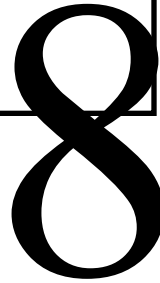


Eighth Class
University Essays



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CLASS OF NONVIOLENCE

The Ethics of Nonviolent Eating

By Helen Nearing

I wonder of what sort of feeling, mind, or reason, that man was possessed who was first to pollute his mouth with gore, and to allow his lips to touch the flesh of a murdered being; who spread his table with the mangled forms of dead bodies, and claimed as daily food and dainty dishes what but now were beings endowed with movement, with perception, and with voice?

Plutarch, On the Eating of Flesh. 70 A.D.

This book on simple food is vegetarian, of course. It is the simplest, cleanest, easiest way to eat. I take it for granted that to live on plants and fruits, seeds and nuts is the way for rational, kindly and perceptive people to live. By the time mankind has fully advanced from complex back to simple living, flesh will have been dropped from the diet and that cruel costly fare will be left to the carnivores. The readers of this book may be beyond that repulsive custom, but for those who are not, I set down what I consider legitimate arguments for a vegetable diet. However, I realize in advance I shall make little dent upon the general public, long-time confirmed in its savage custom.

The sight of slabs of flesh should horrify and disgust any sensitive person if they exercised their inborn compassion. Habit has dimmed their native kindliness. Their palates have become abnormally corrupted and conditioned by a taste for dead food, its flavoring and odors. People who eat slaughtered creatures every day find it hard to imagine what to substitute for meat, not realizing that meat is the substitute for vegetables.

Nature has provided man with an abundance of food for full nourishment instead

of putrefying corpses, which repugnant diet decent folk would abhor if generation upon generation had not, through use and custom, habituated themselves to the ghoulish practice of making their stomachs the burial ground for dead bodies.

The word “vegetarian” derives from the Latin “vegetus” – whole, sound, fresh, lively. The meat humans eat is neither whole, sound, fresh, or lively. It is dis-limbed, tainted, decaying, stale and dead. A diet consisting of green leafy vegetables, root crops, grains, berries, nuts and fruits supplies all the body needs for strength and well-being. It is healthful food, aesthetic, economical, harmless to our brother animals, easy to grow, to prepare and to digest.

Flesh-eating by humans is unnecessary, irrational, anatomically unsound, unhealthy, unhygienic, uneconomic, unaesthetic, unkind and unethical. May I elaborate?

Unnecessary

Meat is not a necessity, but a cultivated want. We need not butcher our fellow creatures for food. Millions of people throughout the world and through the ages have lived their whole lives on plant food and been none the worse; in fact, they have probably been in better health because of their abstemious diet. I had the good sense to be born in a vegetarian family and have lived into my seventies in good health and strength, without meat. Scott became a vegetarian in his mid-thirties and has lived into his nineties, hale and hearty, with plenty of brain and brawn, and without meat. It is obviously not necessary to eat cooked flesh.

A vegetarian friend, Henry Bailey Stevens, wrote some Rhymes for Meat-Eaters,

from one of which I quote:

*With lentils, tomatoes and rice, olives
and nuts, and bread,
Why does a man care to gnaw a slice of
something bleeding and dead?*

Irrational

The argument is frequently made that if we did not kill and eat animals, the creatures would take over and cover the earth. This is not necessarily so. The process of natural selection would intervene as it does with wild animals. If we stopped breeding and cozening domestic animals, the rate of their population growth would immediately and drastically diminish.

Animals need not be bred; they need not be killed; they need not be eaten. "But it is natural for us to eat animals" is the usual remark—"Animals were made for us." That is hardly logical. Animals were on earth aeons before man. They waited long before their devourers arrived.

I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other. He will be regarded as a benefactor of his race who shall teach man to confine himself to a more innocent and wholesome diet.
Henry David Thoreau, Walden. 1854

If it were so natural, why not catch and kill your own animal, cut a slice from the carcass or tear a leg off the living beast and eat it "naturally," fresh and whole? You could do that with a fruit or vegetable, but not with your pet cat or dog's quivering flesh. Many who learn to love animals and have them for pets would never kill and eat their own Bunny Boy. But others' pets, other animals' offspring and parents that

have been murdered by others, can be put into the stew pot and callously consumed.

Most meat-eaters have a squeamish limit beyond which even they will not go. They will not eat worms, slugs, garden snails (though they are said to be an excellent source of protein), or insects, mice, rats, cats or dogs, horses, or human beings. "The Samoans, who ate dogs, despise eggs and chickens. Similarly, the Qitoto of Brazil, who eat rats, frogs, lizards, snakes and turtles, eat the eggs of reptiles but despise those of birds." Bernard Shaw spoke of meat-eating as "cannibalism with its heroic dish omitted."

And Bronson Alcott remarked to Emerson who was dilating upon the horrors of cannibalism while carving up a roast: "But Mr. Emerson, if we are to eat meat at all, why should we not eat the best?" I would agree, in that I have often thought a baby's chubby arm looks delicious and (if I ate flesh) good enough to munch on.

Anatomically Unsound

Animals (and man is one of them) are structurally and functionally adapted to a particular mode of nutrition. The rabbit, to which a vegetarian is often disparagingly compared, is of the Rodentia order, feeding entirely on vegetable matter, the pig is Omnivora; its diet is closest to the typical human omnivorous diet of today. The domesticated pig is not particular about what it eats. Like millions of contemporary humans, its diet includes practically nothing edible, of both animal and vegetable origin.

Physiologically, a fruit and vegetable diet is more in line with the human anatomy. The teeth, the digestive system, the hands, feet and mammary glands of humans resemble the ape family to a great extent.

Primitive humanity was, no doubt, like the anthropoids, mainly frugiverous.

Robert Bnffault, *The Mothers*. 1927

The digestive juices of man are not sufficient to tackle what the carnivores eat. The carnivores secrete hydrochloric acid about ten times as strong as that of humans and have a very short intestinal tract so that meat is quickly digested and expelled. Man's digestive tract is three times as long, holds food for two or three days, forming a putrefying mess if on a meat diet.

The structure of the teeth gives an important clue as to the natural food of a species. Flesh-eating animals have tusks and fangs for tearing and gnawing; herbivores and frugivores have smooth teeth for grinding and chewing. Man and gorilla both belong to the frugivora family. Our front teeth are for biting and our back teeth for crushing and pulping; therefore human diet should be similar to that of the apes: raw fruit, raw vegetables, nuts, shoots and sprouts.

Unhealthy

During World War II, Denmark was put on emergency rations and the king called for a meatless program for a year. Denmark established a world record for lowered death rate that year and a marked decrease in the illness rate. Going back to meat-eating the next year sent the death rate back to the pre-war level.

The strongest of animals, the bull, the elephant, the gorilla, the hippopotamus, are all vegetarian. The camel, also a vegetarian, has long endurance records; the horse and deer have speed records.

A farmer says to me, "You cannot live on vegetable food solely, for it furnishes nothing to make bones with"; and so he religiously devotes a part of his day

to supplying his system with the raw materials of bones; walking all the while he talks behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerks him and his lumbering plough in spite of every obstacle. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854

As to the vaunted necessity for protein and the high protein content in animal flesh and animal products to maintain robust health: protein is certainly required in the body for growth and repair, but is there not a maximum as well as a minimum beyond which one should not go? Too much protein overtaxes the vital organs. The excess must be eliminated as waste or be stored in the muscles, which become hard and inflexible. One might well ask: How little protein does one require, not how much does one need?

