A Novel Argument for Vegetarianism? Zoopolitics and Respect for Animal Corpses

Josh Milburn
University of Sheffield

Abstract: This paper offers a novel argument against the eating of meat: the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism. The argument is, in brief, that eating meat involves the disrespect of an animal's corpse, and this is respect that the animal is owed because they are a member of our political community. At least three features of this case are worthy of note. First, it draws upon political philosophy, rather than moral philosophy. Second, it is a case for vegetarianism, and not a case for veganism. Third, while it is animal-focussed, it does not rely upon a claim about the wrong of inflicting death and suffering upon animals. The paper sets out the argument, responds to two challenges (that the argument is merely academic, and that the argument does not go far enough), and concludes by comparing the case to Cora Diamond's classic argument for vegetarianism.

Keywords: Animal ethics, animal rights, animal politics, Zoopolis, food ethics, vegetarianism, veganism

It is hard to argue for vegetarianism. This may sound like a strange claim to make in a journal focussed on human-animal relations, but the reality is that most classic arguments ostensibly in favour of vegetarianism are actually arguments in favour of veganism (for example, Adams; Singer; Regan; cf. Milburn 'Vegetarian Eating'). After all, the production of eggs and milk involves a great deal of objectification, death, and suffering for non-human animals (hereafter, *animals*), comparable to the levels of objectification, death, and suffering in meat production. This means that if our case for vegetarianism rests upon the objectification, death, or suffering of animals, it will be tricky to stop it from becoming an argument for veganism.

There are the beginnings of arguments for vegetarianism (contra veganism) in animal ethics. Many are underdeveloped; for example, in conversations about *in vitro* meat and plant-based 'meats', some theorists present arguments about the wrongfulness of eating meat (or meat-like products) that may or may not extend to non-meat products (for example, Cole and Morgan; Fischer and Ozturk; Miller). Rebekah Sinclair, working in Carol Adams's feminist-veg(etari)an critical theory, is actually explicit about not extending her arguments against 'meat' to non-meat animal products. She rejects all consumption of meat – even *in vitro* meat – while remaining (in principle) open to eating eggs and milk, which, she claims, 'do not imply a necessary animal death' (231-2). The arguments of Sinclair and others could thus – if issues in the *production* of animal foods are left aside for a second so that we may focus on issues in the *consumption* of animal foods – ground arguments for vegetarianism rather than veganism. However, no one (to my knowledge) builds these ideas into a fully-fledged argument for vegetarianism. When developed arguments for vegetarianism (and not veganism) are offered, on the other hand, they are unconvincing. Tzachi Zamir ('Veganism'; *Ethics and the Beast*) is the one philosopher who offers a full argument for vegetarianism over veganism, which he bases on the image of a vegetarian utopia (in contrast to a vegan utopia) and a claim about effective campaigning on behalf of animals. His arguments fail on several grounds – or so I have argued elsewhere (Milburn 'Vegetarian Eating').

Despite the paucity of developed, compelling philosophical defences of vegetarianism, the practice persists; as such, getting to the bottom of an argument in its favour would be a worthwhile activity for animal ethicists. Further, identifying particular wrongs in meat

consumption could be useful to animal ethicists for a variety of reasons – for example, in supplementing other arguments for ethical eating, to help with identifying genuinely unproblematic diets containing animal products (if any), or as a tool to encourage people to lead more compassionate lifestyles when other arguments have been unsuccessful.

It is my contention that we can find a plausible case for vegetarianism – one that does not simply become a case for veganism – by drawing upon work in the recent 'political turn' in animal ethics, which is the emergence of animal-ethical work drawing upon the language and resources of *political* philosophy, rather than *moral* philosophy (see Garner and O'Sullivan; Milligan). In a line, the case is that eating meat involves the disrespect of an animal's corpse; this is respect that animals are owed, crucially, because they are members of a particular mixed-species political community. However, this argument says nothing about any wrong in the consumption of eggs, milk, honey, or other non-meat animal products. It is thus not an argument for veganism. Indeed, as it extends only so far as the relevant community membership extends, ultimately, the argument might not be for an *entirely* vegetarian diet – but that depends on precisely how we demarcate the 'community' in question. In this paper, I will set out the case, clarify its scope, and deal with two possible objections: first, that the argument is purely academic; second, that the argument does not go far enough. I will close by comparing it to Cora Diamond's case for vegetarianism, from which it is distinct, but with which it shares several features.

