and proper that the same opportunity should be made available to representatives of the Cattlemen’s Association and the National Association for Biomedical Research. All of us who prize freedom of inquiry, and perhaps especially philosophers, should not only welcome critical public scrutiny of controversial ideas but insist on it.

In some hands, however, fairness is an ideal more honored in the breach than the observance. Throughout history, scurrilous attacks on the messenger have been a familiar way to attempt to discredit the message. So it is that, in lieu of competent criticism of my philosophical case for animal rights, some people in high places, both in and beyond academe, have slandered my character, for example, by accusing me of inciting others to riot during my campus lectures and by implicating me in the commission of a variety of violent crimes, including murder.

Now all this would be funny, in an Evelyn Waughish sort of way, if it were simply a case of a quixotic, graying moral philosopher tilting his blunt ideas against the resistant armor of powerful special interests. Given what I see as the real-life carnage at issue, however, it is not very funny at all. When one pauses to consider what, with the blessing of an indulgent culture, these special interests are in the business of doing—for example, there are more than ten thousand animals slaughtered for food every minute of every day just in the United States—the deliberate attempt to silence my voice by sullying my character is not a cause for laughter. Hence the need to respond to, rather than chuckle at, the ad hominem abuse that has been showered on me, a need I satisfied on the occasion to which I referred earlier. Happily, more recent work, by some members of the biomedical community in particular (Vance 1992), suggests that wiser, more temperate minds understand the need to confront the idea of animal rights on its merits rather than permit slander to substitute for rational argument. Whether an ethic more respectful of other animals will emerge as a result of this change in the respect accorded the idea of animal rights is unclear; what is clear is that such
an ethic has little if any chance of emerging without such a change occurring, which is why, given my personal beliefs and aspirations, and notwithstanding the many obstacles still to be faced, I look on this change as a welcome development.

For their part, those philosophers who are to be counted among my critics have behaved beyond reproach. No name calling here. No threats or intimidation. No salacious rumors. No sullying of my reputation. Just good old-fashioned critical analysis. Wherever the truth lies, whether on my side of the debate or elsewhere, the principled manner in which both philosophical critics and philosophical defenders of animal rights have comported themselves, throughout the past ten years and more, gives philosophers reason to be proud of the high standards of our discipline and of the people who practice it.

As it happens, my philosophical critics are many; their specific objections, rich and diverse. At the most general level, however, they may be divided into two main groups. The first issues criticisms within a larger context of shared assumptions about the methods and objectives of moral philosophy. As is true in my own case, for example, these critics emphasize the role of reason in ethics as well as the legitimate roles played by moral principles—such principles as the categorical imperative or the principle of utility—that are at once abstract, universal, and impartial. The second group of critics goes further and challenges the very assumptions I share with the first group. The role of reason in ethics is challenged, for example, as is reliance on general moral principles. Those in the first group mount what we might term “intramoral” criticisms; those in the second, “intermoral.” In what follows, after first giving a thumbnail sketch of my position, I consider representative examples of both. My objective throughout is not to consider all the criticisms that have been raised, or even to consider all the most important ones, since neither of these objectives could be realized on this occasion; my far more modest aim is to consider some of the most important criticisms of both types and to indicate how the challenges they pose might be addressed.

The Rights View

My position, roughly speaking, may be summarized as follows. Some nonhuman animals resemble normal humans in that, like us, they bring the mystery of a unified psychological presence to the world. Like us, they possess a variety of sensory, cognitive, conative, and volitional capacities. They see and hear, believe and desire, remember and anticipate, and plan and intend. Moreover, as is true in our case, what happens to them matters to them. Physical pleasure and pain—they share with us. But they also share fear and contentment, anger and loneliness, frustration and satisfaction, and cunning and imprudence; these and a host of other psychological states and dispositions collectively help define the mental lives and relative well-being of those humans and animals who (in my terminology) are “subjects of a life.”

In my view, subjects of a life have a basic moral right to respectful treatment. Of course, it is possible to advance moral positions that either dispense with rights altogether (Singer 1975) or, while affirming the rights of human beings, deny them in the case of nonhuman animals (Cohen 1986). But (or so I argue) any such theory will be deficient for one reason or another—for example, because it will be inconsistent or needlessly complicated, lack precision or adequate scope, or imply propositions that clash with a large body of our well-considered moral beliefs (our “intuitions”). When the competing ethical theories are thoroughly evaluated by reference to the appropriate standards, the rights view, as I call my position, emerges as the best theory.

The basic moral right to respectful treatment strictly limits how we may treat subject of a life. Individuals who possess this right are never to be treated as mere resources for others, in particular, harms intentionally done to any one subject cannot be justified by aggregating benefits derived by others. In this respect, my position is antiutilitarian, a theory in the Kantian, not the Millian, tradition. Nonetheless, my position parts company with Kant's when it comes to specifying who should be treated with respect. For Kant, only rational, autonomous persons are ends in themselves, a finding that excludes nonhuman animals (and, not unimportantly, many human beings as well), whereas on my position all subjects of a life, including all those nonhuman animals who qualify, have equal inherent value.

It is on this basis that I reach conclusions that, in Jan Narveson's cheerful words, qualify me as “a starry eyed radical” (Narveson 1987:38). In my view, since the utilization of nonhuman animals for purposes of, among other things, fashion, research, entertainment, or gustatory delight harms them and treats them as (our) resources, and since such treatment violates their right to be treated with respect, it follows that such utilization is morally wrong and ought to end. Merely to reform such institutional injustice (by resolving to eat only “happy” cows or to insist on larger cages, for example) is not enough. Morally considered, abolition is required.
That is roughly my position regarding the case for animal rights; I say something more about it later, as the occasion demands. Despite the many defects now evident to me in what I said and argued ten years ago, and notwithstanding the fact that, were I to write The Case for Animal Rights today, it would be a different book in certain respects. I continue to believe that the position presented and defended there is correct in its essential respects.