There is protein in nuts, beans, peas, lentils, mushrooms, cheese, milk, eggs, wholemeal cereals, and many green vegetables. Practically no common foodstuff is devoid of some protein. Plants manufacture it from the nitrogen of the air. They make the simpler type of protein, but the same amino acids as in meat.

Vegetable protein is the original source of meat protein. Nuts are not a substitute for meat; meat is a substitute for nuts. All fruits average out with about as much protein as in mother's milk. The banana has more protein than mother's milk. Vegetables average out to about 3 percent protein, nuts to 15 percent and seeds about 20 percent.

If one fed adequately on fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and sprouts one could do without animal flesh and dairy products and still be above the minimum necessary intake recommended by orthodox nutritionists.

Unhygienic

It is not only healthier but cleaner to eat fresh vegetables and fruits instead of

putrefying meat. Animal carcasses are often full of poisons and sicknesses, and of food additives and chemicals that have been used to fatten or soften or preserve the corruptible flesh. These poisons go into the human bodies that consume the dead meat. With a carnivorous diet the human is a tomb for animal disease. Dead animal bodies contain heavy concentrations of toxic wastes, virulent bacteria and are often diseased with tumors, cancers, tuberculosis, swine fever, and other dangers to health.

Most meats available today are virtually saturated with antibiotics, hormones, tranquilizers, pesticides, dyes, deodorants, and radiation. The majority of processed meats contain preservatives, stabilizers, plastic residue and other harmful substances.

The Mother Earth News. No.2, "Meat Is No Treat"

No one knows better than meat inspectors how much disease there is among animals slaughtered for food. A woman attended a banquet and ordered a vegetable plate. At her side sat a stranger who also chose a vegetable plate. "You too are a vegetarian?" she asked him. "No, madam," he replied, "I am a meat inspector."

Uneconomic

Too many thousands of acres of valuable land are being devoted to pasturage or fodder-feed for animals that are fattened to be eaten by man: over half of all agricultural land in the United States. This land could be planted with crops for direct, firsthand feeding to man, a much quicker and economical way of obtaining food than at secondhand, through animal's bodies. An estimated 40 percent of the world's livestock production is derived from vegetable sources that could be used for human food.

Vegetarianism could go far toward solving the world food problem by eating lower on the food chain. To feed the world's population more adequately and economically, the enormous quantities of grains, pulses and legumes fed to farm stock animals should be drastically curtailed or eliminated entirely.

Unaesthetic

Carcasses that are displayed and hung in butcher shops, or slickly plastic-packaged in supermarkets, would shock any fairly sensitive or artistic person who could bring himself to view the sight objectively. Aesthetically, fruits and vegetables are certainly more attractive than cut-up carcasses and ground-up pieces of flesh, raw and red, or roasted or broiled.

I rarely used animal food, not so much because of any ill effects which I had traced to them, as because they were not agreeable to my imagination. The repugnance to animal food is not the effect of the experience, but is an instinct. I believe that every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher or poetic faculties in the best condition has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food.
Henry David Thoreau, Walden. 1854

Unkind

Let's look at meat-eating from the animal's point of view. They have rights not to be infringed on. They love their lives and their families. Wild creatures are hunted and killed cruelly with no compassion. Domestically-bred animals are wrenched from their families, transported callously and carelessly to abattoirs; there, frenzied with fear at the crowding, the mutual cries and the stench, they are pole-axed, hooked on moving belts for final slaughter, their throats cut, their dangling, twisting, agonized bodies slashed and skinned often before all of

life is extinct. I know, because I've seen it on two horrifying visits to slaughterhouses in Chicago twenty-five years ago.

We cannot eat flesh without unkindness and violence and cruelty. Fish are dragged from their natural element with ferociously sharp hooks; whales' gigantic bodies are tracked in the sea and mercilessly stabbed until death; seals are murdered with clubs and stripped half-living of their skins; crabs and lobsters are boiled alive.

What about "humane killing" you may ask. How can one be cruel humanely? Killing is killing. It has been estimated that man kills in one day more cattle than carnivorous animals kill in a hundred years. Let me quote words from lofty philosophers on the cruel and gruesome, and human, custom of slaying and eating our fellow creatures.

Unethical

"How could you select such an occupation?" asked a horrified onlooker to a worker in the stockyards of Chicago. "We're only doing your dirty work, sir," was the scornful and silencing reply. Whoever eats the meat without killing the animal himself is having his dirty work done for him.

We are not only killers; we are slave drivers and exploiters; we are food robbers. We rob the bees for honey; we rob the chickens, for eggs; we rob the cows, for milk. Cattle in the wild suckle their calves for 15 months. Domesticated cows are pushed beyond their normal breeding capacity, separated from their calves often at birth and are fooled into giving us milk instead of to the calves. As to wild poultry, most birds lay four or five eggs a year. Factory farming forces birds to lay hundreds.

Milk is food for the infant of its species. Eggs are food for the embryo bird. Neither should be consumed by human adults.

Slavery of animals to man is one thing. Men also exploit themselves and become slaves to animals. Breeders, milkers, shepherds, graziers, farmers, slaughtermen, all involve labor devoted to being valets and nursemaids to animals. The time and care would be better centered on breeding and caring for better human beings.

We humans are privileged animals. We will not be cooked for a cow's dinner or infected with a disease so that a monkey can find out the cause of its illness; or taught to run round and round in a wheel to make a squirrel laugh; or caged and our throats slit to make us sing sweetly for our supper; or locked behind zoo bars as examples of curious human beings, or our breast-milk stolen to give to calves. Nor will our babies be sent to the slaughterhouse and sliced up for someone's dinner.

All diets are relative to the consciences of the eater. One cannot be perfectly consistent in living, but a more or less harmless way of life is possible, and if not as pure as the purest one can at least try not to be as gross as the grossest.

So far, eat we must, in order to survive. Therefore we should look to the less sentient forms of life for sustenance. Life is inherent in every food substance that we imbibe, and one has to kill to eat, whether it be an apple, a tomato, or a blade of grass. By what right do we consume these marvels of nature? Plants have an important place on earth. I salute the trees and apologize if I cut one down. I shrink from picking a daisy or a pansy, or biting into an apple or radish. Who am I to take their lives in their prime?

We should widen the range of human feeling until it encompasses all life on earth, doing the most good to the greatest number and the least harm to the least number. Standards and relative degrees of harm and harmlessness

will vary with each one of us. Some will continue to eat fish and fowl while eschewing red meat; some will eat nothing that walks or wiggles-still eating dairy products; some will eat no products at all of the animal kingdom-no eggs, milk, cheese or honey. But we can all be constantly aware of the rights of others, be it baby lamb, bison, fly or cauliflower. We can modify our food habits so that we approach the ideal of living on fruits and nuts and seeds which have finished their life cycle and with which the tree or bush or plant is finished.

The time will come in the world's history, and a movement is setting in that direction even now, when it will be deemed as a strange thing to find a man or a woman who eats flesh as food, as it is now to find a man or a woman who refrains from eating it.

Ralph Waldo Twine, Every Living Creature.
1899

The time will come when men will look on the murder of animals as we now look on the murder of men.
Leonardo Da Vinci

Man alone consumes and engulfs more flesh than all other animals put together. He is, then, the greatest destroyer, and he is so more by abuse than by necessity.
George Louis Leclerc De Buffon, L'Histoire Naturelle, 1749

Our monstrous habit of bringing millions of animals into existence for the purpose of barbarously slaughtering them, roasting their corpses and eating them.

