

Planetary crisis, responsibility to other species and green veganism essays examp...

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Understanding Veganism](#) \n \t
3. [Consumption Politics](#) \n \t
4. [Saving the World through Veganism](#) \n \t
5. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
6. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

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Introduction

Food production and consumption are global issues that must not be taken for granted. After all, there is a full understanding of the premise that without mechanisms enabling the proper production and distribution of food, people in different parts of the world will starve to death. Being crucial not only in terms of nutrition but also survival, in its most basic sense, food must undergo production processes that are responsibly undertaken. Ensuring that food is responsibly processed in production does not just ensure the nutrition and survival of people, but also the welfare of the environment as well. In that regard, it is important to take into consideration matters concerning the environment when it comes to food production.

But what about the environment? It is crucial to address that question with a

simple well-known fact about food – its production involves the use of natural resources that may form part of ecosystems – the preservation and responsible utilization of which may prove integral to the interest of environmental protection. In that sense, it is important to include notions on the kinds of food that must not be subjected to mass production, distribution and consumption in order to protect the environment. This study, therefore, discusses veganism – the exclusion of animals and their by-products from the daily diet, as a practice that does not just help enrich the health of people, but also ensure the well-being of the environment. Can the practice of veganism by people actually promote measures that could materially contribute to environmental protection? Can people compromise their dietary preferences in favor of pursuing a common good envisioned by veganism? Can veganism inspire the eventual alteration of food production, distribution and consumption patterns with the goal of environmental protection as a key motivation? The foregoing questions help shape the flow of this study, which takes on an assumption, aided by the use of existing literature and the breakthrough book by Will Anderson entitled *This is Hope*, that veganism can help mobilize people to become more responsible to approaching issues on global politics related to the environment, given that the consumption of animals and their by-products could actually aggravate environmental problems, which in turn could pose a greater threat to the survival of people.

Understanding Veganism

Veganism induces a synthesis of beliefs and practices centered against animal and animal by-product consumption, not just for food, but also in other applications such as clothing. Perhaps a strong allusion to veganism can be describe from the way Anderson (2012) removed his sandals, woven ring and belt – all made of leather, in a Seattle pizza restaurant in 1968, which was an action that inferably spurred his commitment to what he dubbed as the “ new human ecology.” For the purposes of brevity, this study limits its coverage on the issue of consuming animals – sentient beings, in particular, for food, albeit with expansive applications of the new human ecology advocated by Anderson (2012), which somewhat sums up how he has defined veganism.

The new human ecology serves as an antithesis to what Anderson (2012) has described as the current human ecology. Anderson (2012) pointed out the current human ecology as the main reason behind environmental problems affecting the world at present such as “ human overpopulationoverconsumption of resources, the poverty of ecosystems and people, anddisregard for the rights of individuals from other species.” As both a critique and a vehicle for reversing the perilous trends caused by the current human ecology, Anderson (2012) framed the new human ecology using deep ecology as his basic concept, which provides for the due recognition of “ all species, individuals of those species, and their ecosystems” as those with intrinsic value. To expand further on the new human ecology, Anderson (2012) laid out its components he named the Seven Results, which aims to achieve population reduction, greater social

and economic justice, land reclamation for ecosystem restoration, and a vegan human ecology that is sustainable. The following sections feature a further elaboration of the Seven Results of the new human ecology. Several insights from the existing literature provide for a formative understanding of veganism. Giraud (2013) provides that an appeal to veganism based on emotive grounds is by no means sufficient to explain what she called the “vegan praxis to posthumanism,” which states that the displacement of human privilege of treating animals is founded on ethical assumptions relating to inviolable animal rights. Posthumanist studies on veganism must therefore focus on emphasizing that there is more to recognizing animal rights than just an appeal to emotions, in that animal consumption has a profound role in characterizing the various shifts in ecosystems that, as Anderson (2012) has said, can perpetuate the unsustainability inherent in current human ecology. The role and privilege of humans as consumers and the status of animals as consumables is a relationship that must transcend beyond animal rights, which Anderson (2012) noted as one with notable inconsistencies in that those recognize the existence of a “false hierarchy of species” that recognize with “utmost importance” only animals that are sentient beings, while non-sentient ones and ecosystems as a whole were gravely less valued. Animal rights and veganism, therefore, are not exactly compatible with one another.

Veganism, as noted by Anderson (2012) and Giraud (2013), stresses more on the value of ecosystems via the total non-consumption of animals and animal by-products as a matter of countering the problem of overpopulation and consequent neo-predation, which destroys ecosystems through changes

done by populations needed to sustain themselves, to the peril of animals. The emphasis on veganism against consuming animals and animal by-products stems from the view that the production processes associated with those could not, in any way, promote sustainability in that it urges the feeding and increase of human populations and neo-predation (Anderson, 2012).