My critics are of a different mind; indeed, if they are right, I have secured for myself—by dint of my dogged persistence, so to speak—the unenviable distinction of being wrong about everything having the slightest presumption to philosophical importance. I am wrong about the minds of nonhuman animals, wrong about the way to evaluate moral theories, wrong about what rights are and who has them, wrong about what our moral duties are, and even wrong about what moral philosophy is and how to do it. With such a full plate of imputed failure, I must be selective in my responses. I begin with representative intramoral criticism.

**Intramoral Critics**

Among the objections raised by my intramoral critics, some concern my methodology, others concern elements in my theory of rights, and still others concern the theory's alleged implications. Jan Narveson (1987) objects to my methodology when he challenges my appeal to moral intuitions, R. G. Frey (1987) objects to elements in my theory when he criticizes my idea of inherent value, and Dale Jamieson (1990) objects to what he alleges are certain infelicitous implications of my theory. I will consider the objections in the order just given.

**The Appeal to Intuition**

How might we justify our acceptance of various moral principles, and how might we rationally choose among the conflicting moral theories of which these principles are a part? Anyone familiar with the history of moral philosophy knows how divisive and controversial these questions are. In The Case for Animal Rights I explain and attempt to defend a set of appropriate criteria for making such decisions. The criteria I deploy (Regan 1983b:131–47) are consistency, precision, scope, parsimony, and conformity with our intuitions. It is the last of these that has occasioned the most numerous critical responses, some of which, as I will illustrate shortly, are demonstrably ill focused.

Intuition is an ambiguous concept and a troublesome one no matter how it is understood. In The Case, after explaining several ways in which I do not understand it, I explain the sense of intuition I use as follows:

The sense that is involved is what we shall term the reflective sense. In this sense, our intuitions are those moral beliefs we hold after we have made a conscientious effort . . . to think about our beliefs coolly, rationally, impartially, with conceptual clarity, and with as much relevant information as we can reasonably acquire. The judgments we make after we have made this effort are not our "gut responses," nor are they merely expressions of what we happen to believe; they are our considered beliefs. . . . To test alternative moral principles by how well they conform with our reflective intuitions is thus to test them against our considered beliefs, and, other things being equal between two competing moral principles (i.e., assuming that the two are equal in scope, precision, and consistency), the principle that matches our reflective intuitions best is rationally to be preferred. (Regan 1983b:134)

Having set forth how I understand the concept of intuition, I next go on to explain why some of our intuitions themselves might stand in need of revision or even abandonment if, as is possible, they conflict with principles that are otherwise validated. What we seek, in other words, is what Rawls (1971) refers to as "reflective equilibrium" between our intuitions, on the one hand, and our organizing general principles, on the other. Moreover—and here my theory becomes even more complicated than Rawls's and in some respects resembles ideal spectator views—I also explain why, given the ideal background conditions of arriving at our considered moral beliefs (impartiality, rationality, etc.), a proper humility should lead us to understand how elusive moral knowledge is. On my view, although we can be rationally justified in choosing one moral theory over others if we have done all that we can be reasonably expected to do by way of evaluating the competitors, it does not follow that we know the selected theory to be the only true one. What we can know, rather, is that we have done the best we are able to do in evaluating the theories fully and fairly with a view to deciding which one best satisfies the appropriate criteria, including the test of conforming with our moral intuitions. Given the previously mentioned background conditions, however, this last test represents an ideal that might never be realized despite our best efforts, so that we can never be justified in claiming to know that the favored theory is the only one that conforms with those considered beliefs we would have had we judged ideally.
Narveson is unhappy with my use of this methodology. Sometimes his consternation has my ideas as its object. More often than not, however, the objections he raises do not truly address my views, whether expressed or implied. For example, Narveson at one point makes light of my supposed belief that “the property” of inherent value is something I “intuit” (1987:38); at another place he takes exception to my supposed view that deciding who possesses inherent value is “a matter of moral perception” (39). Now, this may be an accurate way to characterize Moore’s position regarding our acquaintance with the simple, unique, nonnatural property of intrinsic goodness his theory proposes, and it is true that I have written rather extensively about Moore’s philosophy (Regan 1986a, 1986b, 1991b), but what Narveson says in the passages to which I have just alluded is manifestly an inaccurate way to characterize my own views. I have never claimed that “properties” (whatever they are) are “intuited” or that our intuitions are “a matter of moral perception” (whatever that is). To suppose otherwise is to do battle with someone other than the author of The Case for Animal Rights.

Narveson is not always this ill focused in his understanding of the way I understand moral intuitions. He writes correctly that when I appeal to intuitions, I am referring to “reflective intuitions, à la Sidgwick, Ross, and Rawls rather than sheer seat-of-the-pants pronouncements” (Narveson 1987:33). Even so, Narveson believes that when used as a basis for choosing between competing moral principles, the appeal to intuition “is theoretically bankrupt” (33) because “two mutually contradictory proposed moral principles could each pass it” (34). Thus, he asserts, passing this test “can’t be sufficient” as a basis for justifying our acceptance of any one moral principle rather than another (34).

It should be plain, however, for reasons previously given, that I never assert or imply that conformity with our considered moral beliefs (our “moral intuitions”) is a sufficient condition for choosing among moral principles or theories. The appeal to our intuitions is only one among a set of criteria of evaluation I deploy. If I thought passing the intuitive test to be sufficient, why would I bother to evaluate principles and theories against the demands of consistency, scope, precision, and simplicity? Clearly, my position entails that conformity with our intuitions constitutes only a necessary condition of adequacy, and it is no objection to this position to insist, as Narveson does, that passing this test cannot be sufficient. Moreover, although some of the theories I reject are criticized because they clash with a large body of moral intuitions, no theory is ever rejected on this ground alone; I always adduce some other reason logically distinct from appeals to intuitions (a lack of internal consistency is a recurring theme). In short, the appeal to moral intuitions does play a role in my evaluations of moral theories or principles, but only a limited one.