George Bernard Shaw, On Going to Church,
1896

The Animal Rights Position

By Tom Regan

The other animals humans eat, use in science, hunt, trap, and exploit in a variety of ways, have a life of their own that is of importance to them apart from their utility to us. They are not only in the world, they are aware of it. What happens to them matters to them. Each has a life that fares better or worse for the one whose life it is.

That life includes a variety of biological, individual, and social needs. The satisfaction of these needs is a source of pleasure, their frustration or abuse, a source of pain. In these fundamental ways the non-human animals in labs and on farms, for example, are the same as human beings. And so it is that the ethics of our dealings with them, and with one another, must acknowledge the same fundamental moral principles.

At its deepest level, human ethics is based on the independent value of the individual: The moral worth of any one human being is not to be measured by how useful that person is in advancing the interests of other human beings. To treat human beings in ways that do not honor their independent value is to violate that most basic of human rights: the right of each person to be treated with respect.

The philosophy of animal rights demands only that logic be respected. For any argument that plausibly explains the independent value of human beings implies that other animals have this same value, and have it equally. And any argument that plausibly explains the right of humans to be treated with respect also implies that these other animals have this same right, and have it equally, too.

It is true, therefore, that women do

not exist to serve men. blacks to serve whites, the poor to serve the rich, or the weak to serve the strong. The philosophy of animal rights not only accepts these truths, it insists upon and justifies them. But this philosophy goes further. By insisting upon and justifying the independent value and rights of other animals, it gives scientifically informed and morally impartial reasons for denying that these animals exist to serve us.

Once this truth is acknowledged, it is easy to understand why the philosophy of animal rights is uncompromising in its response to each and every injustice other animals are made to suffer. It is not larger, cleaner cages that justice demands in the case of animals used in science, for example, but empty cages; not “traditional” animal agriculture, but a complete end to all commerce in the flesh of dead animals; not “more humane” hunting and trapping, but the total eradication of these barbarous practices.

For when an injustice is absolute, one must oppose it absolutely. It was not “reformed” slavery that justice demanded, not “reformed” child labor, not “reformed” subjugation of women. In each of these cases, abolition was the only moral answer. Merely to reform absolute injustice is to prolong injustice.

The philosophy of animal rights demands this same answer—abolition—in response to the unjust exploitation of other animals. It is not just the details of unjust exploitation that must be changed. It is the unjust exploitation itself that must be ended, whether on the farm, in the lab, or among the wild, for example. The philosophy of animal rights asks nothing more, but neither will it be satisfied with anything less.

TEN REASONS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

The philosophy of animal rights is rational.

EXPLANATION: It is not rational to discriminate arbitrarily. And discrimination against nonhuman animals is arbitrary. It is wrong to treat weaker human beings, especially those who are lacking in normal human intelligence, as “tools” or “renewable resources” or “models” or “commodities.” It cannot be right, therefore, to treat other animals as if they were “tools,” “models” and the like, if their psychology is as rich as (or richer than) these humans. To think otherwise is irrational.

The philosophy of animal rights is scientific.

EXPLANATION: The philosophy of animal rights is respectful of our best science in general and evolutionary biology in particular. The latter teaches that in Darwin’s words, humans differ from many other animals “in degree, not in kind.” Questions of line drawing to one side, it is obvious that the animals used in laboratories, raised for food, and hunted for pleasure or trapped for profit, for example, are our psychological kin. This is not a fantasy; this is fact, proven by our best science.

The philosophy of animal rights is unprejudiced.

EXPLANATION: Racists are people who think that the members of their race are superior to the members of other races simply because the former belong to the (“superior”) race. Sexists believe that the members of their sex are superior to the members of the opposite sex simply because the former belong to the (“superior”) sex. Both racism and sexism are paradigms of unsupportable bigotry. There is

no “superior” or “inferior” sex or race. Racial and sexual differences are biological, not moral, differences.

The same is true of speciesism—the view that the members of the species *Homo Sapiens* are superior to members of every other species simply because human beings belong to one’s own (the “superior”) species. For there is no “superior” species. To think otherwise is to be no less prejudiced than racists or sexists.

The philosophy of animal rights is just.

EXPLANATION: Justice is the highest principle of ethics. We are not to commit or permit injustice so that good may come, not to violate the rights of the few so that the many might benefit. Slavery allowed this. Child labor allowed this. Most examples of social injustice allow this. But not the philosophy of animal rights, whose highest principle is that of justice: No one has a right to benefit as a result of violating another’s rights, whether that “other” is a human being or some other animal.

The philosophy of animal rights is compassionate.

EXPLANATION: A full human life demands feelings of empathy and sympathy—in a word, compassion—for the victims of injustice, whether the victims are humans or other animals. The philosophy of animal rights calls for and its acceptance fosters the growth of, the virtue of compassion. This philosophy is, in Lincoln’s words, “the way of a whole human being.”

The philosophy of animal rights is unselfish.

EXPLANATION: The philosophy of animal rights demands a commitment to serve those who are weak and vulnerable—those who, whether they are humans or other animals, lack

the ability to speak for or defend themselves, and who are in need of protection against human greed and callousness. This philosophy requires this commitment, not because it is in our self-interest to give it, but because it is right to do so. This philosophy therefore calls for, and its acceptance fosters the growth of, unselfish service.

The philosophy of animal rights is individually fulfilling.

EXPLANATION: All the great traditions in ethics, both secular and religious, emphasize the importance of four things: knowledge, justice, compassion, and autonomy. The philosophy of animal rights is no exception. This philosophy teaches that our choices should be based on knowledge, should be expressive of compassion and justice, and should be freely made. It is not easy to achieve these virtues, or to control the human inclinations toward greed and indifference. But a whole human life is impossible without them. The philosophy of animal rights both calls for, and its acceptance fosters the growth of individual self-fulfillment.

The philosophy of animal rights is socially progressive.

EXPLANATION: The greatest impediment to the flourishing of human society is the exploitation of other animals at human hands. This is true in the case of unhealthy diets, of the habitual reliance on the “whole animal model” in science, and of the many other forms animal exploitation takes. And it is no less true of education and advertising, for example, which help deaden the human psyche to the demands of reason, impartiality, compassion, and justice. In all these ways (and more), nations remain profoundly backward

because they fail to serve the true interests of their citizens.

The philosophy of animal rights is environmentally wise.

EXPLANATION: The major cause of environmental degradation, including the greenhouse effect, water pollution, and the loss both of arable land and top soil, for example, can be traced to the exploitation of animals. This same pattern exists throughout the broad range of environmental problems, from acid rain and ocean dumping of toxic wastes, to air pollution and the destruction of natural habitat. In all these cases, to act to protect the affected animals (who are, after all, the first to suffer and die from these environmental ills), is to act to protect the earth.

The philosophy of animal rights is peace-loving.

EXPLANATION: The fundamental demand of the philosophy of animal rights is to treat humans and other animals with respect. To do this requires that we not harm anyone just so that we ourselves or others might benefit. This philosophy therefore is totally opposed to military aggression. It is a philosophy of peace. But it is a philosophy that extends the demand for peace beyond the boundaries of our species. For there is a war being waged, every day, against countless millions of nonhuman animals. To stand truly for peace is to stand firmly against speciesism. It is wishful thinking to believe that there can be “peace in die world” if we fail to bring peace to our dealings with other animals.