Against Eating Community Members

The most significant text in the political turn in animal ethics is Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka's *Zoopolis*. In this book, the authors argue that all sentient animals are entitled to certain basic rights in virtue of their sentience. They thus call for a declaration of animal rights comparable to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, they argue that all animals are entitled to rights beyond those in this declaration, but that the content of these further rights depends on the relationship the animals in question have with the (or perhaps, more precisely, *a particular*) mixed human/animal community. Animals who are a part of this community –

namely, domesticated animals, which includes not only companion animals but also farmed animals – are offered *citizenship* in this community. Animals who live separately from this community (that is, free-living or 'wild' animals) are offered *sovereignty* rights over their own community and space. Animals who do not quite fall into either category – so called *liminal* animals – are offered the rights of *denizenship*, comparable to the rights offered to human migrant workers.

Zoopolis is a rich and inspiring work, offering a whole host of resources for exploring human-animal relationships. Crucial to the present enquiry, however, is a comment that Donaldson and Kymlicka make about the treatment of domesticated animals' corpses. Questioning the idea that the zoopolis might permissibly use the corpses of domesticated animals to feed carnivorous animals,[1] they write that some of the ideas people have about the treatment of corpses:

> are culturally (and religiously) variable, marking the boundaries of community. This could mean that while there are some ways in which we should never treat a corpse – human or animal, citizen or foreigner – there are special obligations we owe to members of the community… Perhaps, then, we ought to treat the bodies of domesticated animals the same way as human bodies in any given society or community, but the same obligation does not apply for corpses of those from outside the community. (151)

Donaldson and Kymlicka do not present this as an argument about human consumption, but it has been drawn on by others exploring the ethics of human diet. Specifically, Bob Fischer and I ('The Freegan Challenge to Veganism') build on the thought to present a case against a range of *freegan* practices – freegans, as we use the term, are people who will eat animal products to stop them from going to waste, but are otherwise vegans. Fischer and I argue that if many animals can be considered members of mixed political communities, and are thus entitled to certain forms of respect that are extended to (human) community members *qua* community members, then certain norms around the treatment of corpses should be extended to them. Given that, in most communities, it is considered deeply disrespectful to eat the corpses of dead

human community members, the members of those same communities – on Donaldson and Kymlicka's picture – should consider it deeply disrespectful to eat the corpses of dead non-human community members. Thus, given that meat products are made from (parts of) domesticated animals' corpses, we have a case against many common freegan practices, including dumpster-diving for canned beef soup and finishing ham sandwiches about to be binned after a meeting. Crucially, this is despite the fact that these freegan practices do not seem to contribute to any animal death or suffering.

The case offered against ('unrestricted') freeganism can be generalised into an argument against the eating of (much) meat as follows. Let us call this the *zoopolitical case for vegetarianism*.

1: The bodies of members of political communities must be treated in a way befitting that membership.

2: Domesticated animals are members of particular mixed-species political communities.

3: The bodies of domesticated animals must be treated in a way befitting animals' membership in particular political communities. *(From 1 and 2.)*

4: The consumption of the corpses of co-community-members is not considered treatment befitting the community member's membership.

5: The bodies of domesticated animals may not be consumed. *(From 3 and 4.)*

6: Much commercially available meat is made from the bodies of domesticated animals.

7: Much commercially available meat may not be consumed. *(From 5 and 6.)*

Statements 1 and 2 offer contentious conceptual and normative claims drawing from the zoopolitics of Donaldson and Kymlicka. 3 follows unproblematically from their conjunction. 4 is a contingent empirical claim. There are communities (in theory and practice) in which the consumption of corpses is seen as wholly consistent with respecting the community-member whose corpse it is. For example, the Wari' of the Amazon historically engaged in endocannibalism as part of a respectful funerary rite (Conklin). Today, the Aghori – an Indian

Saivite sect – apparently practice corpse-consumption, though the relationship of this practice to respect for corpses is far from simple (Barrett; Kaliff and Oestigaard).