Still, it is appropriate to ask whether conformity with our moral intuitions should count as a necessary condition. Narveson arguably thinks not. Our intuitions, he seems to think, are just as likely as not to be expressions of our culturally biased times, places, and circumstances, which is why they should not be enlisted to do the rational and objective business of theory evaluation. I am not convinced that this is a mistake. Recall that, contrary to Narveson, the intuitions to which we are to appeal are not simply “hunch[es], or feeling[s], that a certain finding is the right one” (Narveson 1987:48). They are moral beliefs we form or retain after we have made a conscientious effort to think about them rationally, coolly, and impartially, assuming we understand the concepts involved and assuming we have secured as much relevant information as it is reasonable to demand. As I am at pains to explain, these conditions set forth an ideal that, imperfect creatures that we are, none of us may ever fully realize. Thus, as I noted earlier, although we can be rationally justified in accepting a given theory, it does not follow that we can therefore know that it is the only true one. Narveson might protest that he wants more; in particular, he might want to know which theory is “the true one.” If the history of moral philosophy teaches us anything, however, it is that those who persist in searching for the one true theory are no more likely to meet with success than are those who, in the face of a record of unbroken failure, persist in hunting for the Snark—which, for the reasons already given, does not mean that we must view all moral theories as equally worthy of acceptance. Thus, although I am not so brazen as to suppose that my appeal to intuitions is free of potentially serious difficulties, I do not believe Narveson, from whom I have learned much in other respects, whose work and wit I applaud, and whose friendship I value, has clearly identified what these might be.

The Idea of Inherent Value

Among my most persistent critics is R. G. Frey. In a series of articles and two books (Frey 1980, 1983), he argues against ascribing rights to nonhuman animals—and to humans. His is the stance of the unrepentant act utilitarian, an imperturbable partisan who, when confronted with the ghastly things his theory could permit, ranging from deceitful promises to the judicial execution of the innocent, tightens his grip on the theory rather than abandon it. Whereas the confidence of some philosophers might be shaken
When it is pointed out that their favorite theory can have (literally) murderous consequences, Frey's commitment to utilitarianism does not waiver. Whatever else the shortcomings of his philosophy might be, Frey (a good friend of almost thirty years) is, if nothing else, consistent—in an Emersonian sense.

Frey does more than deny animals rights; he also denies them all but the faintest trace of mind. "Sensations," some pleasant, some painful, they can experience, but that is about it. They are barren of preferences, wants, and desires; they lack memory and expectation; and they are unable to reason, plan, or intend. Frey's conception of the mental life of nonhuman animals comes within a whisker, so to speak, of Descartes's. I have previously addressed this aspect of Frey's work and will not repeat my criticisms here (Regan 1983:38-53, 67-73). Instead I intend to consider his criticisms of an idea that is central to my theory of rights: inherent value.

To understand what this idea means and how it functions in my theory, inherent value needs to be seen in the larger context of all the sorts of values that play a role there. These values include (1) well-being (understood as quality of life, welfare, or happiness), (2) intrinsic values (including various mental states, such as pleasure and satisfaction), (3) utility (understood either as what is useful as a means, as what exists as a resource relative to someone's purposes or interests, as the aggregation of values such as welfare or pleasure), (4) merit or excellence, and (5) inherent value (understood as a kind of value possessed by certain individuals, after the fashion of Kant's idea of something's existing as an "end in itself").

Concerning inherent value, I argue four things. The first is that, although an ethical theory would be simpler if it could dispense with this kind of value, simplicity is not everything. To have the best theory, all things considered, we must postulate inherent value (here and throughout what follows, the Kantian echoes are evident to me now). Second, inherent value is logically distinct from, not reducible to, and not a function of the other kinds of values previously mentioned: a woman's moral status as an end in herself, as one who possesses inherent value, is logically independent of her happiness, talents, usefulness, and so on. Third, inherent value is a categorical concept, meaning that it does not come in degrees; an individual either has it or not, and all those who have inherent value have it equally. (To express these points in Kantian terms, one would say that a given man either exists as an end in himself or does not, and all those who exist as ends in themselves have this status equally). Fourth, all those individuals who are subjects of a life have inherent value and thus enjoy an equal moral status, the subject-of-a-life criterion constituting a sufficient condition for the possession of inherent value.

Many critics have taken exception to the idea of inherent value, Frey among them. He disputes both the idea itself and its alleged equality. Concerning the former, Frey informs his readers:

I do not regard all human life as of equal value; I do not accept that a very severely mentally-enfeebled human or an elderly human fully in the grip of senile dementia or an infant born with only half a brain has a life whose value is equal to that of normal, adult humans. The quality of human life can plummet, to a point where we would not wish that life on even our worst enemies; and I see no reason to pretend that a life I would not wish upon even my worst enemies is nevertheless as valuable as the life of any normal, adult human. (Frey 1987:58)

Notice that in the passage just quoted, Frey refers to the quality of human life and to the fact that it can vary from individual to individual, sometimes plummeting to an unquestionably undesirable level. It should be clear, however, that in challenging my position in the way he does, Frey has confused the idea of inherent value with the very different idea of individual welfare. To speak of quality of life is to refer to how well an individual's life is faring, while to speak of the inherent value of an individual is to refer to the value (the moral status) of the individual whose life it is. Individuals who are confused, enfeebled, or otherwise disadvantaged, let us agree, have lives that are of a lesser quality than the life of someone who realizes the highest level on Maslow's scale of self-actualization. But this does not entail that those with a lesser quality of life lack inherent value or that they may with moral justification be treated as mere resources by those who have a better quality of life. Not for a moment do I deny that the experiential welfare of different individuals can vary greatly. But as I have never said or implied that it is everywhere the same, Frey's insistence that it can vary fails to mount a criticism against my position.