TEN REASONS AGAINST ANIMAL RIGHTS AND THEIR REPLIES

You are equating animals and humans, when, in fact, humans and animals differ greatly.

REPLY: We are not saying that humans and other animals are equal in every way. For example, we are not saying that dogs and cats can do calculus, or that pigs and cows enjoy poetry. What we are saying is that, like humans, many other animals are psychological beings, with an experiential welfare of their own. In this sense, we and they are the same. In this sense, therefore, despite our many differences, we and they are equal.

You are saying that every human and every other animal has the same rights, which is absurd. Chickens cannot have the right to vote, nor can pigs have a right to higher education.

REPLY: We are not saying that humans and other animals always have the same rights. Not even all human beings have the same rights. For example, people with serious mental disadvantages do not have a right to higher education. What we are saying is that these and other humans share a basic moral right with other animals—namely, the right to be treated with respect.

If animals have rights, then so do vegetables, which is absurd.

REPLY: Many animals are like us: they have a psychological welfare of their own. Like us, therefore, these animals have a right to be treated with respect. On the other hand, we have no reason, and certainly no scientific one, to believe that carrots and tomatoes, for example, bring a psychological presence to the

world. Like all other vegetables, carrots and tomatoes lack anything resembling a brain or central nervous system. Because they are deficient in these respects, there is no reason to think of vegetables as psychological beings, with the capacity to experience pleasure and pain, for example. It is for these reasons that one can rationally affirm rights in the case of animals and deny them in the case of vegetables.

Where do you draw the line? If primates and rodents have rights, then so do slugs and amoebas, which is absurd.

REPLY: It is often not easy to know exactly where to “draw the line.” For example, we cannot say exactly how old someone must be to be old, or how tall someone must be to be tall. However, we can say, with certainty, that someone who is eighty-eight is old, and that another person who is 7’1” is tall. Similarly, we cannot say exactly where to draw the line when it comes to those animals who have a psychology. But we can say with absolute certainty that, wherever one draws the line on scientific grounds, primates and rodents are on one side of it (the psychological side), whereas slugs and amoebas are on the other—which does not mean that we may destroy them unthinkingly.

But surely there are some animals who can experience pain but lack a unified psychological identity. Since these animals do not have a right to be treated with respect, the philosophy of animal rights implies that we can treat them in any way we choose.

REPLY: It is true that some animals, like shrimp and clams, may be capable of experiencing pain yet lack most other psychological capacities. If this is true, then they will lack some of the rights that other animals possess. However, there can be no

moral justification for causing anyone pain, if it is unnecessary to do so. And since it is not necessary that humans eat shrimp, clams, and similar animals, or utilize them in other ways, there can be no moral justification for causing them the pain that invariably accompanies such use.

Animals don't respect our rights. Therefore, humans have no obligation to respect their rights either.

REPLY: There are many situations in which an individual who has rights is unable to respect the rights of others. This is true of infants, young children, and mentally enfeebled and deranged human beings. In their case we do not say that it is perfectly alright to treat them disrespectfully because they do not honor our rights. On the contrary, we recognize that we have a duty to treat them with respect, even though they have no duty to treat us in the same way. What is true of cases involving infants, children, and the other humans mentioned, is no less true of cases involving other animals. Granted, these animals do not have a duty to respect our rights. But this does not erase or diminish our obligation to respect theirs.

God gave humans dominion over other animals. This is why we can do anything to them that we wish, including eat them.

REPLY: Not all religions represent humans as having “dominion” over other animals, and even among those that do, the notion of “dominion” should be understood as unselfish guardianship, not selfish power. Humans are to be as loving toward all of creation as God was in creating it. If we loved the animals today in the way humans loved them in the Garden of Eden, we would not eat them.

Only humans have immortal souls. This gives us the right to treat the other animals as we wish.

REPLY: Many religions teach that all animals, not just humans, have immortal souls. However, even if only humans are immortal, this would only prove that we live forever whereas other animals do not. And this fact (if it is a fact) would increase, not decrease, our obligation to insure that this—the only life other animals have—be as long and as good as possible.

If we respect the rights of animals, and do not eat or exploit them in other ways, then what are we supposed to do with all of them? In a very short time they will be running through our streets and homes.

REPLY: Somewhere between 4–5 billion animals are raised and slaughtered for food every year, just in the United States. The reason for this astonishingly high number is simple: there are consumers who eat very large amounts of animal flesh. The supply of animals meets the demand of buyers.

When the philosophy of animal rights triumphs, however, and people become vegetarians, we need not fear that there will be billions of cows and pigs grazing in the middle of our cities or in our living rooms. Once the financial incentive for raising billions of these animals evaporates, there simply will not be billions of these animals. And the same reasoning applies in other cases—in the case of animals bred for research, for example. When the philosophy of animal rights prevails, and this use of these animals cease, then the financial incentive for breeding millions of them will cease, too.

Even if other animals do have moral rights and should be protected, there are more important things that need our attention—world hunger and child abuse, for example, apartheid, drugs, violence to women, and the plight of the homeless. After we take care of these problems, then we can worry about animal rights.

REPLY: The animal rights movement stands as part of, not apart from, the human rights movement. The same philosophy that insists upon and defends the rights of nonhuman animals also insists upon and defends the rights of human beings.

At a practical level, moreover, the choice thoughtful people face is not between helping humans or helping other animals. One can do both. People do not need to eat animals in order to help the homeless, for example, any more than they need to use cosmetics that have been tested on animals in order to help children. In fact, people who do respect the rights of nonhuman animals, by not eating them, will be healthier, in which case they actually will be able to help human beings even more.

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Animals, My Brethren

by Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz

The following pages were written in the Concentration Camp Dachau, in the midst of all kinds of cruelties. They were furtively scrawled in a hospital barrack where I stayed during my illness, in a time when Death grasped day by day after us, when we lost twelve thousand within four and a half months.

Dear Friend:

You asked me why I do not eat meat and you are wondering at the reasons of my behavior. Perhaps you think I took a vow — some kind of penitence — denying me all the glorious pleasures of eating meat. You remember juicy steaks, succulent fishes, wonderfully tasted sauces, deliciously smoked ham and thousand wonders prepared out of meat, charming thousands of human palates; certainly you will remember the delicacy of roasted chicken. Now, you see, I am refusing all these pleasures and you think that only penitence, or a solemn vow, a great sacrifice could deny me that manner of enjoying life, induce me to endure a great resignation.

You look astonished, you ask the question: “But why and what for?” And you are wondering that you nearly guessed the very reason. But if I am, now, trying to explain to you the very reason in one concise sentence, you will be astonished once more how far your guessing had been from my real motive. Listen to what I have to tell you:

- I refuse to eat animals because I cannot nourish myself by the sufferings and by the death of other creatures. I refuse to do so, because I suffered so painfully myself that I can feel the pains of others by recalling my own sufferings.

- I feel happy, nobody persecutes me; why should I persecute other beings or cause them to be persecuted?

- I feel happy, I am no prisoner, I am free; why should I cause other creatures to be made prisoners and thrown into jail?

- I feel happy, nobody harms me; why should I harm other creatures or have them harmed?

- I feel happy, nobody wounds me; nobody kills me; why should I wound or kill other creatures or cause them to be wounded or killed for my pleasure and convenience?

