

BETWEEN THE SPECIES

Good Eats

ABSTRACT

If one believes that vegetarianism is morally obligatory, there are numerous ways to argue for that conclusion. In this paper, classic utilitarian and rights-based attempts to ground this obligation are considered, as well as Cora Diamond's reframing of the debate in terms of the proper way to view other animals. After discussion of these three ways to ground the obligation and their problems, an attitude-based approach inspired by Diamond's view (though different from it in important ways) is advanced. It is argued that such a view, by focusing moral attention on the attitudes of agents as opposed to the actions they undertake, captures the important insights of all three views, while offering a better grounding for the obligation. This view is superior in that it (1) succeeds in explaining the wrongness of a problem case, (2) without committing one to rights or to a troublingly subjective understanding of moral concepts.

ELIZABETH FOREMAN
Missouri State University
EForeman@missouristate.edu

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1. Introduction

It is usually acknowledged that non-human animals can be the proper objects of moral concern. The question of which non-human animals are the proper objects of that concern is not settled, nor is the question of the constraints that that moral concern puts on behavior; however, it is usually granted that there are ways in which it is wrong to treat some non-human beings. Torturing kittens, for example, is generally acknowledged to be wrong. What is interesting is that eating non-human animals is not always (or even often) thought to be one of the prohibited ways of treating them. Although there are those who argue that it is morally impermissible to eat non-human animals (Singer 1974 and 2002; Regan 2004; Norcross 2004; McMahan 2008), it is by no means the standard view. Furthermore, among those who do argue for vegetarianism, there is disagreement as to the scope and ground of the obligation involved. Some argue that sentient animals have a right to freedom from harm that is violated by raising them for food and killing them (Regan 2004), while others argue that it is primarily the pain and suffering that accompany animal industries that renders them impermissible (Singer 2002). Like any practical question in moral philosophy, theoretical commitments shape the answers that are given to the question, and the success of those answers is a function of the strength of the underlying theory. In this paper, the virtues and vices of representative arguments for vegetarianism will be discussed, and an alternative to these arguments will be proposed. Although there is much to recommend both standard utilitarian and rights-based arguments for vegetarianism, it will be argued that the important insights of both can be better accommodated by an attitude-based argument rather than by the standard act-based arguments.

2. Standard Views

Among those who advocate for vegetarianism (both philosophers and non-philosophers alike), some form of utilitarianism is the most common explanatory ground (Singer 1974 and 2002; Norcross 2004; Pollan 2007; Robbins 1987). The reason for this is not surprising; raising, killing, and eating sentient creatures involves causing their deaths, and in many cases causing pain to them, and so it is intuitively plausible that this needs to be justified. If one is drawn to vegetarianism it is often because, when attempting to justify this pain, one weighs it against whatever reasons one has for causing it and finds that such reasons do not offer justification. This lack of justification is even clearer in our modern society, which causes more than just the pain and the loss of future pleasure that result from killing non-human animals (or, the frustration of an interest in, or preference for, remaining alive, depending on one's view), but immense pain and suffering in their pre-slaughter lives as well. The simple fact of pain and suffering provides a compelling reason to remove oneself from participation in the institution that causes it, and so many people who abstain from eating meat do so for this reason.

The obvious intuitive appeal of such arguments (surely it is better not to cause pain and suffering if one can help it!), coupled with the indisputable fact of the pain and suffering caused to non-human animals in animal industries (Singer 2002), provides a solid base for arguing that vegetarianism is morally obligatory. However, despite the intuitive appeal of this view, there are problems with utilitarian justifications of vegetarianism. These problems have largely to do with the identification of the value that one is morally obligated to promote. The problem can be illustrated with a somewhat fanciful science fiction example: Imagine that one of the major chicken

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restaurants, having received much flak for undercover footage of the abusive treatment of the chickens it raises, decides to breed a whole new kind of chicken. This chicken will look and taste exactly like the chickens that we are used to, but it will specifically be bred to feel no pain and have no conscious awareness. In essence, the chickens will be very much like seriously brain-damaged chickens, but in the case of this breed, the brain-damage will be the norm. What could possibly be wrong with this, on a utilitarian view? The chickens are incapable of suffering or having interests, so no matter how one treats them, that treatment cannot be wrong; the chickens are, in essence, meat plants.

