

The cover features a stylized illustration. In the foreground, a person with dark skin is lying down, wrapped in a vibrant, multi-colored striped blanket. They are holding a stringed instrument, possibly a lute or a similar folk instrument, which has a white body and a dark neck. To the right of the person is a simple, reddish-brown ceramic vase. In the background, a lion with a thick, golden-brown mane is looking towards the person. The setting is a landscape with rolling hills under a blue sky with a large, pale moon. The overall style is painterly and evocative.

ANIMALS & ETHICS

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

ANGUS TAYLOR

THIRD EDITION

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BROADVIEW GUIDES to PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER FOUR

IS IT WRONG TO EAT OR HUNT ANIMALS?

**For the session on The Ethics of Eating Animals, please read 91–104
For the session on Hunting and Wildlife Control, please read 107–116**

But for the sake of some little mouthful of flesh, we deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that portion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy.

Plutarch (46-c.122)¹

[Samuel Johnson:] There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation; but they are recompensed by existence. If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be nearly so numerous.

[James Boswell:] But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of existence upon the terms on which they have it.²

Each year human beings kill thousands of millions of animals. In the United States alone thousands of millions of birds (most of them chickens) are slaughtered annually for food, along with tens of millions each of pigs, sheep, and cattle, while hunters kill one or two

¹ Plutarch, "Of Eating of Flesh", in Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds., *Animal Rights and Human Obligations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 113.

² James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, vol. 2 (London: Charles Dilly, 1791), p. 71.

hundred million wild animals (Nicoll and Russell 1990; Singer 2002). Opposition to the raising and killing of animals for human consumption has been a prime focus of the animal-liberation movement and of liberationist philosophers. In this chapter we consider the arguments for and against using animals for food (and, implicitly, for other purposes such as clothing, for which their dead bodies provide material). We then go on to examine a related but separate matter: the issue of hunting, first where hunting for sport is concerned and then in the matter of subsistence hunting, with reference to the Inuit of Arctic Canada.

Vegetarianism

Generally speaking, vegetarians are those who deliberately abstain from eating meat. Vegans try to avoid any food or other product that involves animal exploitation. (Many vegans do not refer to themselves as vegetarians because they see consuming eggs and dairy products as no better, ethically, than eating meat.)

Vegetarianism has a long history (C. Spencer 1993; Walters and Portmess 1999). In India, where Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism preach reverence for all life, it has been common for more than two thousand years (Chapple 1993; Perrett 1993). In ancient Greece vegetarianism was associated with the mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras and his followers. Indeed, until the middle of the nineteenth century in Europe, vegetarianism was often referred to as the Pythagorean diet. Prominent vegetarians of the past include Leonardo da Vinci, George Bernard Shaw, and Mohandas Gandhi. (Gandhi's ethical commitment to vegetarianism was solidified when, as a student in London, he read a book on the subject by animal-rights philosopher Henry Salt.) The ancient-Greek philosopher and biographer Plutarch rejected the idea that humans are meat-eaters by nature and denounced the callousness of those who consume flesh when they have no need to. The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley argued that a vegetable diet is conducive to spiritual as well as physical well-being (Morton 1994). Leo Tolstoy, who converted to vegetarianism in 1885, wrote vividly of his visit to a slaughterhouse, where he was particularly horrified by the indifference to suffering displayed by the workers. Isaac Newton is reported to have found meat-eating repugnant. Albert Einstein praised vegetarianism and became vegetarian himself near the end of his life. Voltaire denounced the consumption of animal flesh; so

did Henry David Thoreau, who stuck primarily to a vegetarian diet. Benjamin Franklin, who was vegetarian for some years, reverted to meat-eating after seeing one fish inside the body of another. His reasoning was: if animals eat each other, why shouldn't he eat them?

Adolf Hitler, of all people, is often said to have been a vegetarian, influenced by the dietary views of his hero, the composer Richard Wagner. This claim may originally have been designed to portray the German dictator as an ascetic who was totally devoted to serving his nation. Hitler did restrict his consumption of meat for health reasons, though some reports have it that he remained fond of liver dumplings and Bavarian sausages; not only did he eat meat now and then, but once in power he banned vegetarian organizations (Berry 2004; Schwartz 2001). Whatever the truth about the Nazi leader's personal habits, there are those who are haunted by a spectre from that time. Isaac Bashevis Singer, vegetarian and Nobel-laureate Yiddish writer, has the protagonist of one of his stories ("The Letter Writer") reflect that "for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka," thus likening our mass killing of sentient beings to the Holocaust. This controversial comparison has been raised by others too (Almeida and Bernstein 2000; Coetzee 1999; Derrida 2002; C. Patterson 2002; Szybel 2006b).

In recent decades various reasons have been adduced in support of vegetarianism (Goodall 2005; M.A. Fox 1999; Hill 1996; Robbins 1987; Stephens 1994). These include good health (since diets high in animal fat and low in vegetables and fruit are correlated with heart disease and cancer), alleviation of world hunger (since each pound of protein produced in the form of meat requires the consumption by animals of many pounds of vegetable protein that might have been consumed by humans), and protection of the environment (since use of land for grazing and for cultivating feed significantly reduces wildlife habitats, requires enormous energy consumption, and results in much pollution, and since tropical rainforests, which play a major role in the health of the biosphere, are being devastated to clear more land for livestock production). While these reasons involve ethical considerations, the reasons in support of vegetarianism to be considered here have to do with the suffering and death of animals.

The issue of suffering and the issue of death are not to be conflated. In the same passage in which he maintains that we are wrong to torment

In his thoughts, Herman spoke a eulogy for the mouse who had shared a portion of her life with him and who, because of him, had left this earth. "What do they know—all those scholars, all those philosophers, all the leaders of the world—about such as you? They have convinced themselves that man, the worst transgressor of all the species, is the crown of creation. All other creatures were created merely to provide him with food, pelts, to be tortured, exterminated. In relation to them, all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka. . . ."

—Isaac Bashevis Singer, "The Letter Writer", in *The Séance and Other Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), p. 270

animals, Jeremy Bentham (1970, p. 282n) argues that "If the being eaten were all, there is very good reason why we should be suffered to eat such of them as we like to eat: we are the better for it, and they are never the worse. They have none of those long-protracted anticipations of future misery which we have. The death they suffer in our hands commonly is, and always may be, a speedier, and by that means a less painful one, than that which would await them in the inevitable course of nature." Bentham's distinction between suffering and being killed is a potentially important one when we consider the issue of eating meat.