The same is true of Frey's comments about my views regarding the equality of inherent value. After first (falsely) attributing to me the position that "all human life, however deficient, has the same value," he continues: "I do not agree. For me, the value of life is a function of its quality, its quality a function of its richness, and its richness a function of its scope or potentiality for enrichment; and the fact is that many humans lead lives of a very much lower quality than ordinary human lives, lives which lack enrichment and where the potentialities for enrichment are severely truncated or absent"
who satisfy this criterion in my view have inherent value and have it equal-
50 Defending Animal Rights
were the same, his protestations misfire.

of the one living that life is another. Since Frey treats the two ideas as if they
my theory of value, the quality of an individual's life is one thing; the value
ly, it does not follow that the quality of their lives is equal. In short, given
 theories of rights are obliged to consider what we owe by way of assistance. The position I offer in The Case
The Case
Duties of Assistance

Any theory of rights is obliged to consider what we owe by way of assistance. The position I offer in The Case for Animal Rights is that we do not exhaust our duties of justice simply by seeing to it that we personally have not violated the rights of others; we also have a prima facie duty to assist those individuals who are victims of injustice—in other words, individuals who have had their rights violated.

Dale Jamieson (1990) challenges what he takes to be some of the implications of this part of my theory. Noting that, in my view, only moral agents can violate another's rights, he argues that “although [according to Regan] we are required to assist those who are victims of injustice, we are not required to help those in need who are not victims of injustice” (351). He refers to my discussion of various wildlife issues and quotes the following passage from The Case for Animal Rights: “In claiming that we have a prima facie duty to assist those animals whose rights have been violated . . . , we are not claiming that we have a duty to assist the sheep against the attack of the wolf, since the wolf neither can nor does violate anyone’s rights” (Regan 1983b:285). He then argues that my position regarding duties of assistance has counterintuitive consequences. For example, it seems to imply that we have no duty to warn a fellow hiker that a boulder is heading his way if the danger does not result from human wrongdoing. After all, according to Jamieson, my position holds that “we are not required to help those in need who are not victims of injustice.” And free-falling boulders, whatever else might be said of them, are not agents of injustice.

Despite its initial appearance as a potentially serious objection, I do not think Jamieson’s criticism stands up. A careful reading of the relevant passages shows that I do not maintain what Jamieson imagines that I do; in particular, I do not maintain that we owe nothing to those in need who are not victims of injustice. What I do maintain is that we do not owe anything to such individuals on the grounds of justice. Thus, there is nothing in my theory that would preclude recognizing a duty to warn the hiker about the free-falling boulder; the point is only that we owe the warning for reasons other than the demands of justice, for free-falling boulders violate no one’s rights.

Jamieson anticipates that I might respond in this way and explains why he thinks I cannot. He writes that my theory “does not recognize nondiscretionary duties of assistance that are not duties of justice” (1990:354). Now I am not sure I understand what Jamieson means by “nondiscretionary duty”; this is not a concept I use, and it is not one that he explains. If he means that it is not up to individuals to decide whether they have duties of assistance to the victims of injustice, then what he says is true of my position, but if he means that it is not up to individuals to decide how and when and to what extent to try to discharge such duties, then what he says is not true of my position. My position, in other words, is that we are not at liberty to decide whether we have such duties, but we are at liberty to decide how to discharge them. I will assume that this is how Jamieson understands the matter. Moreover, I will be the first to concede that, among the nondiscretionary duties of assistance mentioned in The Case for Animal Rights, only duties based on respect for justice are mentioned explicitly.

As Jamieson should well know, however, I take pains to emphasize that “the rights view is not a complete theory in its present form” (Regan 1983b:xiv). Unless there is some principled reason for blocking my possible recognition of duties of assistance in addition to those based on duties of justice, Jamieson’s objection will fail to carry the day.

Jamieson evidently thinks he has such a reason when he suggests that any response I might give cannot merely be “ad hoc,” a response intended “to postulate . . . a class of duties simply to circumvent problems posed by the boulder cases” (1990:354). Whatever the basis for such duties might be, Jamieson believes that “it must mark some important difference between duties of justice and other nondiscretionary duties” (ibid.).

I am not sure I understand the dilemma Jamieson imagines I must face. If I were to say that duties of assistance depend on duties of justice except when God commands otherwise, in which case one should help anyhow, then I can easily imagine how someone might dismiss my defense as ad hoc. Other possible responses, however, without being ad hoc, seem to be perfectly consistent with the general theory of respect for the individual I promulgate. Specifically, I might reply that we have a prima facie duty of beneficence, a duty that includes lending meaningful assistance to those who need it through no fault of their own and that obligates us independently of any
question of their rights being violated. I do not see why or how this constitutes an “ad hoc” reply or why, in the particular case of the falling boulder, my position prevents me from saying that we ought to discharge this duty by warning the hiker.

Jamieson seems to imagine that such a response would merely thicken the plot, not resolve it, for he seems to think that the issue would then become the stringency of the duty to assist those in need who are not victims of injustice. But this is to strain at gnats. I am not aware of any plausible moral theory that is able to specify, in advance, exactly when, where, and how everyone is supposed to discharge the duties of assistance we owe to one another. Indeed, as noted earlier, although individuals are not free to decide whether they have such duties, they are free to decide when, where, and how to discharge them. To expect more from a moral theory than this—to expect it to specify, in advance of real-life circumstances, and for all people at all times and in all places—when, where, and how they are to assist others is ludicrous on its face. The crucial point (and the final one I will make as I conclude my discussion of Jamieson’s objections) is that duties of assistance must conform to the demands of the fundamental principles of justice that define my theory. In other words, we can never have a duty to assist someone in ways that involve treating others with a lack of respect. In this regard, there is a moral limit to how much discretion we have in deciding whom we should help and how we can help them.

**Intermoral Critics**

Theories of individual moral rights, even when their scope is limited to rational, autonomous persons, are fraught with deep, abiding difficulties. The challenge to such theories raised by some utilitarians (Hare 1978) is a familiar one. As for animal rights theory, the critics include such widely divergent voices as those of Kantians, contractarians, and libertarians. As noted earlier, however, despite their substantive differences, these approaches to moral philosophy have important similarities. At the level of theory, the object of moral philosophy is essentially the same: to explain and defend the fundamental principle or principles of morality, principles that will be general, abstract, and impartial. At the level of practice, moreover, these theorists share a common vision: the right thing to do, they all seem to imply, in most if not all cases, is to be determined by assessing what an informed application of the favored principle(s) would have us do given the details of the situation. Philosophers who share these theoretical and practical outlooks obviously can and frequently do differ with one another over what the fundamental principles of morality are and what we should do in particular cases. In fact, the previously considered criticisms of my views illustrate this point. Narveson, Frey, Jamieson, and I disagree about a great many things, both at the level of theory and at the level of practice, but we do not disagree about what we as moral theorists are trying to do or the way we think people should try to determine what ought to be done.