Of course, it is open to a utilitarian proponent of vegetarianism to argue that nothing would be wrong with breeding, raising, killing, and eating such chickens. However, this position highlights one of the unsatisfactory features of utilitarianism (Regan 2004, 200-211). Utilitarianism focuses its theoretical attention on individuals as loci of morally salient experiences, which is one of the reasons it successfully grounds obligations to non-human animals. No matter what the nature of the individual, if it suffers, that suffering matters morally, and the individual matters as a source of suffering. However, one only matters morally as such a source (since it is the suffering alone that is morally salient), so any individual that fails to be (or ceases to be) such a source does not matter morally. Treatment of individuals matters because those individuals suffer, so if one abstracts the capacity for suffering, the individuals do not matter.

Many proponents of utilitarianism find this feature of it particularly appealing—on their view, it is sentimentalism (at best) or speciesism (at worst) to think that non-sentient individuals

matter morally simply because they look like individuals that are sentient, or because they would have been sentient without defect. Given this feature of the utilitarian view, there seems to be no wrongness involved in the chicken example. However, there is reason to think that something is going wrong here; this example involves the deliberate attempt to circumvent what is morally salient about an individual in order to remove one's obligations to it, and such behavior is intuitively suspect. Consider, for example, that it would seem a bad defense for killing a person to point out that when you killed him, he was brain-damaged from the blow to the head you gave him first, and thus no longer a proper object of moral duties. Even if the subsequent treatment of the individual cannot be considered wrong, there must be an explanation of the moral dubiousness of acting in this way, and it seems unlikely that this will be a utilitarian explanation. The most promising utilitarian explanation seems to be that doing this would make one more likely to disregard the interests of chickens that *are* sentient, thus causing more suffering in the long run (Singer 2002)—but it seems that even one instance of this manipulation, done in isolation from any other chickens, is morally amiss. If, on the other hand, one attempts to argue that there is nothing wrong with acting in this way, then the example could be easily altered to describe genetically altered, non-sentient human beings, with the same moral conclusion.

Hard-line utilitarians might argue that there would be nothing wrong with eating human beings that had been bred to be non-sentient from birth. But there is something morally troubling about trying to engineer individuals that lack the one feature that gives rise to their moral status so that one can treat them as objects that have none. In what follows, it will be argued that this sort of behavior is wrong because it displays a morally

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deficient attitude towards sentient beings. First, however, two non-utilitarian arguments for vegetarianism will be considered, in order to illustrate the need for the alternative view.

If one is not a utilitarian, the most common alternative reason given for vegetarianism is rights-based; it is a violation of the rights of non-human animals to raise and kill them for food (Regan 2004). According to rights-based arguments, the reason it is wrong to eat meat is not simply the fact that the production of it causes suffering and death, but that the imposition of such suffering and death are violations of the rights of the non-human animals involved.

Tom Regan argues for such a view, and his arguments are Kant-inspired, though he rejects the Kantian grounding of morality in autonomous moral legislation. According to Regan, any being that is a subject of a life (where this means that one has a point of view from which life can go better or worse for one) has basic moral rights, because all such subjects have inherent value, worth, and dignity over and above their use to others. Included in these basic moral rights is the right not to be harmed. Given what goes on in the animal agriculture industry, raising and killing non-human animals for food (or keeping them in order to lay eggs or give milk) is clearly a violation of their rights.

Rights-based views provide more stringent prohibitions on the same sorts of behavior that utilitarian views prohibit. However, in order to achieve this stringency, proponents of such views posit rights, and this in turn raises worries about the nature and existence of moral rights themselves. To take Regan's view, one might wonder if all subjects of lives have inherent value, and whether that inherent value gives rise to rights. How

does a fact of value generate an obligation? Regan provides an argument for this view, but in rejecting Kantian support for such a position (i.e., Kant's complicated story about autonomy and its relationship to the moral law), Regan opts to reach his conclusion through a process of reflective equilibrium concerning our most settled and core intuitions (2004). Whether we do have core, settled intuitions about basic moral obligations is not absolutely clear, but even if it were, the extra step from intuitions about our obligations to the existence of rights is highly contentious; many people may acknowledge that we ought not harm non-human animals unnecessarily, or treat them in ways inconsistent with respect for their value, but the assertion that these facts mean they have rights against us (conceived by Regan and others as "valid claims") is more contentious. Few theories of rights posit a ground for rights that extends them to non-human beings (Feinberg 1970; Hart 1955; Mill 2001; Rawls 1971). Those views may be wrong, but the invocation of rights seems to be an unnecessarily contentious step in an otherwise appealing argument that non-human animals are not to be treated in ways that violate respect for their dignity (which is the intuitive basis for most moral rights claims).