Meat and Suffering

In *Animal Liberation* Peter Singer advocates vegetarianism not on the grounds that killing is wrong but on grounds of the suffering inflicted on most animals raised for consumption, who are not allowed to exist in conditions where they might exercise their natural faculties and lead satisfying lives. (See also R. Harrison 1964; Mason and Singer 1980.) Sweden has passed a law requiring, among other things, that cattle be allowed to graze and that pigs and chickens not be confined in a manner that prevents them from moving naturally (Rollin 1995). Sweden, however, is an exception to the rule. On the basis of a pleasure/pain calculus, a strong case can be made for refraining from eating the flesh of intensively reared (or "factory farmed") animals. At the same time, this path suggests the moral acceptability of eating meat from "free range" (non-intensively reared) animals, provided that these animals are killed with little or no pain—a goal that is frequently violated in the meat industry (Eisnitz 1997).

Indeed, Roger Crisp (1997) goes so far as to argue that, while we should abstain from eating the flesh of intensively-reared animals, we have an obligation to eat the flesh of non-intensively reared animals, since doing so will maximize the number of animals leading pleasant lives. The claim that it is actually wrong to abstain from meat will seem odd to most people, including meat eaters, depending as it does on the notion that we ought to bring into existence beings (human or non-human) just for the sake of maximizing utility in the world. It may be doubted that enough animals could be reared non-intensively to provide everyone with meat, but it could be argued that we should eat meat whenever we can obtain it from non-intensively reared animals. (See also Matheny and Chan 2005; Schedler 2005.)

The kind of position sketched above relies on the *replaceability argument*. This argument says that if an animal lives a life that involves more pleasure than pain, and if it would not have existed unless it had been deliberately brought into existence by humans, then it is acceptable to kill the animal and replace it with another animal that will lead a similar life. Thus, for example, it might be said that, if we kill a pig painlessly and replace it with another pig leading a similarly pleasant life, we do nothing wrong. A number of objections can be raised against the replaceability argument; for instance, although the argument is normally advanced to justify killing that is done for the purpose of bringing some alleged benefit to oneself or others, its logic appears to license the infliction of pain on an animal for no good result, provided that, on the whole, the animal's life is still worth living (Cave 1982b).

Would we be willing to apply the replaceability argument to human beings? What about painlessly killing a happy person—say, a child we have brought into existence—and then bringing into existence another happy person to replace her? If that is not acceptable, why not? Singer (1979, 1993a, 1993b) rejects the replaceability argument in cases of beings who are self-conscious. Self-conscious beings, unlike merely conscious beings, can have the desire to live, a desire that would be thwarted by their being killed. This means that the death of a self-conscious being is not balanced by the creation of another, similar, being.

In taking this position, Singer rejects hedonistic utilitarianism in favour of preference utilitarianism. This version of utilitarianism measures utility not in terms of pleasure and pain but in terms of the satisfaction and frustration of preferences. It makes an important difference, on this view, which animals are self-conscious and which are not. Those that are not self-conscious, unlike those that are, may rightly be raised and killed for food, provided that they live pleasant lives and that their deaths result in the coming into existence of other animals that lead similarly pleasant lives. Just which animals are self-conscious is not clear, but Singer suggests that chickens, for example, are not. The conclusion that some meat-eating is justified is not speciesist, says Singer, since it results not from a prejudice in favour of our own species but from a consideration of the fact that not all beings have the capacity to desire to go on living. (The replacement option will thus also apply to human infants insofar as they have not yet attained self-consciousness,

even though few parents will want to kill and replace their babies—and fewer still will want to do this in order to eat them.)

In light of the above, we can envisage that liberationists who subscribe to Singer's principles might sometimes eat meat without logical inconsistency. In addition, many liberationists who oppose even painless killing of free-range animals will see no violation of principle in eating animals that have died from old age, illness, or accident (Sapontzis 1987). However, because liberationists are likely to have a gut (!) revulsion against the idea of consuming any animal flesh, eating meat is probably rare among those who are philosophically committed to ending the idea that animals are essentially resources. Singer's intent, of course, is not to justify meat-eating—quite the contrary. He emphasizes that the suffering of factory-farmed animals rules out most meat consumption. And though he holds that eating some free-range animals may be justified in principle, he thinks that in practice eating any meat is bound to lead to the callous attitude that animals are mere means to our ends.

In *Rights, Killing, and Suffering* R.G. Frey contends that the ethical arguments advanced by Singer in support of vegetarianism fail. Frey doubts that any of the animals commonly raised for food are self-conscious; if Frey is correct, then they are all candidates for being killed and replaced according to Singer's criterion. Singer says replacement is not an option where animals lead unpleasant lives; Frey thinks it is possible to improve the lives of intensively-farmed animals to a level where killing and replacing them becomes acceptable. Like Michael Leahy (1991), Frey believes that a concerned individual can without inconsistency continue to eat meat while advocating improvements to the factory-farming system on behalf of animals.

While most philosophers agree that the suffering that most animals experience while being raised for meat is of direct moral import, one strand of thinking dissents from this opinion. For most contractarians the suffering of animals is of only indirect moral import. That is, animal suffering is something to be avoided only insofar as it negatively affects human beings. Thus Peter Carruthers (1992), who, as we have seen in Chapter 1, is prepared to argue that animals do not suffer, holds that even if they do, their suffering is of no account unless it bothers people. His solution: practices that may cause pain to animals, like unusual sexual practices, should not be flaunted in public because of the likelihood

of giving offence to some people. Carruthers does believe that inflicting pain on animals for trivial reasons is to be avoided but, as previously noted, his idea here is that such behaviour may develop the wrong character traits in us in that we may be led to treat human beings badly. He thinks that factory farming does not inflict pain for trivial reasons, since many people earn their livelihoods in this industry.

Carruthers also suggests that people who are upset by animal suffering should just not think about it. Modern society facilitates this to some extent by hiding the workings of slaughterhouses from public view and typically selling meat in small chunks wrapped in paper or cellophane. A twist is to take the sting out of the issue by joking about it: bizarrely, much advertising for meat products and for restaurants shows images of happy animals begging to be eaten. One Internet blogger calls this "suicide food" and maintains a site devoted to reproducing pictures of pigs, chickens, cows, and fish wielding knives and forks, gleefully serving up the bodies of their fellows, or barbecuing themselves, or boiling themselves in cauldrons. The ubiquity of such images suggests they have much to say about the psychological attitude of people in industrial society to the animals they consume.

Nick Fiddes (1991) insists that meat-eating is more than just an act of consumption: killing, cooking, and eating the flesh of animals provides human beings with authentication of their superiority over the rest of nature. Indeed, Fiddes claims that meat is esteemed by society not *in spite* of the consequences for the animals involved but precisely *because* of those consequences and what they symbolize: our mastery of the non-human world. He notes that meat assumed a new importance in the diets of most European peoples from the seventeenth century onwards, when science was emphasizing the need to dominate nature and when mechanistic philosophers were portraying animals as machines. Fiddes suggests that today's rejection of meat-eating by many people is part and parcel of a rejection of the ideology of domination, domination that is manifest both in relations among human beings and in relations between human beings and the natural environment.