Such are the resources of moral philosophy, however, that new channels of thought are constantly being opened and explored. It should hardly be surprising, therefore, that in addition to such intramoral criticisms of animal rights as those I have considered, new and significantly different criticisms directed at the very assumptions evident both in my own work and in the work of my intramoral challengers need to be considered. It is to a consideration of one such line of criticism that I now turn.

According to the criticism I have in mind, Narveson, Frey, and Jamieson are correct insofar as they hold that there is something seriously mistaken in the view that nonhuman animals have rights. But they are mistaken when it comes to explaining why the idea is ill grounded. The fault lies in the very idea of the rights of the individual. This idea, these critics allege, is symptomatic of a deep, systematic prejudice that has distorted Western moral and political thought down through the ages. That prejudice is patriarchy, understood as what is expressive of male bias. Paradoxical though it may seem, they claim that what is fundamentally wrong with the idea of animal rights is that it encapsulates male bias. Before moving on to explore this criticism (which for brevity’s sake I term “the feminist indictment”), three preliminary points merit mention.

First, not all those philosophers who consider themselves feminists accept the view that the idea of individual rights bespeaks patriarchal bias; indeed, some feminists (so-called liberal feminists) strenuously deny it (Regan 1991a). Second, whether accepted or rejected, the indictment, as I have tried to indicate, is perfectly general in scope. It does not allege merely that some views about individual rights are patriarchal; all views about the rights of the individual, whether or not the individual is a human being, are allegedly tainted by male bias. Third, the feminist indictment regarding individual rights can be seen as part of a larger critique of the way both my intramoral critics and I understand moral philosophy. As I will explain later, at its deepest level the feminist indictment attacks this way of doing moral philosophy as itself being patriarchal.
How might one attempt to defend the view that the idea of individual rights is patriarchal? My examination of answers to this question lays no claim to completeness. I am able to consider only three possible responses. To the best of my knowledge, the first two, while common enough, have not surfaced in the philosophical literature (they are more in the nature of popular argument); the third surfaces frequently, however, and is by far the most important of the three responses to be considered.

The Genealogy Defense

One possible defense of the feminist indictment appeals to the genealogy of the idea of individual rights. After all, it was men who first formulated this idea—the Lockes and Rousseaus of the world, not the Xanthippes and Hildegards. The genealogy defense (to give this line of reasoning a name) would have us infer that an idea is patriarchal if it was originated by men.

This is an implausible defense. If we were to accept it, we would be obliged to say that our current understanding of the circulation of blood is patriarchal because it was Harvey and his male contemporaries who were the first to discover how blood circulates. No less absurd consequences would follow in every other similar context (for example, Euclidean geometry must be patriarchal because Euclid was a man). Surely it is absurd to imagine that Euclid’s definition of a right triangle is a symptom of male domination or that it arbitrarily favors, or favors in any way whatsoever, the interests of men over those of women. Logically, the fact that a man discovers, creates, or simply says something does not entail that what is discovered, created, or said is tainted by male prejudice.

The Implementation Defense

A second possible defense of the feminist indictment, the implementation defense, takes a different route. Even a cursory view of social history, from classical Greek civilization up to the present, confirms that by claiming rights for themselves, men have routinely received advantages that have been routinely and systematically denied to women (Regan 2000). No less clearly, men have overwhelmingly been the ones to decide who is to be the beneficiary of these advantages. Thus, because reliance on the idea of individual rights can be shown to have these patriarchal results, should we not conclude that the very idea of individual rights itself is patriarchal?

It seems not. Ideas are not shown to be patriarchal simply because they have been used in a patriarchal fashion; if anything, the patriarchal use of ideas shows that those who use them are patriarchal, not that the ideas themselves are. To make this point clearer, consider an example from another quarter. Various people over time have used the idea of genetic inheritance as a basis for classifying the members of some race “superior” and others “inferior.” Does this show that the idea of genetic inheritance is a racist idea? Clearly not. What it shows is something very different—namely, that some people have used the idea of genetic inheritance in a racist fashion.

The same is true of individual rights. One cannot logically infer that the idea of the rights of the individual is tainted with male bias because biased men have used it to forward their interests at the expense of women’s.

The Male Mind Defense

A third, more subtle defense of the feminist indictment (the last I will consider) takes the following form (Regan 1991a). Owing to a variety of cultural forces, it is alleged, men in general tend to think in certain ways; women, in others. This defense avers that men tend to think in dualistic, hierarchical terms. For example, they tend to view reason as standing against emotion (a dualism) and to think that reason is the superior of the two (a hierarchy). This same pattern emerges in the cases of objectivity and subjectivity, impartiality and partiality, justice and care, culture and nature, and individualism and communitarianism; in each of these and other cases, men tend to carve up the world in dualistic terms, and in each such case, one of the two terms is ranked higher, as being of greater importance or value, than its complement.

What we might term “male mind,” then, is characterized by the dualistic, hierarchical rankings men tend to make—or so it is alleged—a summary of which would read as follows. Men tend to believe that reason, objectivity, impartiality, justice, culture, and individualism are of greater importance or value than emotion, subjectivity, partiality, care, nature, and community. Moreover, men also tend to think that men are characterized by the higher-ranked item in each of the dualisms, and women by the lower. Thus women are supposed (by men) to be less rational and more emotional, less objective and more subjective, and so on.

With the preceding sketch serving as logical backdrop, the male mind defense of the feminist indictment comes to this: the idea of the rights of the individual is a product of male mind and thus of male bias. It is a product of male mind because, for example, it grows out of a conception of the world that places greater value on the separateness of the individual (the rights, after all, are the rights of the individual) than on familial and com-
munitarian relationships, and it places greater importance on evaluating moral choices in terms of impartial considerations, such as justice, than on evaluating them in terms of our responsibility to care for (to nurture and sustain) close interpersonal relationships, such as the relationships that obtain between parents and their children. The moral significance of these latter relationships is denigrated by male mind; they are, as it were, "women's work" and thus of less importance than the acts or policies that honor the universal, equal, inalienable rights of the individual. Against this judgment, partisans of the male mind defense celebrate the qualities (for example, emotion, subjectivity, and an ethic of care) traditionally associated with the feminine.