Even setting this problem aside, however, rights-based arguments will still have a hard time explaining what is wrong with the science-fiction chicken example. The non-sentient chickens will not have rights (on Regan's view, for example, they will not be subjects of lives, and so will not have rights), and so using them as food resources will not be a rights-issue. However one understands rights, appealing to them does not seem to offer an explanation for the problem in this case. In the final section of this paper, it will be argued that the insights of a rights-based view are salvageable without actually asserting the existence of rights, and that a view that avoids such an assertion is more

successful than one that does. However, discussion of another kind of reason for vegetarianism must come first.

3. An Alternative to the Standard View from Cora Diamond

Not all philosophers who argue for vegetarianism argue in one of the two ways just described. One notable argument for the possibility of vegetarianism's being morally required (although it does not come to that definitive conclusion) is offered by Cora Diamond. According to Diamond, if one wants to establish that vegetarianism is obligatory, one shouldn't attempt the sort of act-based arguments advocated by both utilitarians and rights-theorists. The question is not whether it is wrong to eat animals because there is some fact about them that makes that action wrong; rather, the question is whether eating animals can be seen to be inconsistent with a proper view of them. On Diamond's view, the right way to argue for vegetarianism is not to try to find some feature of non-human animals that prohibits us from eating them (that they have interests, or that they are subjects of lives), but rather to examine our reasons for not eating people. According to Diamond, the reason we do not eat people is not that they suffer, or that they have rights, but because *they are people*, and people are not something to eat (1978, 467).

On Diamond's view, "people" is a moral category, and those beings that fall in that category are not "something to eat." The question, then, is whether non-human animals should properly be thought of as a kind that is "not something to eat." On Diamond's view, these categories are constructed by humans in the context of relationships with others; there is no objective ground (subjectivity, capacity to have interests, etc.) for membership in that category. The moral ground of prohibitions

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against eating is that we are in moral relationships with others that preclude our eating them, and so the category “person” includes that prohibition by nature of the relationship that creates it. Whether human beings have such a relationship with other, non-human animals is an open question, according to Diamond. However, she believes that it is not improper to view non-human animals as “fellow creatures,” as illustrated by her use of a Walter de la Mare poem,

...this indicates a direction of thought very unlike that of the Singer argument. There we start supposedly from the biological fact that we and dogs and rats and titmice and monkeys are all species of animal, differentiated indeed in terms of this or the other capacity, but what is appropriate treatment for members of our species would be appropriate to members of any whose capacities gave them similar interests....explicitly in the de la Mare, we have a different notion, that of living creature, or fellow creature—which is not a biological concept. It does not mean, biologically an animal, something with biological life—it means a being in a certain boat...The response to animals as our fellows in mortality, in life on this earth...depends upon a conception of human life. It is an extension of a non-biological notion of what human life is (1978, 474).

According to Diamond, the fact that non-human animals are subjects of lives, or that they have interests, is not something that can be read off of empirical features of the beings in question; instead, that something is seen as an “animal” signifies that one is in a certain relationship with it, and that relationship carries with it certain responses. Further, the fact that an animal

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has a “life” is not read off of biological facts about it either, but is instead merely an expression of our relationship with it.

Diamond’s ultimate conclusion is that factory farming is probably inconsistent with seeing another living thing as a “fellow creature” with a life, but that eating a non-human animal might not be. Presumably, this is because the constructed categories that delineate moral responses are different for non-human animals from what they are for human beings; the kind “animal,” though including a “fellow creature” response that precludes the horrors of factory farming, is still of the “animal life” category and not the “person life” category, and so our relationship to, and understanding of, that life need not preclude eating it.

This line of argument seems to solve many of the problems with utilitarian and rights-based arguments. Starting from the intuitively persuasive thought that the reason we do not eat people is not the sort of reason given by utilitarianism or a rights-based view (who ever considered eating a human being, but thought better of it because it would be a rights-violation?), the argument re-imagines the moral situation from the point of view of the moral agent, and not from facts about the object of the act. However, the problem with this sort of view is one of methodology. Appealing to the sorts of categories we construct, and then reading morality off of these constructed categories, leaves the business of morality far too arbitrary. Diamond is careful to note that the argumentative strategy she is proposing will not work if the person towards whom it is directed does not have a “fellow creature” response to non-human animals; such a person will most likely not be persuaded by an argument for vegetarianism that rests on this response. However, she argues that this is not a fatal flaw, since no one who rejects utilitarian-

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ism will be persuaded by Singer's strategy of identifying non-human animals as morally important. If one is not convinced that having interests is what grounds moral status, then one will be unconvinced by Singer's arguments that non-human animals must not be eaten because they meet this criterion.

