

0.1 Introduction

I have written this book because I have not found a concise statement defending the morality of eating animals. I find this especially puzzling since philosophers are known to leave no stone left unturned, almost every position you can imagine has been defended ¹.

The answer to this odd phenomenon is philosophers are attached to a sort of deductive method of reasoning. It so happens that grand principles often rely on measurable quality. That is, most philosophers refuse to cede ground to intuition or if they do speak of intuition in a sort of formal way².

With no intent to being polemical, it seems fairly clear that most philosophers are in fact heavily left-wing. The left-wing are known to work in "movements", that is a popular trend catches on and the left think they have found a new truth that must be striven for. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that 99% of those movements fail to achieve what they aim for, indeed most such movements are forgotten after few hundred years but it is in the credo of this group to cherry pick their successes and advertise them as if they were always ahead of the curve.

My intent for this book to be eminently readable by everyone. I am articulating what I think is simply common sense because the common man has no interest in articulating his common sense, and to the uncharitable academics this is often interpreted as not having an argument.

Academics forget that we invent our intellectual ideas to aid us in our everyday endeavours. Philosophers are often tempted to change this reasoning, they think that our everyday endeavours are there to aid our intellectual ideas. Ideas such as equality/liberty/freedom/independence etc, represent such a backward reasoning. Philosophers should aim to show how these ideas capture what we are trying to do, for instance it may be that in our everyday endeavours, the heuristics of equality/liberty/freedom/independence make our task easier to analyze and our endeavour less costly, but the way philosophers usually use these concepts is that these are the ultimate ends in themselves.

It must be remembered that Philosophy is the generator of all knowledge, all modern disciplines were once under the wing of philosophers and as they grew beyond their infancy they became their own disciplines, evolving independently of philosophical trends³.

Each chapter in this book will be independent of the others, so there is not much need to

¹List some Nazi philosophers, Schmitt, (that guy on youtube), Frege etc

²Huemer, ethical intuitionism

³Mathematics, Physics, Anthropology, Psychology, Economics(Adam Smith), etc

read it linearly. The specific kind of use I expect of this book is as a sort of reference book of arguments.

Much of the problem in philosophy is being parsimious, it how many ways should one use to divide up the world? I considered when writing the book to demarcate between consequentialist methods of ethics and non-consequentialit methods. Of course the problem with attacking or defending from the categories of consequences is that it is not clear what counts as a consequence.

The first part of the book will be analyzing existing arguments made my various vegetarians and vegans to explain why these are false. My first chapter will be the most important and most popular argument that is mainted today, that is a minimizing-harm argument.

After defending the idea that formulating arguments is superfluous for the practitioners, I will try to formulate what I think is a charitable interpreation of their arguments. That is I will present a series of argument FOR meat eating.

Finally in the last section I will present what I think are some weak ways of formulating pro-eating arguments.

Chapter 1

The arguments for not eating animals

To be clear, I don't think vegetarians actually believe these arguments. At the core, the revulsion we have is not some cost benefit calculus but is more aesthetic, factory like killing gives us a feeling of disgust, one I share. However the inference I draw is less general, it is repulsive to have an animal killed by somebody it doesn't know, who does not know the animal, in an environment it does not know and is totally unnatural to its habits.

The fundamental vision of a farmer raising an animal on his farm, and killing it with his own hands and sharing that meat with his community, is still fundamentally sound. It implies a lower intake of meat that we currently consume. The activism that should be taking place is an activism to return the production process to the farm, get rid of the regulations that force farmers to take them to the slaughterhouse.¹ There are legitimate reasons to regulate animals, but those reasons are much diminished in this world of connected farmer and animal, a farmer can only raise so many animals.

Much of the attempt in this chapter should read like a philosophical journey vegetarians go through. That is, many of them will stay on the first argument presented, others, will have started here and evolved in the same way I describe here. Many would have skipped this argument altogether and gone further down the chain.

1.1 Minimizing Harm

1)Causing unnecessary harm is bad2)Eating animals causes unnecessary harm \rightarrow *Therefore eating animals*

¹find sources on the EU here

1.1.1 Why these words?

First note that "bad" is used in a strong sense of "we should not do what is bad". If the person making the argument has a system of ethics that is additive, then presumably they can add or subtract this good to other bads. In such a case, their formulation of the argument would be that it is "bad" in TOTAL.

"Harm" was chosen over other words because of its generality. The argument would also work if we used the words . The reason alternative words were not chosen is that I wanted to include the concept of "killing". Using words like "pain" or "suffering" would allow meat eaters to escape via empirical methods, for instance they could just point to some painless way of killing and the argument would instantly fail.

The number of vegetarians who would actually hold the "suffering" or "pain" position is in fact minuscule. If there did exist such a non-meat eater, then if the animal could be instantly killed without causing any pain or suffering would have no ethical qualms about eating such an animal.² I suspect most vegetarians would not be swayed into eating meat. In other words I think harm includes the concept of "killing", whilst suffering is neutral to it. So I take their revulsion to be revulsion to the actual killing of the cow. They would consider this killing as unjust.