- Is it not only too natural that I do not inflict on other creatures the same thing which, I hope and fear, will never be inflicted on me? Would it not be most unfair to do such things for no other purpose than for enjoying a trifling physical pleasure at the expense of others’ sufferings, others’ deaths?

These creatures are smaller and more helpless than I am, but can you imagine a reasonable man of noble feelings who would like to base on such a difference a claim or right to abuse the weakness and the smallness of others? Don’t you think that it is just the bigger, the stronger, the superior’s duty to protect the weaker creatures instead of persecuting them, instead of killing them? “Noblesse oblige.” I want to act in a noble way.

I recall the horrible epoch of inquisition and I am sorry to state that the

time of tribunals for heretics has not yet passed by, that day by day, men used to cook in boiling water other creatures which are helplessly given in the hands of their torturers. I am horrified by the idea that such men are civilized people, no rough barbarians, no natives. But in spite of all, they are only primitively civilized, primitively adapted to their cultural environment. The average European, flowing over with highbrow ideas and beautiful speeches, commits all kinds of cruelties, smilingly, not because he is compelled to do so, but because he wants to do so. Not because he lacks the faculty to reflect upon and to realize all the dreadful things they are performing. Oh no! Only because they do not want to see the facts. Otherwise they would be troubled and worried in their pleasures.

It is quite natural what people are telling you. How could they do otherwise? I hear them telling about experiences, about utilities, and I know that they consider certain acts related to slaughtering as unavoidable. Perhaps they succeeded to win you over. I guess that from your letter.

Still, considering the necessities only, one might, perhaps, agree with such people. But is there really such a necessity? The thesis may be contested. Perhaps there exists still some kind of necessity for such persons who have not yet developed into fully conscious personalities.

I am not preaching to them. I am writing this letter to you, to an already awakened individual who rationally controls his impulses, who feels responsible – internally and externally – for his acts, who knows that our supreme court is sitting in our conscience. There is no appellate jurisdiction against it.

Is there any necessity by which a fully self-conscious man can be induced to slaughter? In the affirmative, each individual may have the courage to do it by his own hands. It is,

evidently, a miserable kind of cowardice to pay other people to perform the blood-stained job, from which the normal man refrains in horror and dismay. Such servants are given some farthings for their bloody work, and one buys from them the desired parts of the killed animal – if possible prepared in such a way that it does not any more recall the uncomfortable circumstances, nor the animal, nor its being killed, nor the bloodshed.

I think that men will be killed and tortured as long as animals are killed and tortured. So long there will be wars too. Because killing must be trained and perfected on smaller objects, morally and technically.

I see no reason to feel outraged by what others are doing, neither by the great nor by the smaller acts of violence and cruelty. But, I think, it is high time to feel outraged by all the small and great acts of violence and cruelty which we perform ourselves. And because it is much easier to win the smaller battles than the big ones, I think we should try to get over first our own trends towards smaller violence and cruelty, to avoid, or better, to overcome them once and for all. Then the day will come when it will be easy for us to fight and to overcome even the great cruelties. But we are still sleeping, all of us, in habitudes and inherited attitudes. They are like a fat, juicy sauce which helps us to swallow our own cruelties without tasting their bitterness.

I have not the intention to point out with my finger at this and that, at definite persons and definite situations. I think it is much more my duty to stir up my own conscience in smaller matters, to try to understand other people better, to get better and less selfish. Why should it be impossible then to act accordingly with regard to more important issues?

That is the point: I want to grow up

into a better world where a higher law grants more happiness, in a new world where God's commandment reigns: You Shall Love Each Other.

Edgar Kupfer was imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp in 1940. His last three years in Dachau he obtained a clerical job in the concentration camp storeroom. This position allowed him to keep a secret diary on stolen scraps of papers and pieces of pencil. He would bury his writings and when Dachau was liberated on April 29, 1945 he collected them again. The "Dachau Diaries" were published in 1956. From his Dachau notes he wrote an essay on vegetarianism which was translated into "immigrant" English. A carbon copy of this 38 page essay is preserved with the original Dachau Diaries in the Special Collection of the Library of the University of Chicago. The above are the excerpts from this essay that were reprinted in the postscript of the book "Radical Vegetarianism" by Mark Mathew Braunstein (1981 Panjandrum Books, Los Angeles, CA).

Respect for Animals

interview with Isaac Bashevis Singer

Twice a winner of the National Book Award, Isaac Bashevis Singer was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978. Singer's enormous popularity and stature in the United States is the more astonishing since his first language—the language in which he thinks and creates—is Yiddish. He once joked that his writing must be 150 percent better than it appears “because you lose 50 percent in the translation.” Even though Singer speaks German and Polish and has a good command of English, he prefers to write in Yiddish because he feels that “it has vitamins that other languages haven't got.” Consequently, he is the first writer to have received a Nobel Prize who writes in a language for which there is no country.

Singer was born July 14th, 1904, in Radzymin, Poland. Both of his grandfathers were rabbis as was his father. It is difficult to imagine more unfavorable auspices for a young novelist than to be forced into exile from his native land at the age of 31 with a gift of eloquence in a language that was becoming extinct. Had anyone suggested in 1935 (the year of Singer's emigration to America) that a Polish refugee, writing in a language silenced by the Holocaust, would receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978, Isaac Singer would have been the first to laugh.

How long have you been a vegetarian?

I've been a vegetarian for 14 years.

What do you usually eat in the course of a day?

I eat what I like. In the morning I have some skim milk and hardboiled eggs. For lunch I take a sandwich that consists of toast, sliced tomatoes, and cottage cheese. In the evenings,

some vegetables. This is mere or less how it goes every day.

Have you felt better since you became a vegetarian?

Since I didn't do it to feel better, I never measure it by that. I feel that I'm right. This is the main thing.

I once read that it was Spinoza's notion that man can do as he likes to animals which repelled you from eating meat.

Yes. I don't say that this passage made me a vegetarian, but I felt, when I read it, a great protest. I thought, if we can do to animals whatever we please, why can't another man come with a theory that we can do to human beings what we please? This did not make me a vegetarian. I was in my mind a vegetarian before—because when I read this I was revolted. And though I love Spinoza and always admired him (and I still do), I did not like this text.

Many of your own stories treat the subject of vegetarianism. Do you use vegetarian leitmotifs intentionally?

I would say that of course I never sit down to write a story with this intention, with a vegetarian tendency or morality. I wouldn't preach. I don't believe in messages. But sometimes if you believe in something, it will come out. Whenever I mention animals, I feel there is a great, great injustice in the fact they are treated the way they are.

I've noticed that you use butchers and slaughtermen to represent evil.

Well, I'm inclined to do so. If a character's a ruffian, I would make him a butcher—although some of them are very nice people.

In the story Blood was it your intention to show that people who traffic in animal flesh have something rapacious about them?

What I wanted to show was that the desire for blood has an affinity with lust.

In **Blood**, the female character, Risha, first seduces the ritual slaughterer Reuben, then insists on killing the animals herself. She sets up as a nonkosher butcher, and, as though following a logical progression, finally becomes a . . .

She becomes a werewolf. Do humans who eat meat become predators?

In shedding blood there is always an element of lust.

At the beginning of the story, you mentioned that the Cabalists knew that blood and lust are related, and that's why the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" immediately follows the injunction against killing.