There is an asymmetry, however, between the assumptions Singer asks one to make and the assumptions that Diamond asks one to make. On Singer's view, the facts about non-human animals are not in question; what is in question is the normative importance of those facts. Is the capacity to have interests what is ultimately morally salient about non-human animals? Perhaps it is, and perhaps it is not. However, this capacity cannot be denied, and given that it is a capacity we share, its importance cannot be denied either, even if there is disagreement about *how* important it is (can anyone seriously deny, for example, that it would be bad for a cat to have her paws sawed off?).

Diamond, on the other hand, rejects the idea that once certain empirical facts are granted, normative facts could easily follow. On her view, moral responses are contextual and arise from human category constructions. Even if it is true that a cat feels pain, that she is a "fellow creature" is not yet established; in order for it to be true that a being is a "fellow creature," one must be in a relationship with it, must see it that way. Although she seems to argue that non-human animals are properly seen as "fellow creatures," nothing in the way she argues can establish that for certain. In order to establish that, there must be facts about a being that call for a certain categorization, a certain response, but her understanding of moral construction rules that out. Says Diamond,

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...it is not a fact that a titmouse has a life; if one speaks that way it expresses a particular relation within a broadly specifiable range to titmice...Animals—these objects we are acting upon—are not given for our thought independently of such a mass of ways of thinking about and responding to them. This is part of what I meant earlier when I dismissed the idea of saying of something that whatever concepts it fell under, it was capable of suffering and so ought not to be made to suffer... (1978, 475-476).

Given this view of how our concepts function in order to create moral categories, it seems unlikely that someone who endorses this view could try to appeal to the person who doesn't have the "fellow creature" response—for nothing in the view seems to require that she have that response. In the absence of that requirement, the force of the response does not seem to really establish any sort of universal wrong.

Despite this, though, the idea that a commitment to vegetarianism is a matter of seeing non-human animals as "something not to eat" is one that is worth preserving, and Diamond's attempts to ground arguments for vegetarianism in our way of seeing our "fellow creatures" is promising. However, it would be better to avoid the arbitrary nature of the arguments, and find a firmer grounding for an attitude-based argument for vegetarianism. In the next section, such an argument will be proposed.

4. An Attitude-Based View

Diamond's approach gets to the heart of what is really wrong with eating meat—what is wrong with it is not only, or primarily, that one has failed in an obligation to the animal that one eats. What is primarily wrong with eating meat is that seeing

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non-human animals as something to eat is inappropriate, and the subsequent eating of animals is wrong because of this.

This view of the matter sits well with the insights gained from both utilitarian and rights-based arguments for vegetarianism. Using an animal as a mere means to further one's interests *is* at the root of what is wrong with consuming animal products, and inflicting harm for trivial pleasure is also wrong-generating. Animal-rights advocates focus on the former as primarily grounding the impermissibility of eating animal products, whereas utilitarians focus on the latter as the wrong-making feature of that act. However, focusing on which feature of the being in question generates an obligation to refrain from certain acts involving it is not the only way to understand what is wrong with using others as means and inflicting pain on them; as discussion of Diamond shows, these conflicting grounds of obligation can be collapsed into an understanding of the ways in which these actions display the wrong attitude towards an object of moral concern. That is, focusing on the inappropriateness of *seeing* a non-human animal as a mere means, and the inappropriateness of the *willingness* to inflict harm for a trivial purpose, can capture the role that the insights of these two views actually play in grounding arguments for the wrongness of consuming animal products. By locating the wrongness of consuming animal products in the attitude of the agent, and not in features of the action, such a view easily explains the wrongness of even the science-fiction chicken example, as well as the more standard cases. Instead of arguing about whether sentience or autonomy is the feature that limits our action concerning certain creatures, we can justify these limits by appealing to the wrongness of the attitude of an agent who causes pain or fails to respect autonomy.