But the scope of the male mind defense extends beyond the particular idea of "the rights of the individual." This defense bears the seeds of a more general indictment of the way moral philosophy has been and continues to be done by many theorists. To persist in searching for moral principles that are at once universal, abstract, and impartial, as my intramoral critics and I persist in doing, is implicitly to bespeak the patriarchal prejudices definitive of male mind.

Now there is, I think, much that is unclear in the preceding account. The concepts used to describe male mind are so general and vague that it seems the better part of wisdom to withhold judgment of the idea's validity until a much fuller, more precise story has been told. I will have more (but not enough) to say on this topic later. These matters to one side, what may be said for and against the male mind defense? I will consider five areas of controversy. The first is empirical and concerns disputes about the evidence for the portrait of patriarchy sketched previously; the second concerns the paradoxical presuppositions of the male mind defense; the third and fourth challenge the alleged shortcomings of "hierarchical" thinking; and the fifth explores, albeit incompletely, the way some feminist theorists have used elements of the male mind defense to criticize my position regarding animal rights.

The Empirical Debate The pioneering work of developmental psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982, 1987) is central to the male mind defense. Initially a research associate of Lawrence Kohlberg, Gilligan in time came to wonder why females tended to score lower on Kohlberg's scale for measuring moral development, a scale that awarded a higher ranking to those who relied on abstract, universal, and impartial moral principles (Kohlberg 1984). Rather than view Kohlberg's various stages as constituting an objective, non-question-begging map of moral development, Gilligan became convinced that the philosophy underlying Kohlberg's various stages masks a variety of male biases. In her earlier work she suggests that both the "justice" and "care" orientations are needed and that both play a role in the morally mature person; more recently she has suggested that most women approach moral choice from the care perspective, while most men go about the business of making moral decisions from the justice perspective. Even so, Gilligan herself does not claim that care is better than justice, except insofar as she believes that the justice perspective is more apt to engender violence, including nuclear war; in this respect she implies that an ethic of care is superior to an ethic of justice.

Not all Gilligan's readers have been as willing to accept her findings as have proponents of the male mind defense. In particular, some critics have questioned Gilligan's methodology (Larrabee 1993) and the prima facie unrepresentative character of her research subjects, many being the well-educated children of wealthy white parents. A more provocative challenge, one having its origins in the emerging work of Africanists such as economist Vern Dixon (1976), questions the genderization of the care/justice debate. Dixon and others argue that the ethical orientation of African men is strikingly similar to that of Euro-American women; the former, like the latter, are more concerned with sustaining intimate personal relationships and less interested in asserting individual autonomy. One could argue, of course, that both African men and Euro-American women have forged this ethical orientation in response to their domination by white men of European ancestry, but to push this line of reasoning is tantamount to abandoning the male mind defense of the feminist indictment. That the care perspective is widely shared among African men seems to suggest that there is nothing distinctively female in that perspective, any more than there is anything distinctively male in the justice perspective. At the very least, we would all do well to question the empirical basis for the contrary judgments.

The Paradox In addition to facing legitimate concerns about its empirical underpinnings, the male mind defense also seems to confront a damaging paradox of its own making. Notwithstanding its purported attack on patriarchy, the male mind defense arguably bears symptoms of the very prejudice it seeks first to expose and then to supplant. Partisans of this defense not only denounce the valorization of those qualities that they claim have been traditionally associated with the masculine; they also celebrate those qualities (emotion, subjectivity, an ethic of care) traditionally associated with
the feminine. Yet the implied claim to superiority on behalf of these feminine qualities appears highly paradoxical, first, because celebrating the “feminine” set of qualities over the masculine is to engage in the very sort of dualistic, hierarchical thinking alleged to be characteristic of male mind, and second, because the collective portrait of those qualities that are definitive of the female, like every other portrait in the patriarchy, will have been drawn not by women but by men. How paradoxical, then, that pursuant to their rule, not the exception. Recall how, on his view, we humans have the natural rights we do because we are rational and autonomous, not because we can feel pity or sorrow. It is also true that in the broad sweep of Western customs and attitudes, women in general have been viewed as being less rational and more emotional than men (Regan 1999).

Nevertheless, these facts, assuming them to be so, do not establish that patriarchal prejudice is implicit when reason is placed above emotion. For rationality just might be a more important feature of being human than are the capacities to feel sorrow or anger. That question remains open. To suppose that it is closed because men have tended to rank reason above emotion is again mistakenly to infer something about the content of an idea from facts about its genealogy (like inferring that the concept of a right triangle is patriarchal because men were the first to define it). Notice, too, that it would also be a mistake to infer that the traditional ranking of reason over emotion must be patriarchal because men, in claiming greater rational capacity for themselves, have claimed rights on their behalf that have been denied to women. This latter fact does not support the view that it is patriarchal to base the possession of rights on the capacity to reason; at most it supports the very different view that men have acted in patriarchal ways in implementing respect for women’s rights because of their (men’s) mistaken beliefs about the lack of reason in women—a truly lamentable legacy, let it be granted, but one that does not offer evidence of patriarchal bias in the very idea of the rights of the individual.

But it may be asked, why suppose that the capacity to reason should be ranked “higher” than the capacity to feel emotions? A thorough discussion of this question would be obliged carefully to explain and assess the assumption that the two capacities really are as distinct as the question assumes. Possibly they are; possibly they are not. On this occasion I can offer only some tentative, impressionistic reasons for thinking that they are distinct.

Similarly, my discussion of why and in what sense the capacity to reason might be ranked above the capacity to feel emotions is quite limited, consisting only of the following observations concerning the role reason, broadly construed, often plays in assessing the appropriateness of our emotions.