What Makes Killing Wrong?

Whether Singer's moral distinction between self-conscious and merely conscious creatures can be sustained has occasioned some debate

The symbolism of meat-eating is never neutral. To himself, the meat-eater seems to be eating life. To the vegetarian, he seems to be eating death. There is a kind of gestalt-shift between the two positions which makes it hard to change, and hard to raise questions on the matter at all without becoming embattled.
—Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter*, p. 27

(Jamieson 1983; E. Johnson 1983; Lockwood 1979). For Ruth Cigman (1981) the ability or inability of animals to imagine a future for themselves makes all the difference insofar as the morality of killing them is concerned. She believes that almost all animals lack the capacity to have what she calls categorical desires, that is, desires that entail that one wishes to remain alive in order to do something with one's life. (An example would be the desire to become an opera singer, or to raise a family.) To a subject possessing categorical desires, death must appear as a misfortune insofar as it prevents the accomplishment of one's long-term projects. However, death cannot be a misfortune for beings that lack the capacity to have categorical desires. And for beings for whom death cannot be a misfortune it makes no sense to talk about their having a right to life. Cigman does not rule out the possibility that a very few animals, like chimpanzees and dolphins, may be candidates for having a right to life, though she is sceptical even there. Her conclusion is that although the sufferings of animals may rightly be of moral concern to us, their quick and painless deaths should not be. Eating meat is therefore probably justified if the animals' deaths are quick and painless, but not if they suffer as they are prepared for death.

Steve Sapontzis responds at length to Cigman in his book *Morals, Reason, and Animals*. He says that Cigman's argument turns on the idea that, although animals may *have* an interest in life, they cannot *take* an interest in life, since they cannot understand the full significance of death (that it puts an end to one's experiences in this world). Sapontzis denies that this fact about (most or all) animals disqualifies them from having a right to life. Taking an interest in or valuing *X* is not a necessary condition for having a moral right to *X*. After all, if we believe in the existence of human rights we shall ascribe them to people who may never have heard of a charter like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and who may even have been brought up to believe that there are no such things as human rights. We shall also ascribe rights to young children who cannot understand or value them. Just as death is a misfortune for human beings whose enjoyment of life is cut short by death (even by an unexpected and instantaneous death, so that they never have knowledge of their loss), so death is a misfortune for animals who would have enjoyed life had they not been killed. Sapontzis concludes that it makes sense to extend to animals a right to life in order to protect

them from this misfortune. Except for those extraordinary cases where people have no other way to survive, killing sentient animals for food cannot be justified.

Similarly, Rosemary Rodd (1990) suggests that a creature's possession of simple consciousness is sufficient to make killing it wrong, since killing a conscious creature deprives it of future enjoyments whether or not it can anticipate those enjoyments. She also says that the capacity to anticipate future events (a rat's anticipation of feeding time, a dog's anticipation of a walk) does not require a sophisticated level of self-consciousness and is enough to bring into play a utilitarian injunction against killing based on frustration of desires and preferences.

The question of what makes killing wrong (when it is wrong) is complex, and one that arises also in the debates over abortion and euthanasia. As suggested above by several philosophers, a plausible position has it that the wrongness of killing is inseparably involved with the harm that is done to the victim by depriving that individual of the value of future experiences. But this in turn raises difficult issues of identity, having to do with the continuity (or lack of continuity) between the present psychological states of an organism and that organism's past and future psychological states. Jeff McMahan (2002, 2008) maintains that killing animals is not as wrong as killing human persons because animals normally lose less by dying than humans do: not only are the psychological goods of an animal's future normally of lesser quality and quantity than those of a person's future, but, among other reasons, the psychological unity of the individual over time is considerably less in the animal's case, making the animal's interest in continuing to live doubly weak. Still, says McMahan, the wrongness of killing animals based on loss of future goods is great enough to support the argument for vegetarianism. Further, though the psychological goods available to a person significantly exceed those available to an animal, an animal's capacity to experience bodily pain means that the suffering of an animal can approach that of a human. Hence we have no excuse for ignoring or discounting the enormous harm inflicted on animals by factory farming.

By contrast, Meredith Williams (1980) stresses the moral relevance of the unique interests and cultural life that rationality makes possible in human beings. While the fact that animals suffer is reason for some concern, the lesser value of their lives (something Singer admits in his

discussion of what makes killing wrong) undermines Singer's case for equal consideration and hence his argument for vegetarianism. Leslie Francis and Richard Norman (1978) maintain that, though there should be changes in the factory-farming of animals to minimize suffering, animals have no right to life; they lack the communication abilities and sorts of social relations (economic, political, and familial) that would entitle them to the same moral consideration as human beings. The argument of Francis and Norman is somewhat similar to that of Nel Noddings: animals are necessarily excluded from the same consideration that we accord humans because we cannot enter into the same relations of caring and response with them.

The rights view appears to provide a stronger case for vegetarianism than does a utilitarian approach. While both Peter Singer and Tom Regan believe that we are morally obligated to be vegetarian, the ways they reach that conclusion are quite different. The case advanced by Singer (1980) rests on the alleged long-term benefits to humans and animals of our switching to a meatless diet. But, counters Regan (2004a), in view of the enormous economic interests involved in the meat industry, it is not *obvious* that better aggregated consequences will follow from everyone's becoming vegetarian than from continuation of the present state of affairs. Frey (1983) and Leahy (1991) both invoke the spectre of potentially disastrous economic consequences to bolster the case against obligatory vegetarianism. Singer eschews any absolutist position on the issue of vegetarianism; on a utilitarian view the matter is largely an empirical one of discovering what the best overall consequences will be. Regan's rights view, by contrast, enjoins us to become vegetarian as a matter of justice. Animals who are subjects-of-a-life have the right to be treated with respect, including the right not to be harmed. To raise farm animals for slaughter, to treat them as renewable resources (whether or not they are treated "humanely"), is to violate their basic rights. We cannot justify continuing to consume animals by an appeal to the economic consequences of ending the practice any more than we would be able to justify the continuation of human slavery by an appeal to the harmful economic consequences of ending that practice. No one, says Regan, has the right to be protected from harm by the continuation of an unjust practice, one that violates the rights of others.

Is the rights case for vegetarianism watertight? Given that many wild

animals—mice, rabbits, birds, and others—are killed in crop production by farm machinery, pesticides, and habitat destruction, Steven Davis (2003) has suggested that a diet that includes meat from grass-fed (not grain-fed) animals actually kills fewer animals than a strictly vegetarian diet. But his calculations have been disputed (Lamey 2007; Matheny 2003). Given the much smaller amount of land required to produce an equivalent amount of food in vegetable form, even a diet involving meat from pasture-raised animals arguably results in more deaths and more harm to animals.

