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In his reply to my article, "Rational Egoism, Animal Rights, and the Academic Connection," Dale Jamieson takes me to task for my criticism of his article, "Rational Egoism and Animal Rights." Interpreting my philosophical critique as a malicious personal attack, he suggests that it is mainly "hot air" and constitutes "divisive, ill-tempered bickering" reminiscent of the "ultra-leftism" of the 60's. Jamieson also believes that I misunderstand the methodology he employs and concludes by charging that it is self-aggrandizement, rather than any substantial philosophical or moral concern, which motivates my criticism. How fair are these claims?

Jamieson finds it suspicious that I should twice respond to his "rather modest" article and suggests that I am myself guilty of the idle curiosity which I criticize in my article. "Who else," he says, "would publish two replies to an 'extremely quibbling' article but someone with a Ph.D.?"

This is rather unfair. The term "extremely quibbling" was applied, not to Jamieson's article as a whole but to a specific objection he raises against Regan's argument. It was precisely because the Narveson/Regan/Jamieson debate on rational egoism seemed to me importantly illustrative of a critical problem facing the animal liberation movement that I chose to expand a previously published review of Jamieson's article into a more extended exploration of an issue not considered in that review.

Jamieson is particularly disturbed by my application of the term "incurably speciesist" to his argument. This is understandable, perhaps, given his well-known and obviously sincere commitment to the animal

rights movement. To condemn an argument as speciesist, however, is not to condemn its author as a speciesist, and Jamieson's irate characterization of my criticism as "divisive, ill-tempered bickering" is unwarranted. "Bickering" denotes an unproductive, polemical dispute over trifles. What could be less trifling, in the context of building an ideological foundation for animal rights, than concern to avoid the use of homocentric arguments which undermine the very transformation of moral consciousness which we are struggling to achieve? Far from being "devastating," as Jamieson maintains, the "internal" method he employs--whether it "succeeds" or fails--can only reinforce the very prejudice which we are striving to eradicate, namely, that abuse of animals is only objectionable if it also harms human beings.

Moreover, in the present case there are other, very substantial reasons why such a method is ineffective and inappropriate. As I pointed out in my article, Narveson's concern to prove that denial of rights to morons need not entail their mistreatment is completely inconsistent with the fundamental premises of rational egoism. Hence, no matter how effective Regan's or Jamieson's "internal" arguments may be, a consistent rational egoist can simply dismiss those arguments as completely irrelevant. Is it fair, then, to brand as "churlish" my objection to such an approach?

Jamieson shares my concern with the danger of malaise in the animal rights movement. He believes, however, that it is the "twin temptations" of careerism and opportunism which are the real culprits, not "the attention that academic philosophers have focused on the question of animal rights." He proceeds to summarize the reciprocal benefits which have accrued to the world of academic philosophy and to the animal rights movement through their interchange and communication. All of this misleadingly suggests that I am unappreciative, even sweepingly condemnatory, of the role of academic philosophers in the animal rights movement. Quite the contrary. In my article, I state: "Animal rights advocates may rightly applaud the increasing interest of the academic world in the philosophical issues raised by animal rights." It is idle curiosity and unbridled faith in reason which I criticize in my article, and which I find exemplified in the Narveson/Regan/Jamieson debate on rational

egoism, not academic interest in animal rights per se. Certainly, careerism and opportunism may contribute in significant ways to the threat of enervation which these habits of thought present, but to point out additional causative factors is in no way to rebut the claims made in my article.

Philosophers, of all people, should not be super-sensitive to criticism, since their aim is (or should be) to subordinate themselves to the truth. It is a minor misfortune when their debate takes on the acrimonious tone of a quarrel. But it is a far greater misfortune when philosophical champions of the innocent fall out over what motivates their selfless involvements. Non-human animals, as the most innocent and vulnerable "minority" on earth, need all the help they can get--from academics and activists alike. But that support must not be purchased at the cost of accepting arguments which ultimately undermine their interests. As Jamieson says, it is obtaining justice for animals which should be our sole and guiding concern.

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Opinion



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Quite a number of people have given consideration to the possibility of the existence of life on the moon, or on other planets in our solar system, in other solar systems of this galaxy, or in other galaxies. Some of this consideration is relatively ordered dialogue in the mainstream of science. Even without taking note of the other literature (imaginative, scientific, or "occult"), there has been Bracewell's Intelligent Life in Outer Space and Shklovskii's and Sagan's Intelligent Life in the Universe. There has even been a politically aware movement for Space Migration Now.

The arguments made for the existence of "extra-terrestrial" life are frequently both novel and surprisingly sound (for those among us who from our childhood may remember the range of "impossibilities" implicit in "crying for the moon," but which have since then been quite overturned). In most instances, however, the discourse has taken its way constrained between two alternatives: (1) are there microbes hidden in the soil of Mars, the moon, or beneath some rock, and (2) is there somewhere, if evidently not on any of the other planets in our solar system, higher life? "Higher life" usually means life like us, i.e., capable of communicating with us, or even more intelligent (capable of showing us the error of some or all of our ways and guiding us toward peace), or more spiritual (perhaps "fully realized beings"). There is another question often being asked, too: are we alone in the universe? For some other inquirers, perhaps, the finding of life in extra-terrestrial space confirms their atheism, showing life to have material cause. And there are other ramifications that get considered. The cosmonauts, we can recall, found no god while on their orbital journeys.

Although of late there has been a lull in exploration, during the past two decades we have been witnessing the entry of humans into evolutionary/environmental niches likely