So, though it is not unheard of, communities engaging in cannibalism as a way to respect the corpses of co-community members (or at least as a practice consistent with respect for co-community members) are few and far between. And corpse consumption as a funerary rite is very alien in the kinds of western, liberal-democratic states about which Donaldson and Kymlicka are writing – in these, the consumption of corpses is seen as abhorrent.[2] And while an aversion to cannibalism may be able to explain some of this feeling, it cannot explain all of it. If it could, members of these western societies would presumably have little objection to feeding human corpses to carnivorous animals, but this proposal, too, is unlikely to gain much traction at present. (There are human communities in which corpses are fed to animals – including some Buddhist and Zoroastrian communities (Martin) – but these practices are deeply alien to much of the world.)

Let us, then, take 4 for granted. Conjoined with 3, it gives us 5. One might object to this logical leap on the grounds that it fallaciously equates *what is considered* consistent with respectful corpse treatment with *what is* consistent with respectful corpse treatment. However, practices of corpse-treatment do not gain their legitimacy and importance from any kind of universal moral code, but from widespread acceptance within a given society – they are an issue of *manners* (cf. Buss). So the mere fact that the collective (in a given society) considers corpse consumption *deeply* disrespectful is enough for us to treat it as if it *is* disrespectful for the purposes of this argument. It could be that there are some universal rules of corpse-treatment, but presumably they will not include a proscription against treating (parts of) corpses as food – if they did, that would leave us committed to saying that there is something wrong with those societies in which human corpses are fed to animals or are eaten as part of a respectful funerary rite. That sounds suspiciously like a kind of cultural supremacism, and so (absent clear arguments to the contrary) should be rejected.

6 is a further empirical claim, though surely not a controversial one. When conjoined with 5, it gives us 7, our ultimate conclusion. Let us call the position advocated in 7 *demi-vegetarianism*[3] – and thus acknowledge that, strictly speaking, the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism is a case for demi-vegetarianism.

Demi-vegetarianism is a long way from veganism. This argument offers us no reason to be concerned about the consumption of unfertilised eggs, dairy products, honey, or similar. It is also a step away from vegetarianism in that it still permits the consumption of meat sourced from animals who are not part of the community in question. For Donaldson and Kymlicka, this means non-domesticated animals, as the only animals afforded full membership in mixed human/animal communities are domesticated animals. (Later, I will touch on the possibility of a *cosmozoopolis*, in which wild animals are also considered community members.) Non-domesticated animals, in Donaldson and Kymlicka's eyes, live in communities without *any* norms of respectful corpse treatment, so there is little reason to think that we owe them such treatment.[4] So, demi-vegetarianism will permit the consumption of much 'seafood', as well as much 'game' – though not the farmed versions of either. Wild-caught seafood or game, however, make up only a small portion of the meat available in supermarkets, and only a small (though admittedly highly variable) portion of the diets of most in the developed world, especially when we remember that 'natural' spaces are frequently artificially 'stocked' with animals, who might be fairly described as domesticated, for hunters and anglers.

Demi-vegetarianism is thus permissive when compared to the diets endorsed in a great many contemporary cases for vegetarianism and veganism. Nonetheless, the argument is striking because, though it is animal-focused,[5] it does not rely in any way on the wrongness of killing animals or inflicting suffering upon them. One could conceivably accept that there is no wrong in killing animals or inflicting pain upon them and yet still endorse demi-vegetarianism for the reasons outlined. This is why, I think, the case for demi-vegetarianism is worthy of note.

Incidentally, we should not think that we could engage in some conceptual legerdemain to argue that demi-vegetarianism permits the consumption of meat from animals who were raised abroad, as *these* animals are not members of the community in question. Those who

endorse the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism would presumably still have a duty to respect the corpses of such animals, but there may be a slightly different story about what 'respectful treatment' entails than there would be for animals raised closer to home. After all, these 'foreign' animals a part of *a* mixed community, and thus their corpses should be treated with respect – but what *counts* as respectful treatment may be a little different in their case. This is exactly analogous to the human case. Even if we accept that norms of corpse treatment are culturally variable, we would presumably not say that we have no obligation to respect the corpses of foreigners. Consistent with the different norms of respect in the foreigner's society, however, we might think ourselves permitted to treat the corpse in a way we would never treat the corpses of our co-community members. Perhaps, then, members of a non-corpse-eating society may somehow come across the body of an animal from a corpse-eating society, and thus be permitted to eat it. However, it is surely not the case that any actual corpse-eating society – such as those mentioned above – considers anonymous packaging, mass-distribution, and sale of pieces of corpses part of a respectful funerary rite. It is thus hard to imagine a society retaining a trade in the meat of domesticated animals if the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism is accepted – short of a very radical cultural shift in understanding about what it means to respect corpses.