Hugh Lehman (1988) maintains that a rights view may sometimes condone killing animals for food. He claims that with regard to world population and present food resources we are in effect in a lifeboat situation: not all creatures, human and non-human, can survive. Any overnight prohibition against eating meat would result in there being insufficient food to support all human beings; many people would die, while others would become ill from malnutrition. Hence Regan's worse-off principle implies that, given that death is a greater harm to humans than to animals, it is right to sacrifice animal lives to save human lives. What this means is that meat-eating should continue unless and until food-production systems can be modified to support the world's human population on a vegetarian diet. The details and practicality of a widespread conversion to vegetarianism have not been adequately studied, says Lehman.

Lehman's incremental approach finds a surprising ally in Martha Nussbaum (2004, 2006), who says that the effects on human health and the environment of a total switch to vegetarianism are not yet known, and that therefore we should begin by improving the conditions of animals raised for food. But is Nussbaum's position here consistent with the fundamentals of her capabilities approach? On the one hand, she says that every sentient creature is entitled, as a matter of justice, to continue its life and never to be used merely as a means to the ends of others. On the other hand, she is not convinced that it is wrong, on balance, painlessly to kill and then eat an animal that has been leading a good life. How does the absence of pain excuse killing someone with a right to life, asks Anders Schinkel (2008), especially when Nussbaum's approach holds that an individual need not be conscious of a deprivation in order to be wronged? The array of capabilities to which Nussbaum says animals are entitled, in order to be able to flourish as individuals,

surely means little if they have no secure right to life. Nussbaum suggests that killing for food may involve a tragic conflict between the well-being of humans and the well-being of animals. But, says Schinkel, that idea only makes sense if killing animals for food does indeed involve serious wrongdoing and if at the same time eating meat is necessary for human well-being.

Does Being Vegetarian Make Any Difference?

Resort to utilitarian or rights arguments will not persuade those who do not accept the underlying ethical principles. Perhaps a simple but compelling case for vegetarianism can be made on the basis of premises that nearly everyone is likely to accept, such as the idea that it is wrong to cause unnecessary suffering, or that it is wrong to kill animals when using plants will serve our purposes just as well (Curnutt 1997; Engel 2000; Tardiff 1996). In any event, one may be tempted to assume that, if raising animals for meat is a bad thing (because, for example, it inflicts a great deal of unnecessary suffering and death), then it must be morally incumbent upon everyone (at least, upon everyone who can thrive without eating meat) to become vegetarian. But does this follow? If I abstain from eating meat, will any animals really be saved from suffering and death? It may be that the market for factory-farmed animal bodies is not sensitive enough to register the difference in demand made by a single consumer. If that is the case, why should I bother to abstain from eating meat, even if I agree that the meat industry is evil, since my abstention will apparently have no effect? (The same question can be asked with regard to abstaining from milk, cheese, and eggs, production of which almost inevitably results in exploitation and death for the female animals used and the male animals discarded.)

One response might be that, even if it takes a fairly large increase in demand to affect the number of, say, chickens that are raised for slaughter, there must be some threshold at which the purchase of one more chicken will tip the balance and result in many more chickens being raised for slaughter. If I purchase that particular chicken, I bring about serious harm. Even if the probability of my purchasing the chicken that tips the balance is small, by purchasing *any* chicken I do something the expected outcome of which (a serious harm multiplied by the probability of bringing about that harm) is not negligible (Almeida and

Bernstein 2000; Matheny 2002). But the issue is complicated; the numerous market factors that affect the relation between individual purchases and meat production may call the threshold argument into question (Chartier 2006).

Another response might be that, if I belong to a group of people (even a loosely structured group of consumers) who *could* act collectively to reduce the evils of factory farming but fail to do so, I bear partial moral responsibility for those evils. I cannot excuse myself from blame by saying that on my own I cannot make a difference, particularly if I have done nothing to try to persuade other members of the group to act (Hudson 1993).

There is yet another way to look at the matter, and that involves the idea of virtue. Few of us would maintain, for example, that it would be acceptable to join a gang of racist bullies even if the gang's activities (throwing rocks through windows at night, taunting children on their way to school) would provide us with excitement and we were convinced that our participation or abstention would not affect the number or severity of the incidents. Similarly, whether or not I believe that my eating meat will have any direct effect on the treatment of animals, I ought not to do it, because eating meat displays a disregard for their suffering and death and so is not the sort of thing that a virtuous person would do (Nobis 2002; Shafer-Landau 1994). Further, virtuous behaviour (in this case, being vegetarian) may well influence others to give up meat, people whose example will in turn influence others and thus in the long run have some real effect on animal welfare.

But is the notion of virtuous behaviour misplaced in this regard? Why should we extend it beyond human society? After all, it is often said, nature is "red in tooth and claw", an arena where "the law of the jungle" prevails. When we kill and eat animals we are only doing what they themselves do. Why should we extend to animals treatment that they do not extend to others? One problem with this line of reasoning is that not all animals hunt, kill, and eat other animals. Many are herbivores. In fact, most of the animals we hunt, eat, and experiment on do not kill and eat other animals. If we were to apply a rule that says our treatment of animals should depend on how they themselves act, then it would sometimes be acceptable for us to kill dogs, cats, lions, or eagles, but it would hardly ever be all right to kill cattle, rabbits, deer, or baboons.

We often speak of “animals”, as if they were all members of a single species, thus ignoring the innumerable differences in behaviour among non-human creatures. When someone is behaving in a particularly anti-social manner, we speak of the person acting “like an animal” or being “brutish” or “beastly”. Yet human beings outdo all other creatures in terms of cruelty and unnecessary aggression against members of their own and other species. Can it be that in attributing “beastly” behaviour to non-human animals we are projecting the dark side of our own natures onto convenient scapegoats (Mason 1993; Midgley 1973)?

STOP HERE For Ethics of Eating Animals Session

Feminism and Vegetarianism

Vegetarianism has become a bone of contention among feminists. We have seen in the previous chapter that the ethic of care articulated by Nel Noddings excludes animals from the moral community. Noddings (1984, 1991) justifies meat-eating on the grounds that we have no obligation of caring toward animals in general except to see that we inflict as little pain as possible on them, in particular when we raise them and kill them for food. In addition she believes that, if we all became vegetarians, there would not be enough resources to support the whole human and animal population, contrary to the pro-vegetarian claim that there would be more food resources for humans and more habitat for wild animals. Noddings’ position has drawn fire from feminists like Josephine Donovan (1990, 1991), who accuses her of speciesism.

The most sustained attack on meat-eating, however, has come from eco-feminist philosopher Carol Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and *Neither Man nor Beast*. Adams insists that the very word “meat” attests to the ideological hegemony of an animal-consuming culture. It is a term that, like “water”, denotes a mass of something; meat remains meat regardless of the amount. It has no individuality and obscures the fact that what is consumed was once a unique living creature. Behind every meal of meat, says Adams, is an absence: the death of the animal that has now been transformed from *someone* into *something* (e.g., the idea of a living pig has been banished, to be replaced by a consumable object called “pork”). The function of what she calls the “absent referent” is to disconnect the act of eating meat from awareness of the animal and its suffering.

