

What does it mean to be a vegetarian? Is it a declaration of animal rights? An attempt to minimize one's ecological impact? Perhaps the next step on the moral ladder in promotion of humanitarian demeanor? Whatever the case, the statistics speak for themselves as the domino effects sparked by the eating of meat embark huge ecological problems across the globe. From a production standpoint, it is much more efficient to produce vegetation than meat as the quantity of resources spent feeding and raising animals devastate the environment. From an ethical standpoint, in selecting vegetarianism, one deters away from innate animalistic tendencies by stoically prioritizing morals over desires. But whatever the reason in choosing a vegetarian lifestyle, there is no doubt that it is ultimately represents as an advanced form of humanitarianism. The choice serves a moral sensibility and commitment to the surrounding world and its creatures. Authors Mary Shelley and H.G. Wells both publicly asserted their confidence in vegetarianism, which is clearly reflected in their work. Shelley's Creature in *Frankenstein* in addition to Wells's race of Eloi in *The Time Machine* both uphold vegetarian lifestyles in which both writers call attention to the vegetarian ideal – a moral and ethical obligation humans have to their surroundings.

Shelley's Creature and Wells's Eloi share their differences, however are connected by their vegetarian diet. Through repetition, both authors make their character's vegetarian lifestyle very clear to the reader. This was no accident; both Shelley and Wells were prominent activists of the vegetarian lifestyle. Wells often used vegetarian characters in his novels and *The Time Machine* was no exception. His novel

*Utopia* was perhaps his most famous meat-eating rebuke as he writes of utopia existing in vegetarian form. Shelley came from a family of vegetarian activists as her father and husband actively published essays encouraging animal rights. Thus, it was no minor detail that Eloi and Creature live vegetarian lifestyles.

In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Shelley proposes an interesting juxtaposition: though the Creature is ugly and demon-like in features, he possesses a virtuous character and an astounding intelligence for an uneducated being. Having taught himself to read and then having read *Paradise Lost*, *Plutarch's Lives*, and *The Sorrows of Young Werther* during his time as the DeLacy's "guest," Shelley makes a point to expound the Creature's intelligence and sophistication (127). Her vast illustration of the Creature's moral and intellectual credibility adds to the cogency of his vegetarianism, as he exists as a being who contemplates the exploitation of others. He remarks to Victor Frankenstein of his vegetarian choice, "my food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment" (146). The Creature's vegetarianism announces its separation from his creator's moral code by including animals in its moral circle. This inclusion symbolizes the Creature's attempt to exist in human society as he has embraced animals in his. Despite leading an example for moral supremacy, the Creature proves unable to enter human society, finding it to be formed in such a way that both it and animals are omitted from it. The continuing rejections by human beings represent Shelley's paralleling view of the meat-eating society, as human vanity only allows man as his moral center, proving unable to subsume ugly beings or animals. With this in consideration, the Creature's beliefs serve as an emblem for what it desires for and needs but ultimately falls short in receiving from

human society. Shelley concludes her novel with bleak hope for her Creature and in doing so, argues for human empathy and a humanitarian obligation to man has to living creatures.

H.G. Wells's race of Eloi share the vegetarian nature of Victor Frankenstein's Creature, but unlike the Creature who asserts his decision to living a vegetarian lifestyle, Eloi's history of vegetarianism remains unclear. What is clear is that common animals used for eating became extinct – potentially from lack of necessity, which points to a societal abandonment of meat. “These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians...I found afterwards that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs had followed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction” (44). Though vegetarian in lifestyle, Eloi do not appear to share the same fervor of this decision as Victor's Creature does. In fact, the Time Traveler (TT) describes them as “children,” carefree and scatterbrained, and in recalling his rescue of Weena, he describes the “deficiency” in Eloi as “none made the slightest attempt to rescue” her (59). The lack of fidelity and empathy among Eloi juxtaposes their vegetarian humanism as Wells calls for the necessity in supporting one's comrades. Wells furthers this argument in contrasting Eloi's vegetarianism with the carnivorous Morlocks, whom, the TT eventually discovers, tend to Eloi for the same reasons as a farmer tends to cattle. To the TT this appears grossly inhumane, but Wells neatly parallels Morlocks' consumption of Eloi to our current usage of cattle – gently reminding readers of their own carnivorous behavior. Like Shelley, Wells uses Eloi's lack of devotion to each other and Morlocks' carnivorous behavior to demonstrate his call for man's humanitarian obligation to his surroundings.

In both *Frankenstein* and *The Time Machine*, Mary Shelley and H.G. Wells construct arguments for a more morally sensible and responsible society; a society curtailing meat and apathy and heightening empathy and compassion. Using vegetarianism as a symbol of humanitarianism, both authors call for a moral and ethical obligation of man to his surroundings.