Is This Argument Merely Academic?

Readers might accept the usefulness of the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism as a supplement to standard cases for veganism – perhaps one that can help justify veganism over (certain forms of) freeganism (Milburn and Fischer). Alternatively, they might accept it as a part of a design of a vegetarian/vegan utopia (cf. Zamir, *Ethics and the Beast*; Milburn, 'Vegetarian Eating'), which reveals that, even if meat could be acquired without harming any animals, we should not eat it. They might even acknowledge that a focus on the wrong of meat-*eating* rather than meat-*production* could help overcome disassociations between the practice of meat-eating and the harms of animal agriculture. Such disassociation can be part of a strategy to avoid morally confronting one's own meat-eating (cf. Rothgerber), or it can be a genuine philosophical concern about one's own causal impotence (cf. Fischer).

Nonetheless, readers might question this argument's utility as a freestanding case for demi-vegetarianism. Why, they might say, are people who do not care about the death and suffering of domesticated animals going to care about this 'respect for corpses' talk? There are two separate worries, here. The first is that people are unlikely care about respecting corpses without thinking that killing or otherwise harming is morally problematic. The second is that people are unlikely to believe that animals are community members if they are not already sympathetic towards veganism. Let us address these worries in turn.

First, consider the claim that we are unlikely to endorse norms of corpse-treatment without also saying that killing the being whose corpse this is, and/or making them suffer, is morally problematic. This should be rejected. In fact, there are a range of cases in which we are apparently prepared to endorse the claim that we must treat A's body with respect even while rejecting the claim that killing/inflicting suffering upon A is impermissible. Take warfare. The law and ethics of war, basically by definition, do not condemn the killing of enemy combatants. Nonetheless, the importance of 'respecting' corpses, and preventing them from being 'despoiled' or 'mutilated', is written into the Geneva Conventions, with a failure to respect corpses a war crime.[6] Or take foetuses. While abortion – which involves the direct killing of a human foetus – is legal in many states, it need not follow that one may do whatever one wishes with the remains. The artist Rick Gibson famously had criminal charges brought against him for a sculpture featuring earrings made from freeze-dried foetuses (see Alghrani and Brazier). Or consider self-defence. Serious threats to oneself or others can justify visiting extreme violence on blameworthy individuals, or even (though this is more controversial) innocent third parties. It would be a perversion of ethical and legal systems permitting this, however, to use this fact to justify suspending norms of respectful corpse treatment – one may not cannibalise, sexually penetrate, or taxidermise the corpse of an attacker, even if one has legally and ethically killed said attacker in self-defence.

There are, then, plenty of examples illustrating that it makes sense to talk of strong norms of corpse respect even for the corpses of those permissibly killed. We do not need to believe that anyone opposed to the unrestricted use of foetuses is 'pro-life', or that anyone opposed to the unrestricted use of criminals' corpses is opposed to the death penalty, or that

anyone concerned about the treatment of dead in war is a pacifist. Equally, we have no reason to believe that only committed, animal-rights-endorsing vegans can affirm the importance of respecting domesticated animals' corpses.

Let us turn to the second strand of the objection. We might imagine that the importance of respecting the corpses of community members is relatively uncontroversial, but that the idea that domesticated (or any) animals are community members is a novel, fringe view. For the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism, I have drawn from the zoopolitics of Donaldson and Kymlicka. However, claims about humans and animals sharing community membership are not new. Mary Midgley, for example, conceptualises humans as living in a mixed human/animal community. Nor are such claims unique to those who could be labelled broadly animal-protectionist. Kimberly Smith, for example, argues that it is a historical fact that domesticated animals are a part of our community. Nonetheless, she is far from a vegan. She is 'inclined to choose the farmers over the animal rights advocates' when it comes to the ethics of killing animals (64) – and the kind of 'happy farming' that Smith endorses is far from suffering-free (Stănescu). So her normative approach provides a concrete example of how the idea of animals as community members and the idea of animals as killable beings who can be made to suffer can sit together.[7] The value of the case for demi-vegetarianism is that it shows how animals can be owed certain kinds of respect – including respectful treatment of their corpse – *regardless* of whether they are understood to have an interest in, or right concerning, not being killed.