As an eco-feminist, Adams stresses the way in which, historically, the

essence of being human has been identified with white Euro-American maleness and opposed to what is seen as *other*: other races, other species, the other sex, all of which have tended to be identified with the world of nature, not culture. Although modern feminists have sought to demonstrate that women are, equally with men, representatives of culture, in general they have not challenged the pernicious equation of animals with otherness, says Adams, so that for most feminists (but not eco-feminists) animals continue to be viewed as objects to be exploited.

Adams details the ways in which meat-eating has been identified with masculinity, not only in Western cultures but around the world. Vegetables and other non-meat items, on the other hand, have typically been seen as women’s food. Adams notes how in the feminist movement of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century there was often an explicit link made between vegetarianism and the liberation of women. She devotes a chapter in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* to the significance of the fact that Frankenstein’s monster in Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel is vegetarian. By including animals within the scope of its moral concern, the creature’s rejection of meat challenges the barrier of *us* and *them* that separates humans and animals and simultaneously symbolizes the creature’s own desire to be admitted into human society.

As well as meat’s being seen to be men’s food, animals are often presented culturally in sexualized (female) ways and women’s bodies are often presented as a form of meat. This linkage is evident today in many images confronting us in everyday life—in advertising, in cartoons, in posters, on menus (Adams 2004). Hunting magazines commonly link the hunt with sex, and animals with women (Kalof, Fitzgerald, and Baralt 2004).

The idea that feminists should advocate vegetarianism has been challenged by Kathryn Paxton George (2000). George maintains that arguments for universal vegetarianism, particularly in its vegan form (that is, a meatless diet without eggs or dairy products), tacitly assume male physiology to be the human norm. She claims that requiring girls and women to be strict vegetarians would typically mean imposing an inadequate diet on them, given the specific nutritional requirements of human females. There are also many males for whom a strict vegetarian diet is unsuitable, says George. Strict vegetarianism is a viable ideal only for well-off adult males (and for healthy, well-off, younger adult females who do not bear children) living in technologically advanced societies. It is normally

Behind every meal is an absence: the death of the animal whose place the meat takes.... The function of the absent referent is to keep our “meat” separated from any idea that she or he was once an animal, to keep the “moo” or “cluck” or “baa” away from the meat, to keep something from being seen as having been *someone*. Once the existence of meat is disconnected from the existence of an animal who was killed to become that “meat”, meat becomes unanchored by its original referent (the animal), becoming instead a free-floating image, used often to reflect women’s status as well as animals’.

—Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 14

only this minority who have the physiological capacity, the education, and the access to the necessary food sources (including vitamin and mineral supplements) to lead healthy lives on a strict vegetarian diet.

George is prepared to say, for the sake of argument, that animals have *prima facie* rights but argues that, even so, the eating of meat by those who need it for their health is condoned by Regan's liberty principle (which says that, provided all those involved are treated with respect and assuming that no special considerations obtain, any innocent individual has the right to act to avoid being made worse off, even if doing so harms other innocents). Indeed, Regan and other pro-vegetarian philosophers do excuse from the requirement to be vegetarian those who must consume meat to stay healthy. George, however, says that *excusing* such people (the majority of people, in her opinion) from an ethical ideal is unsatisfactory because it suggests that these people are a moral underclass, physiologically incapable of doing what is right. Rather, she says, we must reject the notion that one type of diet can embody the ethical standard for all individuals.

George's position has been vigorously disputed by Evelyn Pluhar (1992, 1993), who denies the assertion that most people's health would suffer on a vegetarian diet. Much of the disagreement between George and Pluhar has to do with the scientific evidence about human nutrition; readers who are interested in the details should consult their writings. Pluhar also disputes George's contention that Regan's rights view will frequently condone the eating of meat. If the liberty principle is to be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the idea that all subjects-of-a-life have equal inherent value, says Pluhar, then we cannot prevent ourselves being made worse off by killing and consuming our fellow subjects-of-a-life. Unless we assume that subjects-of-a-life have the right to their own bodies, one person would have the right to kill another person for his or her heart if it were needed for the first person's survival. That our fellow subjects-of-a-life, having the same inherent value that we do, have the same right to their own bodies that we have to ours is a "special consideration" that prevents our invoking the liberty principle to justify killing them. Pluhar notes that Regan's view does not preclude us from consuming eggs and dairy products so long as this involves no animals (female or male) being treated without respect—a condition that is not easily met these days.

Cora Diamond (1978) thinks that the sorts of arguments advanced by Singer and Regan are fundamentally misconceived—not because we should not be vegetarian but because a case that rests on the capacities and interests of animals is not compelling. It is not mainly on the basis of the biological capacities and attendant interests of other human beings that we are inclined to refrain from eating them; it is in the first place because they are individuals with whom we share a common life. It is in the context of our lived relations with other people that we evaluate our proper responses to their joys and sufferings. Similarly, suggests Diamond, when we think of animals as fellow creatures, as companions on life's journey, we shall be more likely to respond to them with pity (i.e. compassion) and less likely to treat them as consumable objects.

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Sport Hunting

For much of human existence, people hunted wild animals in order to provide themselves with food and with materials with which to clothe and shelter themselves. Today the materials required for food, clothing, and shelter are for the overwhelming part obtained from other sources, either from non-animal sources or from animals raised on farms. Nevertheless, a significant minority of the population in industrialized nations continues to hunt. It has been estimated that the animals killed by hunters in the United States every year include 50 million doves, 25 million rabbits and squirrels, 25 million quail, 20 million pheasant, 10 million ducks, 4 million deer, 2 million geese, 150,000 elk, and more than 20,000 black bears (Swan 1995).

As hunting's role in the economy and culture of society has diminished, it has become more controversial (Dizard 1994; McLeod 2007). Despite the fact that most people are happy to eat meat from farmed animals, many of these same people—not just advocates of animal liberation—disapprove of the killing of wild animals. Hunters typically come from small-town or rural backgrounds and often view opponents of hunting as effete city dwellers who are out of touch with nature. In his treatise on the history of hunting, Matt Cartmill (1993) notes an interesting fact in this regard: that hunters generally consider Walt Disney's *Bambi* to be the most powerful piece of anti-hunting propaganda ever produced, a film that, in their opinion, has presented generations of children with a false and sentimentalized view of wild animals.

Those who hunt do so from a variety of motives. In particular, two sorts of hunting stand out as special candidates for philosophical debate: subsistence hunting and "sport" hunting that is done from an avowed love of nature. Subsistence hunting involves killing wild animals not to supplement the food bought at the supermarket but as a central element in one's survival and way of life; in the modern world subsistence hunting is normally part and parcel of maintaining a traditional Aboriginal culture. Subsistence hunting by the Inuit (Eskimos) will be discussed shortly. Sport hunting is done not in order that the hunter may survive but either for recreation or, according to some of its proponents, to provide the hunter with an intimate and even spiritual connection with the natural world.