Yes, but I feel so myself. There is always an element of sadism in lust and vice versa.

Do you feel that people who eat meat are just as reprehensible as the slaughterer?

The people who eat meat are not conscious of the actual slaughter. Those who do the hunting, the hunters, are, I would say, in the grip of a sexual passion. Those who eat meat share in the guilt, but since they're not conscious of the actual slaughter, they believe it is a natural thing. I would not want to accuse them of inadvertent slaughter. But they are not brought up to believe in compassion.

I would say that it would be better for humanity to stop eating meat and stop torturing these animals. I always say that if we don't stop treating these

animals the way we do, we will never have any rest.

I think other people are bothered by meat-eating too, but they say to themselves: "What can I do!" They're afraid that if they stop eating meat they will die from hunger. I've been a vegetarian for so many years—thank God I'm still alive!

I've also noticed that in The Slaughterer, you say that the phylacteries . . . are made of leather, yes. I'm always conscious of it. Even the Torah is made from hide. And I feel that this somehow is wrong. Then you say, or have the character in The Slaughter say, "Father in heaven, Thou art a slaughterer!"

Didn't we just have an earthquake in Turkey where thousands of innocent people died? We don't know His mysteries and motivations. But I sometimes feel like praying to a vegetarian god.

Do you feel that people who eat meat are evil?

Well, I wouldn't go so far. I don't want to say this about all the people who eat meat. There were many saints who ate meat, very many wonderful people. I don't want to say evil things about people who eat meat. I only like to say that I'm against it. My vegetarianism is in fact a kind of protest against the laws of nature, because actually the animals would suffer whether we ate them or not. Whatever the case, I am for vegetarianism.

In previous interviews you have stated that like the Cabalists you feel that this is a fallen world, the worst of possible worlds.

This is what the Cabalists believe. I don't know all the worlds. All I can see is that this world is a terrible world.

Do you think meat-eating contributes to the triumph of evil throughout the world?

To me, it is an evil thing—slaughter is

an evil thing.

Do you think the world might be improved if we stopped the slaughter?

I think so. At least we should try. I think, as a rule, a vegetarian is not a murderer, he is not a criminal. I believe that a man who becomes a vegetarian because he has compassion with animals is not going to kill people or be cruel to people. When one becomes a vegetarian it purifies the soul.

In an interview that you gave to Commentary in the mid-1960s, you mentioned that you were something of a scholar in spiritual matters.

Scholar? I wouldn't consider myself a scholar.

Well, do you think that animal souls also participate in the spiritual world?

Well, I have no doubt about it. As a matter of fact, I have a great love for animals that don't eat any meat.

Many of the great poets and philosophers of classical antiquity look back with nostalgia on a golden age in which war, murder, and crime were unknown, food was abundant, and everyone was vegetarian. Do you think that if people became vegetarian again they would become better people?

Yes. According to the Bible, it seems that God did not want people to eat meat. And, in many cases where people became very devout, or very pious, they stopped eating meat and drinking wine. Many vegetarians are anti-alcoholic, although I am not.

I think one loses desire for intoxicants when one becomes a vegetarian it purifies the body.

I think it purifies the soul.

Do you believe in the transmigration of souls?

There's no scientific evidence of it, but I

personally am inclined to believe in it. According to the Cabalists, when people sin, they become animals in the next life, sometimes ferocious animals, like tigers and snakes. I wouldn't be surprised if it were true.

Do you believe in the actual manifestations of demons in the physical world?

I believe it—yes. I mean, I don't know what they are. I'm sure that if they exist, they are part of nature; but I feel that there are beings that we haven't yet discovered. Just as we discovered only about two hundred years ago the existence of microbes and bacteria, there is no reason why we shouldn't one day discover some other beings. We do not know everything that goes on around us.

So you think there are malevolent spirits in the world today?

I think there may be such spirits or astral bodies—I don't know what to call them. Since I've never seen them or contacted them, everything I say is just guesswork. But I feel there may be entities of which we have no inkling. Just the same, they exist and influence our life just as bacteria and microbes did without our knowing it.

Do you think, on the other hand, that there are benevolent spirits?

Yes, I do. There is a great possibility of it.

Do you wear leather and articles of clothing made from animals?

I try not to, but I can never get the kind of shoes that are not, although I'm going to do something about it. What about you? Do you wear leather shoes?

No, I don't wear anything that could cost an animal his life.

Tell me the name of the place where I

can get these shoes that you wear.

I can send you the name of a mail order shoe company where you can get them.

Do me a favor and please do.

I shall. There's a mail order firm in Patterson, New Jersey —The Haband Co. —which makes shoes of nothing but synthetic leather.

T hey're not to be gotten in stores?

You can get them, if you're willing to make a canvass of all the stores — which can be quite time-consuming —and insist upon shoes fashioned entirely from man-made materials.

I never wore furs, and I don't want to wear anything made from animals.

I just think that if one is vegetarian, one should be consistent.

You are absolutely right, 100 percent.

A Vegetarian Sourcebook

By Keith Akers

Animals do not want to be killed, of course, but in addition to being killed, they suffer a great deal of pain in the process of being turned into food. Of course, their slaughter itself causes a certain amount of pain (more or less, depending on the method of slaughter used). But the process by which the animals are raised in Western societies also causes suffering. Indeed, given the suffering of many animals' day-to-day life, slaughter itself is practically an act of mercy.

In most Western countries, animals are raised on "factory farms." The treatment animals receive in them is solely connected with price. While it is not necessary to be cruel to animals prior to their slaughter, it does save money.

There is no disagreement about the basic facts concerning the way animals are treated on these factory farms. The nature and types of pain endured by animals in the process of being raised on such farms have been detailed frequently before, most notably in Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*. I will spare the reader too many of the grisly details, but will indicate the broad outlines of the issue Singer treats so well in his book.

Crowding is the worst problem. Indeed, it is the main cause of the high mortality rate among many factory farm animals. Chickens typically lose 10 percent or 15 percent of their population before they ever get to the slaughterhouse. Veal calves suffer a 10 percent mortality in their brief 15 weeks of confinement. It makes more economic sense to crowd the animals together and increase mortality than to pay the money necessary to maintain all of the

animals in more humane conditions.

Chickens are probably the most abused animals. Near the end of its 8 or 9-week life, a chicken may have no more space than a sheet of notebook paper to stand on. Laying hens are crowded into cages so small that none can so much as stretch its wings. This inevitably leads to feather-pecking and cannibalism — the chickens attack and even eat each other. Obviously, such chickens are under a great deal of stress.

The manufacturer's response to this is de-beaking — cutting off most or all of the chicken's beak. Of course, this causes severe pain in the chickens, but prevents the cannibalism.

A similar problem arises when pigs are kept in confinement systems. Pigs, under the stress of the factory farm system, bite each other's tails. The solution, of course, is tail-docking, whereby the tail is largely removed.

About 75 percent of all cattle in the industrialized countries spend the last months of their lives in feedlots, where they are fattened for slaughter. Cattle usually have at least some degree of freedom for the first months of their lives, veal calves being the exception. Veal calves are kept in very small stalls, prevented even from turning around, and kept deliberately anemic. They are denied any roughage or iron. The purpose of this is to keep the flesh pale-looking. It has no effect on the nutritional value of the meat (except perhaps to make it less nutritious); it does not even alter the taste. The only effect this cruel diet has is to produce a pale-colored flesh.