Experience teaches that our feelings sometimes are inappropriate because they are based on mistaken beliefs. I well remember, for example, hearing a young man sing the Star-Spangled Banner on the radio at the start of a Durham Bulls baseball game. Musically it was a disaster. By contrast, Roseanne Barr’s fabled rendition of this song was the equal of a Beverley Sills’s aria. It was so bad that I laughed out loud. After the song ended, however, and the announcer explained that the young singer suffered from serious physical and mental disabilities, what I initially found funny turned serious. An aura of courage now surrounded the performance. My feelings changed because my beliefs changed. What I had felt emerged as inappropriate to what had taken place, something I came to understand not by feeling my way through the world, as it were, but by using ordinary ways of knowing—ways that involve the elementary application of reason.

We have all had similar experiences, and most of us have had them not rarely but fairly often. Moreover, most of us are familiar with the process by which we come to recognize that our feelings (for example, about members of religions or races other than our own) are grounded in beliefs that we have accepted uncritically (for example, the belief that Native Americans are lazy and shiftless). Once we see through the prejudicial character of such beliefs, the feelings we have toward others (for example, Gentiles’ feelings about Jews, or Caucasians’ feelings about African Americans) can and often do change. Throughout this process our capacity to reason is called on to play a role that our capacity to feel cannot perform.

More generally, emotions without reason can be blind. The task of checking the factual and inferential basis of the emotions we feel exceeds both the reach and the grasp of our power to feel them. In a very real sense, this is part of the human condition. How, then, can it plausibly be judged to be patriarchal to recognize the limits of emotion or the role of reason in this regard? We do not denigrate the importance of emotions in human life if we rank reason “above” emotion. For my part, then, I am not convinced that recognizing a dualism or hierarchy between reason and emotion is a bad thing in general or a symptom of male domination in particular.

Reason and Emotion A third issue meriting attention concerns the alleged dualism and hierarchy of reason and emotion. It is unquestionably true, I think, that most male philosophers have ranked the capacity to reason in some sense above the capacity to feel emotions. In this respect, Locke is the rule, not the exception. Recall how, on his view, we humans have the natural rights we do because we are rational and autonomous, not because we can feel pity or sorrow. It is also true that in the broad sweep of Western customs and attitudes, women in general have been viewed as being less rational and more emotional than men (Regan 1999).


Justice and Care

As I have mentioned, another dualistic hierarchy cited in the male mind defense concerns the distinction between justice and care. We understand justice as giving everyone or his due—or alternatively, as treating others as they deserve to be treated. Understood in this sense, justice and individual rights are companion concepts: if people have a right to be treated in certain ways, they deserve to be treated in those ways; such treatment is something to which they are entitled, something they can claim as their due, as a matter of justice. The concept of care differs from this. Care is something that is freely given—for example, as an expression of love, friendship, or compassion—not extracted from another as something that is due, after the fashion of a debt owed. To care for others is to be disposed to act to forward their interests whether or not they deserve such concern. The most important and intimate of human relations—for example, those between parents and their children, between friends, or between lovers—are expressions of the human capacity to care, not responses to the impersonal demands of abstract justice.

The male mind defense posits that men in general are inclined to understand morality in terms of justice; women, in terms of care. Thus it is claimed that because the ethic of justice is inextricably connected with the idea of the rights of the individual, that idea bears the imprint of male mind and thus of patriarchy. How strong is this defense of the feminist indictment?

To begin with, it is difficult to understand how anyone can doubt that there is a real difference between the concepts of justice and care. Justice is something we can demand as our right; care is not. Indeed, if things were otherwise—if care were something we could demand as an individual right—then, contrary to the male mind defense, the ethic of care would also be patriarchal, since it, too, would be built on and incorporate the idea of the rights of the individual. Both partisans and critics of the male mind defense, then, should agree that justice and care, and their respective moral directives, differ in the crucial respects I have noted.

Empirically considered, the situation is far less clear. Certainly it is possible that men are inclined to think about moral responsibility in terms of justice and individual rights, and that women are inclined to do so in terms of care. Some psychological studies seem to support this finding. The number of relevant studies conducted to date is small, however, and those that have been done are less than conclusive. To the extent that the male mind defense stands or falls on the relevant empirical data at hand, those who are not already committed to the feminist indictment are well advised to withhold their informed assent.

There is an alternative way to regard the apparent conflict between interpreting moral responsibility in ways that emphasize justice and doing so in ways that emphasize care. This is to view the apparent conflict as normative in character rather than empirical—that is, as a conflict not between how men and women as a matter of fact tend to understand moral responsibility but between two conflicting interpretations of how all of us, men and women alike, ought to understand it. When viewed in this way, the relative scarcity of empirical data concerning typical male and typical female moral development becomes moot. The issue now concerns which type of ethic is superior as an ethic, whatever may be psychologically true of current patterns of male and female moral thinking.

Now, it seems to me that any fully credible ethic will have to find a place for both justice and care. Consider care first. While it is doubtless true that parents have duties to their children, and that many fail miserably in discharging them, it is no less true that parental character is improved to the extent that parents are motivated by their care for their children, rather than by their choice to conform their wills to abstract principles of justice. Kant, it is true, teaches that one's moral worth is contingent on one's capacity to do one's duty for duty's sake, especially when tempted to act otherwise. On this matter, however, Aristotle seems closer to the truth: the best parent is one who does good by her or his child out of love and concern for the child and in the absence of any desire to do less. In this respect, as well as in others, the importance, indeed the centrality, of care in a fully developed moral life seems too obvious to require further support.

The same is no less true of the role of justice. Morally speaking, care is not enough. And it is not enough because it is too limited. The plain fact is that most people care too little about too few people. The circle of care may include some family members, friends, a few neighbors, and maybe some business associates. The list is not long by any means. If the boundaries of moral responsibility are fixed by those relationships of care that people actually have, then people will be free to deny any sense of responsibility to those who stand outside the circle of their caring relationships (i.e., the overwhelmingly greater part of humanity). Do white racists have any moral responsibilities to Asians and Chicanos? Given the present interpretation of the ethic of care, it seems not; after all, they fail to care for them. The absence of care, it seems, means the absence of responsibility. This does not bode well for an ethic of care as here interpreted.