As with the issue of using animals for food, it makes a difference whether a liberationist adopts a rights or a utilitarian perspective on sport hunting (Wade 1990). The rights position on sport hunting is clear. While everyone has the right of self-defence (you need not let yourself be mauled to death by a grizzly), hunting an animal for sport is a violation of the animal's basic right not to be harmed by moral agents.

On the other hand, those who defend hunting often do so on utilitarian grounds of aggregate benefit to humans and animals. Hunting, it is said, not only brings pleasure to hunters but spares animals the drawn-out and painful deaths they would otherwise likely suffer from hunger, disease, or natural predation; and where natural predators are scarce, hunters function to maintain ecologically healthy population levels among animal species. A problem with the claim that hunting is good for ecosystems is that hunters typically aim to kill healthy adult members of, say, a deer population, while animal predators usually take the least fit members. However, it has been asserted that to the extent that hunters do enhance ecological values, they do what is right (List 1997). Robert Loftin (1984) says that the sport hunter has a stake in the preservation of wildlife habitats and that lobbying by the hunting community toward this end benefits not only those species that are hunted but many more that are not hunted. Sport hunting can be justified on utilitarian grounds, he says, because, among other things, it results in one animal being replaced with another.

Ann Causey (1989) rejects utilitarian assessments as missing the heart of the matter. Hunting, she claims, is a deep-seated human

instinct that harks back to our palaeolithic ancestors. As such, the desire of hunters to kill is morally neutral. However, because violent death is an intrinsic part of nature, the hunter's desire to participate in this aspect of the world can be valuable. Senseless killing or hunting done merely to obtain trophies is morally offensive; on the other hand, those hunters whose primary motive is the spiritual enrichment that comes from immersing themselves in natural processes are engaged in a morally legitimate activity.

In making her argument, Causey is following in the footsteps of Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955), whose *Meditations on Hunting* is the classic defence of hunting as a spiritual activity. According to Ortega, the primary goal of the true sport hunter is not to kill an animal for consumption or sale. The primary goal of the sport hunter lies in the activity of hunting itself. Hence the sport hunter is not interested in the death as such of the animal hunted; yet, paradoxically, killing is an essential aim of this hunt. This is because the whole activity of hunting is predicated on striving to take the animal's life; it is a battle of cunning and physical skill between hunter and hunted, with the life of the hunted at stake. Alternatives, such as pursuing animals with a camera in order to bring home photographs, miss the point. Without the striving to kill, hunting is a charade, devoid of its true significance. This is what Ortega (1972, pp. 110-11) means when he says, "To sum up, one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted."

But why hunt? For Ortega, the answer to this question has to do with our very roots as human beings. Through the activity of hunting, modern man (the great majority of hunters are men) escapes from the routines and burdens of civilization and becomes temporarily like his palaeolithic ancestors, immersed in the natural world. The sport hunter becomes again like an animal himself. He hunts his prey through achieving an understanding of its way of thinking and being, and in this there is ideally a mystical union with the animal hunted. Hunting is a kind of religious rite in which the hunter is submerged in the mysteries of nature, of life and death. Despite this re-emergence of the hunter's animal nature, however, the hunter remains superior to the prey. There is, Ortega maintains, a hierarchy of species in nature; life is marked by conflict and every kind of creature is in a relationship of superiority or

To the sportsman the death of the game is not what interests him; that is not his purpose. What interests him is everything that he had to do to achieve that death — that is, the hunt.... To sum up, one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted.
— José Ortega y Gasset,
Meditations on Hunting,
pp. 110-11

inferiority with regard to every other kind. Hunting in its essence involves a member of a superior species taking possession of a member of an inferior species.

Ortega's defence of hunting as an activity that can give the hunter a profound and intimate sense of connection with the natural world is echoed by many pro-hunting writers, including environmental philosopher Holmes Rolston III (1988). Similarly, Theodore Vitali (1990) defends sport hunting as an exercise in predatory skills that brings pleasure to the hunter and generally enhances ecosystems, which function efficiently through the competitive taking of life. (More will be said on the subject of animals and ecosystems in Chapter 6.) According to Vitali, the pleasure that the good hunter seeks is not pleasure in the death as such of the animal, which would be morally "troublesome"; but pleasure in the exercise of predatory skills. At the same time, like Ortega, he stresses that the act of killing is essential to the activity of hunting. Predation involves killing and only by killing can a person test his or her skills as a predator. Hunting with a camera or with paint pellets is not really hunting, since in neither case does one achieve the "definitiveness" and "radical completeness" that killing brings to predatory activity.

While not engaging directly in the debates of philosophers, James Swan (1995) emphasizes that for those he calls "nature hunters" hunting is a quasi-religious experience. Urban civilization divorces us from nature and from our hunting instinct. By contrast, the nature hunter feels a deep reverence for the natural environment; he feels respect and even love for the animals he kills, says Swan. The act of killing can be a "peak" experience, involving intense emotional excitement and a confrontation with the most profound issues of life and death. Adopting a virtue-ethics perspective, some have argued that, insofar as hunters unflinchingly confront the inevitability of death and take responsibility for their part in the cycle of nature, hunting promotes *eudaimonia*, or human flourishing (Jensen 2001; Tantillo 2001).

Those who know their political philosophy may perceive a disturbing likeness between the picture of the world painted by Ortega and his sympathizers and the picture painted by fascist ideologues. Nature, according to fascism, is an arena of eternal conflict where one must vanquish others or be vanquished; only by recognizing that we are beasts of prey and by immersing ourselves in the struggle for survival can we

overcome the alienating and debilitating effects of modern civilization, with its misguided notions of equality and individual rights, and achieve a mystical union with the forces of nature.

The claim that human beings are natural predators who have a hunting instinct is questionable (Cartmill 1993; Cohn 1999; Mason 1993; Moriarty and Woods 1997; Preece 1999). If, for the sake of argument, we accept the claim, we might want to say that it is surely better to manifest our predatory instincts by means of aggression against animals rather than by means of aggression against people. Hunting, then, might be seen as an invaluable outlet for urges that are arguably necessary for psychological health but would prove mutually destructive if expressed in conflict among humans. Yet Cartmill finds the equation of reverence or love with killing—what he calls the "murderous amorousness" of some hunters—not just disturbing but pathological. He finds in the imagery of sport hunting and in some of the feelings expressed by hunters—including a false and contemptuous affection for the victim and a refusal to think of the victim as an individual—a symbolic attack on women, in which hunting is akin to rape. This conclusion is also drawn by eco-feminist Marti Kheel (1995).