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By refocusing, one can see that what is wrong with consuming animal products is that, in whatever way one acquires them (by killing a non-human animal, by milking a non-human animal, by keeping a non-human animal in order to gather its eggs, etc.), the treatment of the animal is inconsistent with viewing it as having the moral status that it has. Of course, moral status is something that one has in virtue of having certain features, but status is not simply the *possession* of those features. Instead, moral status is a matter of being of a certain kind—one is the sort of thing that must be viewed in certain ways, and mistreatment is in large part a matter of being viewed inappropriately given the sort of thing one is. On such a view, wrong acts are those that display a bad attitude, where the badness of the attitude is grounded in the appropriateness of ways of seeing certain kinds of creatures. Morally salient facts about creatures generate moral status, and acts are wrong if they express a way of seeing the creatures that have that status in a way that fails to recognize it.

To make this clearer, consider the difference between pulling a cat's teeth because one is worried about her oral health and wants to do what is best for her, and removing a cat's teeth for the fun of it. In the former case, one views the cat as a being with genuine interests, needs, and (at least basic) preferences about how her life will go. In this case, one takes the cat to the vet in order to respect her status as a subject, as a being that is living a life for which one has taken some responsibility. In the latter case, it is not clear how one views the cat, but at the very least it seems as if one is viewing the cat inappropriately, as an object to do with what one wishes. Even if one were to anesthetize the cat before pulling her teeth, be vigilant about infection, and alter her diet and her toys so that her toothless

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life is tolerable, there seems something wrong with removing the cat's teeth for the fun of it.

A view like Regan's gets close to explaining why this is so: it is a lack of respect for the cat to treat her as if her teeth were merely a means for one's own amusement, and as if the use she has for them is unimportant. However, one does not have to posit rights at all in order to explain the wrongness of this act; even if the cat has no rights to the free and unrestricted use of her teeth, the action (even when it does no harm) displays disrespect towards her. And this disrespect is wrong not only for the wrong acts that follow, but wrong in the very attitude it displays. Regan wishes to give a firmer grounding to our obligations to animals than is provided by utilitarianism, and so conceives of a failure to respect non-human animals as involving an injustice, a violation of rights that the animals can claim against us. That is, he wishes to rule certain actions out as simply impermissible because the creatures involved can demand non-performance as their due. However, given that one can explain this wrong without appealing to the troublesome notion of rights, it seems better to retain the core moral insight and drop the appeal to rights. Even without the idea of rights, there is a robust wrong that occurs in the case of pulling a cat's teeth for fun—that is, one views (and subsequently treats) a non-human animal in a way that is inappropriate to the kind of thing that it is. Moral status can generate prohibitions against ways of seeing creatures (and the actions that those attitudes lead to) without having to generate rights against certain kinds of treatment, and the argument from respect paves the way for that without need for the extra appeal to rights.

Contra Diamond, however, the appeal here to “what kind of thing an animal is” is not a matter of how we happen to see

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it; “what kind of thing an animal is” is not merely a construction, a categorization that carries with it certain responses (and which is shaped by those responses). A non-human animal is a particular kind of thing as a matter of *fact*, and one is morally required to see, and respond to, the kind of thing a creature is in ways that are appropriate to its kind. According to this view, morality is ultimately a matter of viewing, and responding appropriately, to the world; one’s actions are a good sign of how one views the world, but they are not ultimately the basis of moral evaluation, since the wrongness of the act of treating another inappropriately ultimately rests in the inappropriate view that drives the action. Although full argument for this agent-centered view is beyond the scope of this article, such a view can explain moral evaluation in general, and so (as is the case with both utilitarianism and rights-based views) provides an argument for vegetarianism that is continuous with arguments against harming our fellow human beings.

This view endorses veganism because most non-human animals are the sorts of things that are subjects of the morally relevant kind. They lead their own lives from a privileged perspective (they alone know what it’s like to be them), and this means that we must view them as the self-guided creatures that they are. To see them otherwise, to see them as merely resources for one’s use, is to willfully ignore a morally salient feature of their experience. Non-human animals are, as Regan puts it, subjects of lives, and ignoring this subjectivity, or thinking that it is unimportant in the face of one’s own subjectivity, is to have an inappropriate attitude towards what is a fundamentally morally important experience. It is important to note here that the argument is not that all moral obligations are obligations of respect; the claim is simply that being self-guided is the feature of experience that gives one moral status, and wrong acts are

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those that display an attitude that is inappropriate in the face of this fact (that is, that fails to see the creature in a way consistent with that fact).

