Rowan occasionally touches on other issues about which philosophy has much to contribute. The discussions of scientific method, of consciousness, and of the definition of suffering are the most obvious examples. One cannot help but think that a better understanding of the "apparent philosophical sophistry" in these areas would have resulted in a stronger and more sophisticated analysis. As it is, Rowan's remarks tend to be somewhat vague and unsatisfying.

Perhaps the best way to sum up the style, tone, and substance of CMRM is to note that it exemplifies the position that is championed by the Scientists' Center for Animal Welfare (SCAW), the official line of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and that portion of NIH that is promulgating new regulations governing animal welfare. That is, Rowan is part of a movement which is firmly rooted within the scientific community but which is cognizant of and sympathetic to the need to raise serious moral questions about the use of animals in research. The philosophical arguments which justify those questions are less important in this context than the fact that the questions are being addressed.

References

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pre-Christian and primitive to the death of God, the actual destruction of peoples and languages, and now to gleaning the known cosmos of what remains of species and green earth.

A first it may have seemed to some that to rid the world of the ancient gods would free the world for the reign of the compassionate religion of Jesus. Later it perhaps seemed that to be rid of God and Christianity would honor evolution and provide for the humanly sanctioned aims of a science entrusted with advancing the cause of life (if especially human life). Sweeping the earth and skies of gods and then ridding our idealisms of an obstructive God have not, however, led to beneficent results. Instead, there has been set in motion a destructive momentum which, having exhausted one field of activity, destroying gods (and one good way to rid the world of primitive spirits, as well as of obstructive differences of opinion has been to destroy the peoples believing in the gods) and killing God, has found a way to maintain itself by proceeding to destroy green and animate Nature, in the end perhaps leaving only the cinders of physics.

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Freud's discovery of the testes of the eel, which preceded his "discovery" of the Unconscious, was in a double tradition of Western concern, searching for the bodily location of the soul with an energy derived both from the wish to prove the soul's "real" existence and to show that the soul cannot be found. Freud's physiological investigation found the source of the eel's sexuality, and his psychology proceeded then to locate human culture in sexual origins, but simultaneously by making the psychological scientific ("real") prepared the way (at least along one line of consideration) for the idea of human kind's soulfulness to begin to be credited by not only the religious.

But the iconoclastic impulse with which a society in which there is religion seems periodically to be beset remains a factor we should weigh when assessing the significance for the animal movement of the present pro-animal developments among the religions and the religious. If religions for a generation increasingly esteem animals, perhaps reverencing them in a manner akin to worship, what of that time decades or a century hence when iconoclasts, breaking what they have come to regard as idols, walk everywhere in nature killing with the shattering poles of the purifier? Do we who live in the present do animals a protective service to advance their being held in such changeable religious regard?

Nevertheless, now we may finally perhaps be in position culturally to listen to the claims of both religious and "primitive" peoples to have in their own right some important contributions to make to the conversation about morals, including our conversation about animal rights and welfare. Yes, let's not quibble about subtleties in welcoming the urgently needed voice of the religious, but do let's also attend to these more difficult areas of thought and soul.

In the Winter, 1987, issue of BTS, I will return a final time to this discussion, considering the virtues of polytheism as we decide how to welcome religions back.