A possible response is that people should care for others—indeed, that we should care for everyone—even if we happen not to do so. In particular,
we should care for all those who are the victims of oppression: children, members of racial minorities, homosexuals, the poor, women, possibly even nonhuman animals. Understood in this way, the ethic of care can hardly be faulted for being morally conservative; only now serious questions arise about its internal consistency. If the ethic bids us to act in caring ways toward everyone, not just family members and friends, then this ethic's guiding principle ("Act caringly toward everyone") looks very much like the sort of patriarchal ethic allegedly associated with male mind—a principle that is at once abstract, universal, objective, and impartial.

Thus it is that proponents of an ethic of care face what is to my mind an insuperable dilemma: either the ethic is grounded in the limited, partial care that people do have for others, in which case its implications are friendly to the worst forms of moral prejudices (including prejudices against women), or the ethic is grounded in an unlimited, impartial care for everyone, in which case it takes its place alongside other ethics that advocate universal, abstract principles (and by implication embodies some of the very attributes of patriarchal ethics it seeks to expose and overcome). The choice, that is, is between a morally inadequate ethic or a logically inconsistent one.

**Patriarchy and Animal Rights** Much of the feminist criticism of my position takes a predictable form. Patriarchal modes of thought are first characterized in terms of certain traits (a, b, and c); my position is said to have traits a, b, and c; therefore, my position is denounced as patriarchal. Thus, Deborah Slicer (1991) writes that my ethical theory is typical of "the justice tradition" (110), that it "perpetuates . . . our culture's objectionable use of dualistic hierarchies" (112), that it embodies "a masculine sense of the self" (for example, insofar as it incorporates a "masculinist contempt for our emotions" [115]), and that it would have us "worship principles while neglecting such things as virtues and the affections" (113). My views are said to "grossly oversimplify" (114) the moral issues they aspire to address; in some cases these views are said to be "dangerously misleading" (109).

In much the same mode Josephine Donovan (1993) writes disparagingly of my "determined exclusion of sentiment from 'serious' intellectual inquiry" (170) and of the way my position "privileges rationalism and individualism" (ibid.), noting the need for "a critique of the atomistic individualism and rationalism of the liberal tradition . . . , a vision that emphasize[s] collectivity, emotional bonding, and an organic (or holistic) concept of life" (173). When all the dust settles, the philosophy one gets in *The Case for Animal Rights* is, in Donovan's word, "biased" (168).

In view of my previous comments on the debate surrounding the empirical basis of the male mind defense and the self-inflicted paradox to which this defense is heir, I hope it is clear that Slicer's and Donovan's dismissive characterizations of my views assume the greater part of what needs to be established. For example, if there is nothing essentially "masculinist" about an ethic in "the justice tradition," then while it may be ideologically correct to chastise my views as "masculinist," the question of the nonideological accuracy of such descriptions remains open. Moreover, it is relevant to ask how fair these critics are in their efforts to understand and characterize the views they attribute to me. A few examples will show that fairness sometimes is a scarce commodity.

—My views are said to display "the masculinist contempt for emotion." The sole evidence given for this judgment is my insistence that the case for animal rights I present relies on reason, not emotion. How could it be otherwise? How, that is, could one conceivably offer a theory of animal rights based on appeals to emotion? What could such a theory possibly maintain? The claim that emotion has its limits hardly expresses contempt for emotion, and it is the thesis that emotion has its limits, not contempt for emotion, that one finds in my work.

—Consider, further, the following passage from an essay of mine that has been readily accessible for the better part of ten years: "There are times, and these not infrequent, when tears come to my eyes when I see, or read, or hear of the wretched plight of animals in the hands of humans. Their pain, their suffering, their loneliness, their innocence, their death. Anger. Rage. Pity. Sorrow. Disgust. . . . It is our hearts, not just our heads, that call for an end to it all" (Regan 1985:25). How, I wonder, can one read a passage like this one and criticize me for harboring a masculinist contempt for emotion?

—I am said to offer an approach to ethics that "worships principles while neglecting such things as virtue or the affections," despite the fact that I have published a lengthy refutation of utilitarianism (Regan 1983a) based on this theory's inability to account for the great value friendship has in human life.

And so it goes. I do not claim that Slicer, Donovan, and other feminist critics of my position willfully or maliciously misrepresent my ideas. I claim only that they do misrepresent them, not rarely, but often. By itself, of course, this does not make my ideas any more credible than they otherwise might
be. Nonetheless, when added to the reasons I have presented on previous occasions (Regan 1991a), it does go some way toward explaining why I do not believe the feminist critique of the philosophy of animal rights, as reviewed on this occasion, is compelling enough to require modifying or rejecting my position.

Conclusion

It has not been my intention to reargue the full case for animal rights or even to respond to all the most important criticisms that have been raised against the case as originally presented some ten years ago. I have been obliged to be selective in choosing what to consider. However, I have made my selections with a view to highlighting, in the most general way, the sorts of objections a more complete response would need to consider. Some of these objections are intramoral; others, intermoral. The former raise various objections within the larger context of shared assumptions about the nature and purpose of ethical theory; the latter challenge these very assumptions. Among the former, some challenge the methodology used in developing my theory of rights; some, the terms of the theory itself, and some, the alleged implications of the theory. Representative of the latter is the challenge embodied in the feminist indictment. I am not certain whether I have responded fairly and well to the specific criticisms I have discussed; I know I have not responded fully. Perhaps the future will permit the opportunity for a more leisurely exploration. The one thing that is clear, is the heavy debt I owe to all those who have taken the time to read my work and to challenge me to do better. To all these, my informed, fair critics, both those whom I have been able to consider on this occasion and those whose objections await some possible future airing, I conclude by saying, “Thank you.”

Works Cited


——. 1991c. “The Business of the Ethical Philosopher.” In Explorations of Value, ed. Thomas Magnell, 93-104. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi. (Chapter 8 of the present volume.)