Ortega and others admit to feeling ambivalent about the rightness of killing the animals they hunt. For his part, Ortega attributes this ambivalence to the fact that we humans see ourselves as emerging from animality (at once transcending that state and yet connected with it) and to a general confusion about the norms that ought to govern our relations to other beings, including those in our environment, particularly when it comes to the matter of death.

Most hunters are not so philosophical in reflecting on their activities. Opponents of hunting are sceptical about the claims that killing is necessary in order to exercise the skills involved in hunting and that hunters take little joy in the actual killing of animals (Pluhar 1991; J. Williams 1995). In defence of sport hunters it can be said that many of the more thoughtful among them at least sound sincere in their professions of respect and admiration for animals and of feeling guilt at inflicting suffering and death. Then again, such guilt could be expunged, the hunting experience intensified, and the confrontation with death made all the more meaningful if hunters were to restrict themselves voluntarily to *hunting each other*. As it is, many adhere to a code of ethics

It is not that "romance" connotes only sex when applied to heterosexual relations and connotes only power when applied to hunting. Rather, hunting and predatory heterosexuality are instances of romance because each is simultaneously sexual and an expression of power.

—Brian Luke, *Brutal*, p. 84

that enjoins them, among other things, to kill their prey as quickly and painlessly as possible and to take no more animals than they intend to use. Brian Luke (1997) argues that this "Sportsman's Code" implies both a recognition of the intrinsic value of individual animals and a personal responsibility to minimize one's imposition of suffering on them. But the paradox, he says, is that these non-anthropocentric values can best be realized by not hunting animals at all.

Sport fishing, or angling, can be said to be a form of hunting but it has received comparatively little attention from philosophers. This is probably because there is considerable doubt that fish qualify as subjects-of-a-life under a Regan-type rights view and because their capacity for suffering is not obvious to most people. The analogical argument is somewhat harder to apply to a fish than to a mammal, a bird, or a reptile. In particular, fish do not emit shrieks or moans when hooked or when hauled out of water. Still, at least one writer (de Leeuw 1996) argues that there is reason to believe that angling imposes significant and needless suffering on fish, suffering that, because it is intrinsic to the pleasure taken by anglers in hooking fish, playing with them, and landing them, probably cannot be justified even according to the ethical code of hunters.

Subsistence Hunting: The Case of the Inuit

Most of those liberationist philosophers and activists who oppose sport hunting will say that a stronger argument can be made in favour of subsistence hunting. The Inuit of Canada's eastern Arctic provide a case study in the issue of subsistence hunting and the impact thereon of modern technology and economy.

The hunting that the Inuit do is not recreational. It is no weekend outing. During the long, dark Arctic winter, when the sun is rarely to be seen and the temperature may hover around -35° Celsius, hunters spend hours travelling by snowmobile to areas of offshore ice to look for breathing holes used by seals. Then they stand nearly motionless above active holes, often for hours and often without success, waiting for the appearance of their prey. Ortega's maxim that "one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted" has little relevance here. Traditionally the Inuit hunt to kill and thereby to survive.

Hunting animals has always been not simply the means by which the

Inuit have provided themselves with food, but a central aspect of their culture. The hunt has been the core around which the Inuit have organized their lives. In recent decades, however, the technology and the economy of the industrialized world have significantly intruded into these lives. Modern houses, electricity, radio, snowmobiles, motorboats, rifles, and many other modern tools and artifacts are evident, along with the capitalist market. Some critics of the hunt say that these changes have effectively destroyed the traditional subsistence economy and with it the moral legitimacy of hunting as a necessary activity. Today's Inuit hunt for profit and are part of the fur industry, they say.

In his study of modern Inuit hunting and the controversy surrounding it, George Wenzel (1991) charges that such critics have been misled by their focus on technological artifacts like snowmobiles (which have replaced dog teams) and rifles (which have largely replaced harpoons). They have failed to look at the social context of the use of these tools. Because of resettlement of Inuit by the Canadian government in the 1950s, hunters today must traverse great distances and snowmobiles are a necessity; in turn, the sale of some sealskins is necessary in order to bring in the money required to buy and maintain the snowmobiles and other tools. While the Inuit have adopted modern technology, what remains largely intact, says Wenzel, is the web of Inuit social and cultural relations, organized around the hunt. Without the hunt, the traditional way of life would disappear. He concludes that the campaign to stop seal hunting is myopic and morally flawed.

Wenzel makes a good case for regarding modern Inuit hunting as a continuation of a traditional way of life using other means, a case that should give pause to thoughtful anti-hunt activists. In fact, many activists who oppose sealing by non-Natives (in particular, the Newfoundland seal hunt) are prepared to recognize the legitimacy of subsistence hunting by Native people. In one important sense, however, Wenzel's argument may be said to beg the question. Although he notes the high moral status accorded animals in traditional Inuit culture, Wenzel fails to consider seriously the idea that the moral worth of individual animals may make present-day hunting of them wrong even in the light of other considerations. As a result he assumes what requires to be demonstrated: that the moral legitimacy of "harvesting" seals and caribou rests solely on the questions of cultural tradition and ecological sustainability. Wenzel

is not alone in focusing exclusively on these criteria. Controversy has also arisen over the hunting of bowhead whales by Baffin Island Inuit. The public debate has centred not on the moral status of the whale but on the sustainability of this endangered species and on the Inuit's claim that hunting the whale is a matter of cultural sovereignty.

Wenzel notes that in traditional Inuit culture animals are viewed as forming a single moral community with human beings, all members having reciprocal rights and obligations. Animals are believed to be sentient and even intelligent beings who are aware of the thoughts and intentions of hunters. Hunted animals willingly sacrifice themselves to those human beings who have the right attitude. If they are to be successful, hunters must approach animals with an attitude of respect, that is, with appreciation for an animal's generosity in allowing itself to be used, and with the intent of using the animal's body as fully as possible for food and of sharing it with other members of the hunter's community.

This attitude of respect for animals is common in Aboriginal cultures. It differs in its implications from the kind of respect inherent in the animal-rights position in that it allows and even encourages the killing and consumption of wild animals. Nonetheless, these two versions of the concept of respect share something fundamental: each admonishes us to treat animals as ends in themselves, never simply as means. If animals really do give their consent to being killed and consumed, then it is possible for humans to kill and consume them without treating them simply as means.

Human beings do not normally give consent to being killed and consumed by other people. It is unlikely that Wenzel would defend any present-day hunting and killing of humans, even if some instance of this could be shown to support the continuation of a traditional cannibal culture and not to deplete the long-term supply of harvestable humans. Given that present-day members of a traditional cannibal culture could make their living by other means, few observers would claim they ought to be allowed to perpetuate their age-old subsistence culture.