Thus, the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism is not merely academic. There are plenty of cases in which we accept the impermissibility of disrespectful corpse treatment without accepting the impermissibility of killing. Meanwhile, the status of animals as community members is not a mere quirk of Donaldson and Kymlicka's zoopolitics; indeed, as demonstrated by the example of Smith, there are theorists who endorse the status of animals as members of communities while not endorsing the claim that it is impermissible to kill them or make them suffer.

It is worth noting that even were this not the case, and the zoopolitical case for veganism was merely academic, that would not make it valueless. Philosophical arguments do not solely seek to motivate; instead, they seek to appeal to reasons and values that – if being consistent – we (or someone else) *should* accept.

Does This Argument Go Far Enough?

Vegans will likely be unimpressed with the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism; they will insist that it does not go far enough. For example, vegans may worry that the argument fails to properly condemn the death and suffering involved in contemporary practices of egg and dairy farming, or of angling for free-living fish. I share the concern. Indeed, Donaldson and Kymlicka will share the concern, too; recall that they endorse universal basic animal rights, and so would likely be opposed to any practice that involves killing, or inflicting suffering upon, sentient animals. However, in a sense, the argument is not for vegans (unless as a supplement to other arguments) and they should welcome – in the interests of protecting animals and developing an overlapping consensus – new cases for (near-)vegetarianism. This is especially true when the arguments could serve to convince those who do not share certain key normative premises with animal protectionists – for example, the wrongness of inflicting death and suffering on animals, or else the normatively salient connection between these wrongs and one's own consumption, given causal-impotence worries.

If one wishes to stretch the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism to cover all cases of meat-eating, then one will have to demonstrate that *all* animals belong to communities in which the consumption of corpses is disrespectful. One way to go would be to follow Donaldson and Kymlicka in identifying wild animals as members of separate communities to humans, but argue that these separate communities have norms of respectful corpse treatment. This, I suspect, will not be a successful strategy. It is unlikely that communities made up solely of animals have norms of corpse treatment. I allow that some more cognitively sophisticated animals may have

such norms, but this would be tricky to demonstrate; one would need to do more than prove that animals do not eat their dead to prove that they see eating their dead as *disrespectful*. And it is surely implausible that all or even many wild animals have such norms.

A more promising approach would be to argue that Donaldson and Kymlicka are wrong to draw the boundaries of mixed human/animal communities as they do, and instead argue that all humans, domesticated animals, *and* wild animals share in a 'community of fate', and thus all are appropriately thought of as part of the same political community. This is the position of Alasdair Cochrane ('Cosmozoopolis'; *Sentientist Politics*), who offers – in place of Donaldson and Kymlicka's zoopolitics – a vision of *cosmozoopolitics*. If Cochrane is right about the political status of free-living animals, then perhaps the zoopolitical case for demi-vegetarianism can become a cosmozoopolitical case for vegetarianism. On this picture, all animals, domesticated or wild, would be entitled to respectful corpse treatment. However, specifying what constitutes respectful corpse treatment in the cosmozoopolis would be tricky – why should we accept that particular western human norms (i.e., not eating corpses) are the ones to be followed? Cochrane says nothing about the subject, and we should not attribute a cosmozoopolitical case for vegetarianism to him – in other work, he has explicitly defended the prospect of eating the corpses of domesticated animals who have died naturally (*Animal Rights Without Liberation*, 87-8). So, while challenging Donaldson and Kymlicka's demarcation of the mixed-species community may provide a route to expanding the zoopolitical case for demi-vegetarianism, there are complications that must be addressed.