The problem of "harm" is that it may be general enough to encompass other actions, such as killing a plant or tree. The argument as presented makes reference only to animals but somebody object ask "why only animals and not plants?". In this case, the vegetarian may return to the previous standards of "suffering" or "harm". Alternatively they could commit "organicism", that is arbitrarily discriminate between organic beings based on their categorization. However I suspect the most likely position they will take is that it is not a matter of category but a matter of degree. That is, they will agree that harming plants is bad, but not sufficiently bad given the benefits. That is, one may think that the value of plants is high but the value of humans living is higher. I believe this kind of position automatically locks you into a sort of "additivity" or comparability of values.

1.1.2 Necessity

Though this is perhaps the most common argument that you will encounter philosophers make, I will be focusing on attacking it by deconstructing the first the first premise.

The main way to de-construct this premise is through the word "unnecessary". What does

²I have never met such a vegetarian

this word mean? It is perhaps best to work with its negation, necessity. Necessity is a fairly rare word in that the common use and the philosophical use are identical: Something that must be present for a certain other thing to occur. It makes little sense to talk of necessity without linking it to something, there must be a second part to the use of the word, necessity is a constraint and there must be some objective for the constraint to work on. For instance if I want to make a cake it is necessary that I use the ingredients necessary to make the cake. The sentence "flour is necessary to make the flour cake" makes sense. The sentence "flour is necessary" does not make sense.

So then here it is clear that vegetarians are assuming that there is some system being optimized and we must constraint that system by not doing "unnecessary harm". What is the "cake" of the suffering of animals? Suppose an agent is trying to get the best "taste" possible, the omega taste. If the omega taste does not require eating animals³ then the argument works, this would be equivalent to saying "don't eat animals because there are better tastes out there". If on the other hand the "omega taste" must include animal flesh, then the argument instantly fails. That is, if I am trying to have the best taste I can, then it IS necessary that I eat animals.

Though I suspect many people do consciously eat meat because they enjoy the taste, evolutionary reasoning actually works backwards, that is, they like the taste because they eat meat. In other words, the argument should not be taken at face value, people are comfortable eating meat but the reason they eat is not because of the taste. Nevertheless taste plays a strong role for habit formation.

So what are agent's optimizing if they are not optimizing for pleasure? Perhaps the obvious answer is that "they aren't optimizing", people just have a set of habits they inherited and are used to doing things in a certain way but there is no such thing as "optimizing" so it makes no sense to talk of constraints to the optimization problem, this is simply the academic reasoning projecting into the real world again.

For the sake of the academics though we can attempt to try another possibility of optimization, maybe even though they don't consciously optimize, they act as if they optimize. What else can be the optimand of people? Perhaps people are trying simply to optimize their pleasure, but that would simply result in a similar argument to the "taste" argument. Perhaps they are trying to lead a good life, in which case the vegetarian would have to appeal defining the "good life", something many vegetarians don't wish to do because it makes retaining a subjectivist position difficult. If they are willing to embrace non-subjectivist

³Note here that this is more plausible than it appears, since there are specific labs that aim to create vegetables that emulate the taste of meat

positions then they would have to fall to objective standards. Nevertheless the most likely turn of vegetarians after reflecting is to become use happiness as the standard.

1.1.3 Utilitarianism

The most popular turn of vegetarians after reflection is to turn to utilitarianism. Though the concept sounds rather abstract, essentially the founders of the doctrine meant simply, to maximize happiness ⁴. Though the doctrine as initially thought up does not necessarily imply one action over another, when combined with other intuitive ideas it quickly becomes evident why they go this route. The question, is what if one persons happiness comes at the expense of anothers? Utilitarianism has an answer, whatever action maximizes the *total* happiness should be taken. Most adherents of this also make a second assumption, "the law of diminishing marginal utility", that is, the enjoyment one person gets for every marginal unit is diminishing. Or the second banana gives me less happiness than the first banana. ⁵. This framework is especially appealing to some left leaning authors, it allows them to justify animal right and income/wealth re-distribution with a single framework.

How do these two premises, maximize happiness, diminishing happiness help the vegetarian make his case?

The choice is self evident if the production method is less costly, but less so if it is more costly.

1.2 An alternative picture of humans

It almost seems caricatural, to try and talk of people in this way, that is people don't have objectives they are trying to optimize. Instead they have goals they wish to achieve, this may seem like just a linguistic difference but from the analytical point of view it flips it all around. There is a list of things a person hopes and desires to have, is meat necessary for the achievement of any of those goals? If it isn't necessary maybe they only consume meat because it makes it "easier", to be more precise, perhaps eating meat allows them to meet more of their goals. Once again we are pulled into the empirical world, a massive can of worms is opened, perhaps there is a vegan rich person who will give you money and help you achieve more of your goals if you don't eat meat.

⁴Bentham and Mill

⁵This assumption is questioned in Frankfurts book, equality

1.3 Speciesism

The arbitrary nature of speciesism, but false since superman would have our moral compass, as well as a moral ape or animal.

1.4 Cost-benefit

1.4.1 calculus

Another argument vegetarian may make has more intuitive appeal: If the costs exceed the benefits, it is bad. The suffering from animals exceeds the benefits. Therefore you ought not to eat animals.

