The Case for Animal Rights.

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zation onward. In fact, some of the speakers on the program were inclined to that view philosophically, but the conference was intended to analyze the issues raised by many views, not to defend any ideological stance. In short, it was set up to examine the medical, legal and ethical issues that arise when the question is asked, Is a fetus a person? It was not intended to be a philosophical, and certainly not a theological, discussion.

It succeeded admirably, with factual and analytical data richer than is to be found in any other symposium on the subject, within the parameters given in the book's title.

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THE CASE FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS.

By Tom Regan. University of California Press, Berkeley (California). $24.95. xvii + 425 p.; ill.; index. 1983.

In a series of forceful essays published over the past ten years, Tom Regan, a philosophy professor at North Carolina State University, has established himself as a leading philosophical advocate of the view that nonhuman animals have rights that we humans violate when we use animals to satisfy our taste for flesh, and also when we subject animals to scientific or commercial experimentation. Although Regan's position bears some resemblance to other arguments for animal liberation, his writings are distinctive in that they eschew utilitarian considerations about the significance of animal suffering, and instead take their stand on a notion of the inherent worth or value of animal life.

Regan's essays on animal rights and environmental ethics were published in book form in 1982, under the title *All That Dwell Therein*; his new book, however, is a much more thorough statement of exactly what its title suggests. The book covers not only the central issue of whether animals have rights, but also the major premises on which such an argument must be built and the practical consequences of the rights view. Thus, there is a careful account of the grounds for believing that mammals, at least, are conscious and aware of what is happening to them; and there is also a discussion of the nature of ethical thinking and a summary of the major ethical theories. This is followed by analyses of the major philosophical positions regarding animals and our relations with them, and this in turn serves as a basis for Regan's presentation of his own position.

Regan's central claim is that if we are to make sense of our considered moral judgments about, for instance, the equality of all human beings—including those who may not measure up to normal human levels of intelligence—then we must accept that there is inherent value in all individuals who are "subjects-of-a-life." Individuals are "subjects-of-a-life" if they are able to perceive and remember, have beliefs, desires and preferences, have a sense of the future, and a psychophysical identity over time, have experiences, and are sentient. All beings who satisfy these conditions, Regan says, must be regarded as having equal inherent value, and we act unjustly when we fail to display proper respect for their inherent value—for instance, if we treat them simply as things we can use as means to our ends.

Regan claims that mammals, once sufficiently mature, are "subjects-of-a-life" in the relevant sense, and thus have the basic right to be treated with respect. In his final chapter he sets out the implications of this view, and they are far-reaching: animal agriculture as we know it is based on the violation of the rights of animals to be treated with respect, and so we ought to become vegetarians. (Eating meat would be justified only if it were necessary for our survival.) Hunting and trapping, of course, are also rejected. Finally, Regan contends that all harmful uses of animals in science are morally unjustifiable. This includes, in his view, experiments that do not involve pain, but which do require the sacrifice of the animal's life.

This is a book dense with argument. It is bound to receive detailed discussion over the coming years, and no doubt some weaknesses will be found in Regan's case. To mention only one point very briefly, it seems odd that Regan is prepared to value normal human life more highly than the lives of nonhuman animals (as when he allows that if four men and a dog are in a lifeboat that can hold only four individuals, the dog should be thrown overboard) and yet he is not prepared to allow medical experimentation which could save many human lives at the cost of the life of a single dog. Is Regan's stance on experimentation more rigid than his own ethical theory can justify? This and other questions are certain to be debated; but whatever the outcome, there can be no doubt that *The Case for Animal Rights* is an impressive contribution to what is fast becoming one of the central ethical issues of our time.

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NATURE THROUGH TROPICAL WINDOWS.

By Alexander F. Skutch; illustrations by Dana Gardner. University of California Press, Berkeley (California). $19.95. xiii + 374 p.; ill.; index. 1983.

Alexander Skutch writes with great sensitivity