Meanwhile, this argument is not useful for grounding the wrong of eating eggs, dairy, and the like, as these are not (made from) animal corpses. If one seeks theoretical resources for condemning these practices independently of concerns about the impropriety of inflicting harms on animals, one should look elsewhere. Identifying such theoretical resources would be a worthwhile exercise – but it is not the focus of the present paper.

Is This a Novel Case?

Readers may question the novelty of the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism and argue that, as it focusses not on the suffering and death of animals but the way we should view them and their bodies, it shares an affinity with Cora Diamond's case for vegetarianism. Like the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism, Diamond's case against meat steps back from a focus on the intrinsic features or capacities of animals (for example, sentience), and asks about the kind of relationship we have with them. According to Diamond, animals share something crucial with humans – they are *fellow creatures*, and they can be our *company*. Is it appropriate for us to eat our 'fellows', our 'company'? Diamond thinks not.

On the face of it, there is indeed a similarity, here. The zoopolitical case and Diamond's case both take morally thick concepts (that is, concepts with both descriptive content and normative content) and include animals within the (at first glance, perhaps solely human) category so that they can apply the normative content of the concept to animals. In so doing, they do not lean too strongly on any particular foundational normative theory (though more on the philosophical foundations of the views in a second), such as utilitarianism or rights theory. This means that the arguments could have value and persuasive power for people who accept an array of different foundational normative theories.

Clearly, though, the two arguments draw upon *different* thick concepts. Diamond's notion of a *fellow creature* is drawn explicitly from literature, especially poetry. It is presented as a way for individuals to understand their personal relationships with other animals, and thus, derivatively, to help individuals relate appropriately to other animals. The concept of *membership*, however, is drawn from liberal political theory and practice. It is a term that can help us understand our *societal* relationship with other animals, and thus, derivatively, to help us relate appropriately to animals as both individuals and collectives. Not only are the concepts different, but the consequences of deploying them are different – as different sets of animals might be called 'fellows' and 'members'. Most obviously, Diamond sees some wild animals as fellows, while Donaldson and Kymlicka do not see wild animals as co-members.

Nonetheless, this similarity does open up the possibility of extending other kinds of thick concepts to animals in search of arguments for vegetarianism. In fact, this work has already been done – or the first steps of it have already been made. Jeff Jordan, for example, extends the concept of *friend* to animals as a foundation for an argument for vegetarianism. As he tells us in the title of his paper, 'friends shouldn't let friends be eaten'. Recent work in animal studies has done important extension of other kinds of thick concepts to include animals – *worker* (Blattner, Coulter, and Kymlicka), for example, and *refugee* (Derham and Mathews). Whether or not *these* concepts could be useful for grounding arguments for vegetarianism or veganism remains to be seen, but the point is clear: in including animals within these thick concepts (member, fellow, company, friend, worker, refugee, citizen, denizen, sovereign, and so on), academics hope to ground better treatment for animals *without* having to rely on (for example) a full declaration of animal rights (see Eisen; Kymlicka).

But while the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism, like Diamond's case, is about including animals within key thick concepts, there are crucial metaphilosophical and metaethical differences between the zoopolitical case for vegetarianism and Diamond's argument. Exploring the details of this will take us too far from the present enquiry, but Diamond draws explicitly upon the Wittgensteinian tradition in ethics (that is, ethics drawing from Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language), in sharp contrast to the more morally individualist approach of Donaldson and Kymlicka (for a useful introduction to this distinction in animal ethics, see Crary). Though Donaldson and Kymlicka are concerned with group membership in addition to the capacities of particular animals, their approach has more in common with the mainstream animal-ethical approaches of (say) Peter Singer and Tom Regan than it does with Diamond's approach.

In outlining the differences between the arguments, I do not mean to argue that one is inherently more compelling than the other. Both, perhaps, come with intellectual baggage that some are going to find unappealing – those drawn to more mainstream approaches to ethics might be put off by Diamond's metatheoretical commitments, while those drawn to alternative political theories may be put off by the zoopolitical argument's liberalism. For the right audience, either could be compelling. My point, instead, is simply that the arguments are different.