This may seem like a striking argument, the obvious question to ask is "how do you know?" More specifically:

How come 1) we can measure the benefit and the harm? What exactly makes these categories measurable? It is perhaps intuitive that every human can measure their own suffering, it is less clear that they can measure their own happiness or joy. But even if they could, this is different than actually measuring the happiness of another.

2) the measures we come up with are comparable? Did we assert that these are of the same kind? How do we know it isn't like comparing temperature to distance? Even if we suppose that the two are measurable, how come they also also comparable?

3) The benefit is lower than the harm? How come the benefit is lower than the harm? It is obvious here that the vegetarian must attempt to define what the benefit is.

1.5 Equal consideration

1.6 Ecological:Plants

Vegetarians will often use empirical arguments to attack this kind of reasoning, that is, the sheer magnitude of plants needed to make an animal live.

Chapter 2

The good arguments for eating animals

2.1 The extreme case: What if you have to?

Chapter 3

The bad arguments for eating animals

3.1 It is natural

Eating Meat is natural (3.1.1)

Doing what is natural is good (3.1.2)

eating meat is good. (3.1.3)

Failed arguments;

They sometimes dispute the naturalness but most evolutionary biologists agree that we have evolved because we have used less energy on digestion and more on brains.

3.2 We are superior

3.3 Harm and necceccity

3.3.1 Lifestyle preferences

It is often assumed that good is attributable to specific actions. However there is a complete failure to articulate the discontinuities of life. Archtypes or cutlural goods are non reducible. It is NOT true that you can remove the olive oil from the greek diet and still have the greek diet. Some things are just fundamental.

How people measure the good and bad is with lifestyles, not with individual deeds. In other

words, one may in theory be content with their daughter sleeping around with a different guy every night. However the repugnance to this may in fact be with the lifestyle that is associated, the alienation from feelings, the frequenting of night clubs. When someone tells you they want x, this is not necessarily because they want x in itself. Indeed it may be that they simply want things that are associated with x.

For animals specifically the reason is easy enough to see. I want a reason to live with animals. Or I want a reason for animals to exist or to exist in greater number. And by wanting x, I am creating that reason.

One may try to envision different ways that we can live with animals, but it is ultimately an empirical question. One such way we could imagine is to worship the animals, perhaps between the gaps we have at work, we could go to the chicken altars and worship them. One may imagine simply that these animals are publicly financed to live in the streets, were they are fed or their poop is cleaned at public expense. This all sounds reasonable, and it is likely a few meat eaters would be convinced if this was shown to work in practice.

Of course if the animal rights activists position becomes less extreme the answer is quite natural for a few animals. Perhaps cows sheep goats and chickens could all give us ample reason to live with them. But still there remain animals which don't have this property, such as pigs.

It is wrong to want to have kids for your own pleasure. You should want to have kids because your gut tells you to. You can't articulate WHY you should have kids, but there is this tendency in you to have kids. It is not that you think kids will make you happier, but that having kids itself is what life is about, it is simply the expression of who you are, just like a flute gains no pleasure from being played, but it is its purpose. Indeed it is its very reason for existing, it is the cause of it existing.

Dogs have found their place with us and most of us are thankful. Perhaps a significant difference between dogs and other animals.

It is perhaps a typically modern tendency to try and calculate the costs and benefits of all structures. The search for deductive beauty is often a homogenizing force. However inductive beauty gives very different results. Deductively we may have a positive impression of an idillic community where everyone has the same life. But inductively there is something disgusting in knowing that everything is the same everywhere. Diversity is a value in itself, we want everyone to plant different plants in their gardens. We can imagine that the diversity is such that everyone plants the same different plants.

3.3.2 Formulation vs induction

It seems like philosophers have taken up a task that the ancients never dared. That is to assume that if an argument cannot be formulated, that the position is incoherent. It is hard to imagine a more arrogant position than the position that if something cannot be defended, it should be abandoned.

In reality even though you cannot defend an action as such, you can imagine reasons why it emerged. And without whosing that those reasons are no longer neccesry, it is incoherent to throw it away.

3.3.3 Against false principles

How do we know if a principle is good? If it accords with our intuitions. Indeed almost all tragedies in the human race follow this same pattern. "My principle is good, therefore x is justified". in reality people should just see if a principle holds true to their intuition and then go with it. The animal rights activists are a failure because they go by the principles of minimize unnecessary suffering, or some other weird principle. In reality the reasoning we should be following is the opposite, "eating animals is okay" therefore the principle of minimizin suffering is false.

There is this class of arguments which intuitively many people have which sound immoral. For instance many people will fall back into the notion of "what if you have to?", clearly morality takes into account neccesity. If something is immoral, your obligation does not somehow change because of your need. The the clear formulation of this argument would be:

1)It was immoral to kill animals then. (3.3.1)

2)If our ancestors didn't kill animals they would not have evolved as they did (3.3.2)

12 \rightarrow We are buit on immoral
(3.3.3)

This line of argument implies the world would be more moral if humans had never existed.