This way of understanding wrongness can also explain what is wrong with ignoring the pain of a non-human animal, or thinking that its pain is unimportant in the face of one's own. Here, Singer's insights are apt—it is atrocious to think that the pain of another living thing is unimportant in the face of one's own desires. But what is atrocious is not just the behavior that that thinking engenders, nor is it the fact that such thinking engenders an attitude likely to bring about bad behavior. The attitude itself is already morally wrong, whether bad behavior follows it or not, because it is a failure to see another living creature as having moral status; it is a failure to see another living creature as more than an object for one's own use. Singer's attempts to explain the wrongness of certain acts by claiming that they engender attitudes that lead to further bad behavior adds an unnecessary step to the argument, for the attitude can be seen as wrong in itself. And this is in fact more intuitive; if we take Singer's view, one does no wrong if one enjoys watching a film of a cow being tortured, apart from making oneself more likely to torture cows oneself. On the view endorsed here, however, enjoying a film in which a cow is tortured is already wrong, even if one never goes on to compound that wrong by torturing an actual cow.

The reason that veganism is obligatory on this view is that it is not necessary for human beings to consume animal products in order to survive. Non-human animals are the sorts of things that experience and structure their own lives, and the appropriate attitude towards those lives is not only a function of what sorts of lives the animals lead, but the sorts of lives that human

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beings lead as well. If human beings required meat to survive, or if they required eggs and dairy products, then the appropriate attitude towards other living things would still involve proper recognition of their autonomy, but would also involve seeing them as things to eat (or as producers of things to eat). Proper respect for them would still be necessary, but what that would require in terms of attitude and behavior would be a function of what sorts of lives human beings had to lead.

Human beings do *not* need to eat meat or other animal products in order to survive, though, so it is inappropriate to see other living creatures as things to eat. Facts about them and facts about us make it the case that they are *not* things for us to eat, and seeing them that way is inappropriate. What's more, veganism is explicitly and absolutely required on such a view, since one's attitude to a milking cow or a laying hen is no less inappropriate than one's attitude towards a veal calf—one views such creatures as sources of food, as things to milk and keep. To see the inappropriateness of such an attitude, one need only consider how obscene that attitude would be if one took it towards a human being. One need not consume the milk of human beings (after a certain age), and so one should not view human beings as mere food resources in one's adulthood.

On such a view, not only is it wrong to slaughter a cow or keep chickens, it is wrong to buy eggs and wrong to purchase hamburger. Even if one does not kill the cow or keep the chicken as a food resource, buying and consuming those products displays an inappropriate attitude toward non-human animals. However, rather than having to posit an injustice traceable to a particular individual in order to explain this, one need look no further than the attitude of the purchaser. One would do the

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same wrong purchasing Tofurky, mistakenly thinking it was once a living bird, as one would do buying an actual turkey.

A view like this one is also able to give a more satisfactory answer to the problem raised by the science-fiction chicken example. If one manipulates chickens in order to circumvent what is morally salient about them, one is already doing wrong, because one is viewing chickens inappropriately. If one takes seriously that chickens have moral status, then trying to get around that status by subtracting the features that help ground it expresses a wrong attitude towards the kind of things that chickens are (namely, things that normally have those morally salient features). Even if the resulting chickens have none of the features that grounded the appropriateness of certain attitudes towards their predecessors, the act of manipulation that brought them about clearly displays a bad attitude towards chickens, given the kinds of things that they are. The act of manipulating them to bring their non-sentience about is wrong because of the attitude this displays towards chickens, towards creatures with moral status. Though no sentient individual is harmed, and no individuals' rights are violated, the attitude expressed is already wrong. And it is not too much of a stretch to think that this would require one not to take advantage of the situation that that manipulation brought about. That is, even if the resulting chickens have no awareness at all, the act of trying to engineer chickens without morally salient characteristics because one wishes to eat them (which, given what they are, one ought not want to do) displays a bad attitude in itself, and so this can be seen as wrong in a way unavailable to those who rest wrongness in facts about the actual creatures involved.

5. Conclusion

Although both utilitarian and rights-based arguments for vegetarianism have intuitive appeal, they both have problems that can be avoided by focusing less on the wrongness of the actions that are prohibited, and more on the wrongness of the attitudes involved. Taking insights from Cora Diamond's notion of "seeing another as a fellow creature," it becomes clear that a wrong way of "seeing" non-human animals is at the root of what is intuitively appealing about utilitarian and rights-based arguments. By retaining and focusing on the importance of those wrong ways of seeing, one can more successfully argue for the wrongness of eating non-human animals and their products.

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