Taking issue with Wenzel's implicit double standard, Wendy Donner (1997) argues that if we are going to say that individual human beings matter, and not just the human species as a whole, then consistency demands we say that individual animals matter, and that it is wrong to kill any animal except for important purposes: to satisfy basic needs for

food, clothing, and shelter. Donner is willing to go along with Wenzel's contention that the Inuit must sell some furs in order to acquire the money necessary to buy and maintain hunting equipment. But she insists that we cannot uncritically accept that every new element incorporated into the Inuit's way of life is consistent with maintenance of their traditions. To the extent that the Inuit do in fact depart from their traditional way of life, says Donner, they lose the moral advantage in the hunting debate.

Now, few would hold that satisfying basic needs always justifies inflicting suffering or death on others. Our imaginary modern cannibals can satisfy their basic needs by hunting and killing other people, yet few of us would say they would be justified in continuing their traditional method of making a living. The reason is that, although their basic needs can be satisfied by hunting other people, modern cannibals have no need to hunt people. One way or another they can feed, clothe, and shelter themselves by alternative methods and, morally speaking, this would seem to make all the difference.

Do the Inuit need to hunt in order to survive? The answer to this question is not obvious, since it is not obvious what is entailed by "survival". Even if abandonment of the hunt meant that their traditional culture would not survive, on an individual level modern Inuit can, at least in principle, survive by filling any of the roles for people in industrial society. Especially now that the eastern Canadian Arctic has become the political territory of Nunavut ("our land" in the Inuktitut language), more Inuit are directly participating in the economic and organizational processes of the modern world. And where a wage-paying job in the work force is not available, there is, as for other Canadian citizens in similar straits, government welfare. Indeed, many of Nunavut's residents today are on welfare, while rates for suicide, teen-age pregnancy, and the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other substances are far above national averages.

Can Regan's worse-off principle be invoked to justify continuance of the hunt? Supporters of the hunt argue that anti-fur campaigns have had devastating effects on Aboriginal communities (Barber 1997). Is the harm that befalls individual Inuit with the ending of the hunt and the hunting way of life greater than the harm to individual seals of losing their lives? And do we take into account those Inuit not yet born who will have lost their ancestors' culture? If the hunt ends, new generations of

Inuit do not segregate the qualities enjoyed by human beings from those enjoyed by animals. Animals share with humans a common state of being that includes kinship and family relations, sentience, and intelligence. The rights and obligations that pertain among people extend to other members of the natural world. People, seals, polar bear, birds, and caribou are joined in a single community in which animals give men food and receive acknowledgement and revival.

—George Wenzel, *Animal Rights, Human Rights*, pp. 60-61

Inuit will grow up for whom the old ways will be just stories in history books and museums. They will become astrophysicists and social workers and check-out clerks, watch basketball and soap operas on television while eating prepackaged dinners from the suburbs of Toronto, and look forward to winter vacations in Trinidad or Morocco or on the far side of the moon. Will they be better off or worse off than if they had been seal hunters—and by how much?

Hunters and Supermarket Vegetarians

It should also be noted that Regan's miniride principle has been invoked by one hunter and writer in defence of his own hunting of elk for food. Ted Kerasote (1993) points to the many wild animals killed in crop production in order to supply food to what he calls "supermarket vegetarians". He reasons that because supplying himself with food by hunting results in fewer animal deaths, such hunting is preferable to adopting a vegetarian diet.

Kerasote's argument is certainly food for thought. At least two issues arise from it. First, there is the matter of intentional infliction of harm versus harm that is the unintentional but foreseeable side effect of one's actions. A utilitarian is likely to see no moral difference between the two, since utilitarianism holds that it is consequences that count and not intentions. Hence a utilitarian must give Kerasote's less-harm argument serious consideration. On the other hand, a deontologist, who focuses on rights and duties, may well hold that the intentional infliction of harm (in this case, the intentional killing of elk or other animals for food) is worse than the unintentional deaths that result from an action (growing and harvesting plants) that in itself is benign.

A second issue that arises from Kerasote's argument is whether hunting for one's food is practicable on a large scale. There are now six-and-counting billion human beings on the planet. It is unlikely that all or most of these people could feed themselves largely by hunting, and the attempt to do so might well result in the extermination of many animal species. On the large scale, then, the choice would seem to be between supermarket vegetarianism and supermarket meat-eating, that is, between a diet that depends on commercial agriculture but not on meat and a diet that depends on commercial agriculture including the farming of animals.

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Conclusion

It may appear that philosophers are deeply divided on the issue of vegetarianism, and so they are—up to a point. With the important exception of most contractarians, there is something of a consensus that little of the suffering inflicted on animals raised for meat can be justified. In particular (contractarians aside again), few are prepared to defend the factory-farming of animals. The implication is that, at a minimum, most of the meat industry ought to be drastically reformed or outright abolished. Nevertheless, even pro-liberation philosophers typically concede that meat-eating is acceptable in some circumstances. A rights view, in principle, places stricter limitations on meat-eating than does a utilitarian view, though just what the practical implications of these two views are is a matter of debate.

Although feminist philosophers in general have not made the issue of vegetarianism central to their concerns, a few have. Yet those who have are divided in their opinions. Against vegetarianism, it has been maintained that an ethic of care implies only that we ought not to inflict unnecessary suffering on animals when raising them for food; it has also been claimed that not everyone can maintain good health on a vegetarian diet and that, as an ethical ideal, vegetarianism is generally not suitable for girls and women—a conclusion that has been disputed by some other feminists. Many eco-feminists equate meat-eating with the ideology of male dominance in society and see vegetarianism as an integral part of the struggle for women's liberation.

Defenders of sport hunting often point to its alleged environmental benefits: in the modern world hunters act as substitutes for natural predators, limiting the growth of prey populations; hunters also lobby for the maintenance and enhancement of wilderness areas, which would otherwise likely be destroyed by the spread of urban areas and industrial activity. More than this, however, many defenders of sport hunting see it as an important means by which people are able to rediscover themselves as natural beings, confronting the mysteries of life and death in what may be felt as a profound, even religious, experience. Critics attack sport hunting from various angles: it violates the rights of animals; it is a pathological expression of aggression, often with anti-female overtones; its beneficial aspects can be achieved by other means, such as wildlife photography; the intrinsic value of animals, implicitly

recognized by the hunter's code of ethics, can only really be respected by refraining from hunting.

Subsistence hunting has generally seemed morally less problematic than sport hunting, and philosophers have devoted less attention to it. A prime issue here has been whether the technology and economy of the modern world has intruded into traditional cultures to such an extent as to undermine the moral legitimacy of hunting by members of these communities. While critics claim that even Aboriginal people now hunt largely for commercial reasons, a case can be made that people like the Inuit have adopted modern methods in order to maintain their traditional social relations. Even so, the question remains: if animals have intrinsic value and should be treated with respect (as Aboriginal people believe), is hunting them acceptable when one could adopt a different way of life and not hunt?