Concluding Remarks

I have argued that if the corpses of members of our community are owed respectful treatment, and if domesticated animals are members of our community, then (assuming some plausible empirical assumptions) we should not be eating meat made from the corpses of domesticated animals. Crucially, I think the premises of this argument are true, and so I think that the conclusion is true, too. We should not be eating meat made from the bodies of domesticated animals; not (just) because of the harms involved in meat production, but because, in so doing, we fail to extend respect to the corpses of co-members of our community. What is more, however, I think these premises are relatively innocuous, and can realistically be adopted by people not already convinced of the moral necessity of veganism. This new argument for vegetarianism can thus be added to the growing list available to animal ethicists and animal activists. The argument, I suggest, will be of value in thinking through the ethics of eating animal products, supplementing and complementing more familiar approaches to the ethics of eating animals. For example, this argument could illustrate that there are problems in eating meat from the body of an animal even when doing so does not contribute to harm to that or other animals.

The argument may also be of value in encouraging those unconvinced by classic cases for veg(etari)anism away from meat. From an animal-protectionist perspective, the zoopolitical argument for vegetarianism does not go far enough and cannot replace arguments for veganism based on the wrong of harming animals. However, tens of billions of terrestrial vertebrates are killed a year for food; if we start to include fish, decapod crustaceans, cephelapods, and others – as we surely must – the number enters the trillions. Those who see this as a problem should welcome tools that can help to overcome this harm. Perhaps those who do not see the wrong in killing animals or making them suffer but adopt vegetarianism nonetheless should be welcomed. For the cow, the theoretical commitments of the people not killing her do not matter; what matters is that they are not killing her.

Notes

[1] For more on this kind of question, see Milburn, 'The Animal Lovers' Paradox' and Milburn, 'Not Only Humans Eat Meat'.

[2] Incidentally, I am here neither endorsing nor condemning this abhorrence. The (ir)rational basis of claims about corpse treatment is orthogonal to my argument. That said, for a proposal for pushing societies towards a greater acceptance of the permissibility of eating (*in vitro*) human flesh, see Milburn, 'Chewing Over *In Vitro* Meat'.

[3] Though acknowledging that it differs from other diets with a similar names, including R. M. Hare's demi-vegetarianism (see Hare).

[4] Except insofar as there are *universal* norms of corpse treatment, though, again, it is surely not the case that there is a universal norm against the consumption of corpses.

[5] That is, it is not a case for veganism that focuses on the benefits of veganism for humans or the environment. It is about something owed directly to animals.

[6] For more details, see https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule113, which sets out rule 113 of Customary International Humanitarian Law: 'Each party to the conflict must take all possible measures to prevent the dead from being despoiled. Mutilation of dead bodies is prohibited.'

[7] One might claim that this argument is uncompelling, as these animals are part of our community only *so that* they might be killed. In response, I would contend that this is by-the-by. In the words of Robert Nozick, 'the parallel argument about people would not look very convincing… An existing person has claims, even against those whose purpose in creating him was to violate those claims'. Similarly, '[o]nce they exist, animals too may have claims to certain treatment' (38-9).

Works Cited

Adams, Carol. *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. Continuum, 1990.

Alghrani, Arnel, and Margaret Brazier. 'What Is It? Whose It? Re-positioning the Fetus in the Context of Research.' *Cambridge Law Journal*, vol. 70, no. 1, 2011, pp.51-82.

Barrett, Ronald L. *Aghor Medicine*. University of California Press, 2008.

Blattner, Charlotte, Kendra Coulter and Will Kymlicka, editors. *Animal Labour*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Buss, Sarah. 'Appearing Respectful: The Moral Significance of Manners.' *Ethics,* vol. 109, no. 4, 1999, pp.795-826.

Cochrane, Alasdair. *Animal Rights Without Liberation*. Columbia University Press, 2012.

---. 'Cosmozoopolis: The Case Against Group-differentiated Animal Rights.' *Law, Ethics and Philosophy,* vol. 1, no. 1, 2013, 127-41.

---. *Sentientist Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Cole, Matthew, and Karen Morgan. 'Engineering Freedom? A Critique of Biotechnological Routes to Animal Liberation.' *Configurations*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2013, pp.201-29.

Conklin, Beth A. *Consuming Grief*. University of Texas Press, 2001.

Crary, Alice. 'Ethics.' *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*, edited by Lori Gruen, Chicago University Press, 2018, pp. 154-68.