Transportation of animals is frequently another traumatic event in the life of any

animal destined for slaughter. Cattle may spend one or two days in a truck without any food, water, or heat - which can be terrifying, and even deadly, in winter time. It is not unusual for cattle to lose 9 percent of their body weight while being transported. About 24 hours or so before slaughter, all the animal's food and water is cut off - there is no point in feeding an animal food which won't be digested before it is killed.

The act of slaughter is not necessarily painful. In many slaughterhouses in the United States, animals must be stunned before having their throats slit. After being rendered unconscious, they are bled to death. The animals must experience awful terror in the minutes or hours before they are killed, smelling the blood of those who have gone before. But the moment of death itself need not be painful at all. Unfortunately, not all slaughterhouses utilize such stunning devices. It is probable, in such cases, that an animal bleeds to death while fully conscious.

The fact of death is almost impossible to minimize in most systems which produce animals for food. In our culture, the use of animals for food in any way usually means putting the animals to death. Even dairy cows and laying hens are likely to wind up in someone's soup once they cease producing. Efficient production of milk, eggs, or meat for humans invariably entails substantial suffering for the animals and - sooner or later - death. The ugly reality of modern factory farms is an open book, and for this reason I have not gone into detail. Peter Singer's comments are worth quoting at this point.

“Killing animals is in itself a troubling act. It has been said that if we had to kill our own meat we would all be vegetarians. There may be exceptions to that general rule, but it is true that most people prefer

not to inquire into the killing of the animals they eat. Yet those who, by their purchases, require animals to be killed have no right to be shielded from this or any other aspect of the production of the meat they buy. If it is distasteful for humans to think about, what can it be like for the animals to experience it?”

Ethical Significance of these Facts

Among vegetarians there is certainly no consensus on what ethical system, philosophy, or religion one ought to have. Most ethical vegetarians, though, agree on these two points:

- Animals suffer real pain at the hands of meat producers, both from their horrible living conditions and, in some cases, from the way they are slaughtered; and in no case do animals want to die.
- Animals are our fellow creatures and are entitled to at least some of the same considerations that we extend to our (human) fellow creatures; specifically, not to suffer or be killed unnecessarily.

Very few have seriously attacked the first view, that animals suffer real pain or have real feelings. Some have questioned whether animals suffer quite as much pain as humans do, perhaps because animals (allegedly) cannot foresee events in the same way that humans do. Only one major philosopher, Descartes, is said to have held the extreme view that animals have no feelings whatsoever – that they are automations.

The second issue though, whether animals are our fellow creatures, entitled to those same considerations that we accord other human beings or even pets, is less obvious. This issue requires a more thorough examination.

Are Animals Our Fellow Creatures?

Most people recognize a set of living beings whom they acknowledge to be entitled to a certain amount of consideration of their part. The inhibitions against killing or mistreating one's own family or near relations may very well have a biological basis. Most human beings extend the idea of a "fellow creature" to other humans of their own race or nationality and often to all humans anywhere. The most logical ethical vegetarian position is that this idea would be extended to include animals as well as humans.

Animals are like us in many ways. They have the senses of sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing. They can communicate, though usually on a more rudimentary level than humans. They experience many of the same emotions that humans do, such as fear or excitement. So why shouldn't animals be considered our fellow creatures?

There are three frequently heard attacks on the idea that animals are our fellow creatures. These kinds of attacks can be summarized as follows:

- Killing for food is natural; "Animals kill other animals. Lions kill zebras, and spiders kill flies. Killing for food is part of nature; it can't be wrong for us to do something, which is natural.
- Animals are significantly different from people, so it's all right to kill animals: "We can only have equal considerations for those who are our equals. Animals are not our equals; they are weaker than we are, and they are not rational. Therefore they are not our fellow creatures, and it can't be wrong to eat them."
- To abstain from killing is absurd: "Plants are living creatures too. Perhaps plants have feelings. If one objects to killing, logically one

ought to object to eating all living creatures, and thus ought not to eat plants either."

Let us examine these arguments one by one.

Is Killing for Food Natural?

The first argument, perhaps the most sophisticated, concedes that animals may be in some sense our fellow creatures and that animals suffer real pain. But because of the dictates of nature, it is sometimes all right to kill and eat our fellow creatures; or alternatively, it is all right to eat those of our fellow creatures which, as a species, are naturally food for us.

This is quite an admirable argument. It explains practically everything; why we do not eat each other, except under conditions of unusual stress; why we may kill certain other animals (they are in the order of nature, food for us); even why we should be kind to pets and try to help miscellaneous wildlife (they are not naturally our food). There are some problems with the idea that an order of nature determines which species are food for us, but an order against eating certain species may vary from culture to culture.

The main problem with this argument is that it does not justify the practice of meat-eating or animal husbandry as we know it today; it justifies hunting. The distinction between hunting and animal husbandry probably seems rather fine to the man in the street, or even to your typical rule-utilitarian moral philosopher. The distinction, however, is obvious to an ecologist. If one defends killing on the grounds that it occurs in nature, then one is defending the practice as it occurs in nature.

When one species of animal preys on another in nature, it only preys on a very small proportion of the total species population. Obviously, the predator species relies on its prey for its continued survival. Therefore, to wipe the

prey species out through overhunting would be fatal. In practice, members of such predator species rely on such strategies as territoriality to restrict overhunting, and to insure the continued existence of its food supply.

Moreover, only the weakest members of the prey species are the predator's victims; the feeble, the sick, the lame or the young accidentally separated from the fold. The life of the typical zebra is usually placid, even in lion country. This kind of violence is the exception in nature, not the rule.

As it exists in the wild, hunting is the preying upon of isolated members of any animal herd. Animal husbandry is the nearly complete annihilation of an animal herd. In nature, this kind of slaughter does not exist. The philosopher is free to argue that there is no moral difference between hunting and the slaughter, but he cannot invoke nature as a defense of this idea.

Why are hunters, not butchers, most frequently taken to task by the larger community for their killing of animals? Hunters usually react to such criticism by replying that if hunting is wrong, then meat-eating must be wrong as well. The hunter is certainly right on one point - the larger community is hypocritical to object to hunting when it consumes the flesh of domesticated animals. If any form of meat-eating is justified, it would be meat from hunted animals.

Is hunting wrong? A vegetarian could reply that killing is always wrong and that animals have a right to live. This would seem to have the odd consequence that it is not only wrong for humans to kill, but that it is wrong for lions to kill zebras, spiders to catch flies, and so on. If animals have a right not be killed, then they would seem to have a right not to be killed

by any species, human or nonhuman.

There are two ways of replying to such an apparent paradox:

- to draw a distinction between necessary and unnecessary killing. Humans have an alternative: they do not have to eat meat. A tiger or wolf, on the other hand, knows no other way. Killing can be justified if only it is necessary, and for humans it is not.
- to accept the challenge, and to agree that the most desirable state of the world is one, in which all killing, even between nonhumans animals, has ceased. Such a world would, perhaps, be like that envisioned by Isaiah in which the wolf would lie down with the lamb...After humans become vegetarians, we can start to work on the wolves.

Are Animals Different from People?

The second argument justifying meat consumption is usually expressed as a sort of reverse social contract theory. Animals are different from people; there is an unbridgeable gulf between humans and animals, which relieves us of the responsibility of treating animals in the same way that we would treat humans.

