

Recognizing that there is an emotional, if not a logical, connection between eating and morals, she discusses political statements about malnutrition and consumer protection in the context of the symbolism of food, diet and abstention. She related such contemporary fasting as that of Dick Gregory with earlier more avowedly religious food disciplines: "The change in eating habits is seen as the first step in the reclamation of the soul."

The application of her analysis to works like Peter Singer's Animal Liberation is evident. The culmination of his approach is a set of vegetarian recipes, just as Lappe's Diet For A Small Planet moved from argument to the kitchen stove. In both the "socially conscious person" is made to believe that "every forkful of food he raises to his lips is tainted;" thus diet becomes "an entering wedge into a personal conversion experience."

One harmful aspect of this missionary approach to difficult moral issues, Gay contends, is to opt for political ineffectuality, precisely because the rigorous work of political analysis is circumvented.

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RUTH GAY, "THE TAINTED FORK", THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR (WINTER, 1978/79), P. 83.

Ruth Gay, a student of the history of diet, seeks to raise gastronomy to the level of moral philosophy in her piece in The American Scholar. She is not unsuccessful.