Derham, Tristan, and Freya Mathews. 'Elephants as Refugees.' *People and Nature*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2020, pp.103-10.

Diamond, Cora. 'Eating Meat and Eating People.' *Philosophy,* vol. 53, no. 206, 1978, pp. 465-79.

Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka. *Zoopolis*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Eisen, Jessica. 'Down on the Farm: Status, Exploitation and Agricultural Exceptionalism.' *Animal Labour*, edited by Charlotte Blattner, Kendra Coulter, and Will Kymlicka, Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 139-59.

Fischer, Bob. *The Ethics of Eating Animals*. Routledge, 2019.

Fischer, Bob, and Burkay Ozturk. 'Facsimiles of Flesh.' *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2017, pp. 489-97.

Garner, Robert, and Siobhan O'Sullivan, editors. *The Political Turn in Animal Ethics*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Hare, R. M. 'Why I Am only a Demi-vegetarian.' *Peter Singer and His Critics*, edited by Dale Jamieson, Wiley-Blackwell, 1999, pp. 233-46.

Jordan, Jeff. 'Why Friends Shouldn't Let Friends Be Eaten.' *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2001, pp. 309-22.

Kaliff, Anders, and Terje Oestigaard. *Cremation, Corpses and Cannibalism*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.

Kymlicka, Will. 'Social Membership: Animal Law Beyond the Property/Personhood Impasse.' *Dalhousie Law Journal*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2017, pp.123-55.

Martin, Dan. 'On the Cultural Ecology of Sky Burial on the Himalayan Plateau.' *East and West*, vol. 46, no. 3/4, 1996, pp. 353-370.

Midgley, Mary. *Animals and Why They Matter*. University of Georgia Press, 1983.

Milburn, Josh. 'Not Only Humans Eat Meat: Companions, Sentience and Vegan Politics.' *Journal of Social Philosophy* vol. 46, no. 4, 2015, pp. 449-62.

---. 'Chewing Over *In Vitro* Meat: Animal Ethics, Cannibalism and Social Progress.' *Res Publica*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2016, pp. 249-65.

---. 'The Animal Lovers' Paradox? On the Ethics of "Pet Food".' *Pets and People*, edited by Christine Overall, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 187-202.

---. 'Vegetarian Eating.' *Handbook of Eating and Drinking*, edited by Herbert L. Meiselman, Springer, 2019.

Milburn, Josh, and Bob Fischer. 'The Freegan Challenge to Veganism.' Unpublished manuscript, 2020.

Miller, John. 'In Vitro Meat: Power, Authenticity and Vegetarianism.' *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2012, pp. 41-63.

Milligan, Tony. 'The Political Turn in Animal Rights.' *Politics and Animals,* vol. 1, 2015, pp. 6-15.

Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Basic Books, 1994.

Regan, Tom. 'The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism.' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy,* vol. 5, no. 2, 1975, pp. 181-214.

Rothgerber, Hank. 'Real Men Don't Eat (Vegetable) Quiche: Masculinity and the Justification of Meat Consumption.' *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2013, pp. 363-75.

Singer, Peter. 'Utilitarianism and Vegetarianism.' *Philosophy & Public Affairs,* vol. 9, no. 4, 1980, pp. 325-37.

Sinclair, Rebekah. 'The Sexual Politics of Meatless Meat: (In)edible Others and the Myth of Flesh Without Sacrifice.' *The Future of Meat Without Animals*, edited by Brianne Donaldson and Christopher Carter, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 229-48.

Smith, Kimberly. *Governing Animals*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Stănescu, Vasile. 'Beyond Happy Meat: The (Im)possibilities of "Humane", "Local" and "Compassionate" Meat.' *The Future of Meat Without Animals*, edited by Brianne Donaldson and Christopher Carter, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 133-54.

Zamir, Tzachi. 'Veganism.' *Journal of Social Philosophy*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2004, pp. 367-79.

---. *Ethics and the Beast*. Princeton University Press, 2007.

Acknowledgements

I offer thanks to Bob Fischer for conversation and comments; to editors and reviewers at *Animal Studies Journal* for helpful suggestions; and to Alasdair Cochrane and the British Academy for supporting my research at Sheffield (grant number PF19\100101).