David Hume argues that because of our great superiority to animals, we cannot regard them as deserving of any kind of justice:

“Our intercourse with them could be called society, which supposes a degree of equality, but absolute command on the one side, and servile obedience on the other. Whatever we covet, they must instantly resign: Our permission is the only tenure, by which they hold their possessions...This is plainly the situation of men, with regard to animals.”

Society and justice, for Hume, presuppose equality. The problem with this theory is that it justifies too much. Hume himself

admits in the next paragraph that civilized Europeans have sometimes, due to their “great superiority”, thrown off all restraints of justice in dealing with “barbarous Indians” and that men, in some societies, have reduced women to a similar slavery. Thus, Hume’s arguments appear to justify not only colonialism and sexual discrimination, but probably also racism, infanticide and basically anything one can get away with.

Thomas Aquinas provides a different version of the unbridgeable gulf theory. This time it is the human possession of reason, rather than superior force, that makes us so different from animals. Aquinas states that we have no obligations to animals because we can only have obligations to those with whom we can have fellowship. Animals, not being rational, cannot share in our fellowship. Thus, we do not have any duties of charity to animals.

There are two possible responses to this: that the ability to feel, not the ability to reason, is what is ethically relevant; or that animals are not all that different from humans, being more rational than is commonly supposed.

Both of these objections are expressed briefly and succinctly by Jeremy Bentham:

“A full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not ‘Can they reason?’, nor, ‘Can they talk?’ but ‘Can they suffer?’”

The problem is that none of the differences between humans and animals seem to be ethically significant. Animals are just as intelligent and communicative as small children or even some mentally defective humans. If we do not eat small children and mentally defective

humans, then what basis do we have for eating animals? Animals certainly have feelings, and are aware of their environment in many significant ways. So while animals may not have all the same qualities that humans do, there would seem to be no basis for totally excluding them from our consideration.

Equal Rights for Plants?

A third argument seeks to reduce ethical vegetarianism to absurdity. If vegetarians object to killing living creatures (it is argued), then logically they should object to killing plants and insects as well as animals. But this is absurd. Therefore, it can’t be wrong to kill animals.

Fruitarianism take the argument concerning plants quite seriously; they do not eat any food which causes injury or death to either animals or plants. This means, in their view, a diet of those fruits, nuts, and seeds which can be eaten without the destruction of the plant that bears their food. Finding a theoretically significant line between plants and animals, though, is not particularly difficult. Plants have no evolutionary need to feel pain, and completely lack a central nervous system. Nature does not create pain gratuitously but only when it enables the organism to survive. Animals, being mobile, would benefit from having a sense of pain. Plants would not.

Even if one does not want to become a fruitarian and believes that plants have feelings (against all evidence to the contrary), it does not follow that vegetarianism is absurd. We ought to destroy as few plants as possible. And by raising and eating an animal as food, many more plants are destroyed indirectly by the animal we eat than if we merely ate the plants directly.

What about insects? While there may be reason to kill insects, there is no reason to

kill them for food. One distinguishes between the way meat animals are killed for food and the way insects are killed. Insects are killed only when they intrude upon human territory, posing a threat to the comfort, health, or well-being of humans. There is a difference between ridding oneself of intruders and going out of one's way to find and kill something which would otherwise be harmless.

These questions may have a certain fascination for philosophers, but most vegetarians are not bothered by them. For any vegetarian who is not a biological pacifist, there would not seem to be any particular difficulty in distinguishing ethically between insects and plants on one hand, and animals and humans on the other.

“Terrorists” For Animal Rights by Colman McCarthy

Police at the United States Capitol put the nation at risk last Sunday. They allowed an estimated 24,000 terrorists to gather for an afternoon rally on the west lawn of the Capitol. The group was an international assembly of citizens working for animal rights, labeled “terrorists” three days before by Louis Sullivan, secretary of health and human services.

Sullivan, a physician who argues with a broadax more than a scalpel, said the “animal right terrorists” coming to the rally were “on the wrong side of morality.” On the right side, Sullivan places—besides himself—medical researchers whose lethal experiments on hundreds of millions of animals have been carried out, until lately, with few constraints beyond amiable peer review, if that.

Sullivan’s smear is part of an emerging counteroffensive being waged by those agencies or businesses whose grants and profits are animal-based. The secretary mouthed publicly what many researchers in lab coats have been grumbling among themselves for some time: animal right advocates are anti-science fanatics, while we are selfless pursuers of human advancement.

On hand for Sullivan’s terrorism speech were several appreciative research organizations as well as some nonmedical slaughterers and tormentors of animals who also see themselves toiling away on behalf of humankind: the American Meat Institute, the National Cattlemen’s Association, the National Pork Producers Council, the National Turkey Federation, and the National Broiler Council. A worry arises: If organized protests have lowered fur sales, can meat be next?

In medical research alone, large numbers

are involved. The Department of Agriculture reported in 1988 that 140,471 dogs, 42,271 cats, 51,641 primates, 431,457 guinea pigs, 331,945 hamsters, 459,254 rabbits and 178,249 “wild animals” were used experimentally. That figure of 1.6 million animals, which excludes mice and rats, is an annual roll a small fraction of the estimated 10 million creatures killed daily for food in the United States.

Until the 1970s both commercialists and medical researchers killing animals had little reason to be on the defensive. Meat was not only macho but was promoted as necessary for health, and the only people alarmed at animal experimentation were a few antivivisectionists, usually in England.

The 1970s and ‘80s saw a flow of books and articles on factory farming, a surge of animal rights and vegetarian magazines, and new animal welfare legislation to protect creatures from carriage horses in Central Park to parrots imported from Central America. In 1980 People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals had a membership of six. Now it’s 300,000. In the same decade, the Humane Society of the United States grew from 160,000 to 963,000 members.

Sullivan’s labeling these citizens “terrorists” on the “wrong side of morality” is a squeal of panic desperation. If he had more concern for the health of the public than the health of the medical research and meat industries, he would have skipped the polarizing invective. On animal testing, Sullivan may share the prevailing research opinion that human beings can ethically subject animals to pain that would never be sanctioned for people. But why isn’t he raising questions on either the

practicality or effectiveness of animal testing? Was it medically necessary for the U.S. Army to pay \$2.1 million to Louisiana State University to shoot 700 cats in the head to learn that the animals had post-trauma breathing problems. Was it medically effective to force primates to inhale tobacco smoke to learn that it caused lung cancer?

These are the equivalents of the Pentagon needing \$600 toilet seats to defend the free world. University and medical researchers have been as artful as military contractors in enriching themselves with grants to discover the miracle vaccine always just one more animal experiment away. Or two more. Or three more.

The barbarity of using animals in painful tests aside, which is where Sullivan and friends prefer it, the objection of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals stands: "Despite the decades of animal research, no one has been cured of heart disease, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, diabetes, or cancer of the colon, breast, or uterus." Clean drinking water, food, and already available medicine can prevent nearly all the 60,000 disease-induced deaths that Oxfam reports are occurring daily in the Third World.

Louis Sullivan can keep on with his axings, but too many citizens are being educated on both the ethics and uselessness of killing animals for human benefit, greed, or pleasure. Changes, brought on by animal rights advocates, have come without commercial devastations. Revlon, Avon, and Mary Kay have recently stopped animal testing. Each had been routinely inflicting their chemicals on animals. Revlon now advertises its products as "cruelty-free."

It was terrorism, all right, behind this conversion, the fearful terror of losing money. Revlon lives. So do some animals.