It is also important to note that veganism can be mobilized effectively through the practice of sustainable citizenship. As it stands, Micheletti and Stolle (2012) noted that sustainable citizenship incorporates both institutional and individual roles, which are both seen as the main mobilizers of consumerism and veganism. Institutions that set forth a set of rules that propagate veganism can inspire its members to create efforts in promoting it, from issuing publications to undertaking creative campaigns. Individuals can start on carrying out veganism within themselves by simply giving up the consumption of animals and animal by-products, as noted by Anderson (2012). The current human ecology defined by Anderson (2012) is describable as one that is deeply institutionalized - an argument that is consistent with anarchist calls to resist the consumption of animals and animal by-products (Werkheiser, 2013). Anarchism, as a discourse, proposes strategies that include, albeit not limited, "solidarity, propaganda of the deed, radical resistance" and many similar others designed against the continued proliferation of animal and animal by-product consumption, which is deeply embedded in "social, cultural, economic, and political systems (Werkheiser, 2012). In the context of globalization, Wrenn (2011) noted that veganism has since stood as a crucial movement against nonhuman animal

injustice, in that the globalized world has entailed the rise of speciesism in both the social and economic levels. The foregoing, albeit serving as partly an overview of the consumption politics of veganism, explains that the choice to become vegan is not merely defined by the need to improve dietary quality. The concerns touched upon by veganism with regard to the preservation of the integrity of ecosystems against the dangers of overpopulation and neo-predation makes it a concept noteworthy of further elaboration.

Consumption Politics

The politics of consumption characterizing animals and animal by-products are primarily characterized by the ways in which the current human ecology is perpetuated. The current human ecology, as raised by Anderson (2012), is characterized by overpopulation and neo-predation. Overpopulation is pronounced as a very problematic aspect of current human ecology, the full proliferation of which allows for neo-predation to take place. Sustaining large human populations entail the heavy usage of resources that prove perilous to the existence of various ecosystems. In that case alone, nonhuman animals, particularly sentient beings, are denied of opportunities to experience whatever beauty they behold of the world. Concern towards the feelings of sentient beings is on main focus here, in that their capacity to record experience, albeit not in the same plane as that of humans, deserve to be protected through the protection of their ecosystems (Anderson, 2012). Resulting from overpopulation is neo-predation, where not only the greater consumption of animals and animal by-products are at risk, but also the

takeover of various plant and animal habitats for use by human populations, which inevitably results to environmental damage (Bristow, 2011). Large forest lands, for example, may fall victim to farming and industrial practices, the demand of which is driven by the large human population. Anderson (2012) posited that the more human population is unregulated through the consumption of animal and animal by-products, the more neo-predation would continue. The unsustainable nature of current human ecology, therefore, gives greater ground for veganism to emerge as its favorable antithesis - a sustainable practice that formidably challenges the status quo (Beardsworth & Keil, 1991).

The continued allowance of the current human ecology to thrive has led to ecosystems trying to adapt to human populations, which in turn provide very perilous results. Such wayward trend characterizing the current human ecology has, in turn, provided for various economic, political and social injustices. Poverty, a form of injustice that is economic, political and social at the same time, is perhaps the single most problematic issue brought forth by the current humane ecology. Despite the fact that overconsumption of animal and animal by-products is linked to overpopulation, it does not mean to say that there is equal distribution of resources. The lack of control people have under the current human ecology entails them not only to overpopulate as a result, but also to cause skewedness in resource distribution, mainly through circumstances that allow for loss of opportunities due to sheer human selfishness. The concentration of resources on the wealth absorbed by rich people amounts to other people having weaker or no means for resource accumulation to gain lesser or none of those, hence the skewed

distribution (Anderson, 2012). The same trend of poverty happens to nonhuman animals, particularly sentient beings, given that overpopulation and neo-predation of human populations account for the depletion of their own kind and the resources that allow for their existence (Eadie, 2012). Such imbalances, according to Anderson (2012), should no longer be allowed to continue.

Neo-predation provides for perhaps the most appalling negative outcomes of the current human ecology, in that there is further acceleration of resource depletion and the destruction of ecosystems that allow for the existence of nonhuman animals and other living species in the first place. As it stands, the global significance of veganism can perhaps be best applied to political efforts at regulating neo-predation, which causes perilous environmental consequences affecting people worldwide such as climate change (Anderson, 2012; North, 2011). Climate change is currently the central topic of many international policymaking efforts, given that concerted effort is needed in order to stop neo-predatory actions of individuals and corporations alike worldwide. Indeed, the current human ecology is by no means an easy trend to reverse, given the prevalence of the idea entitling humans as consumers of animals and animal by-products. Anderson (2012), on that account, has emphasized on the need for veganism to reach full prevalence as a manner of curbing down the excesses of the current human ecology towards the imposition of a new human ecology, which expands the idea recognizing the intrinsic value of nonhuman animals, other living species and their ecosystems.

Saving the World through Veganism

Veganism, given the foregoing explanations, seek to emphasize the use of the new human ecology proposed by Anderson (2012), which he casually yet coherently explained as the result of adding “ new human” into “ new ecology.” The new human, within the context of Anderson (2012) has to show change mainly through his complete condemnation of consuming animals and animal by-products, given the idea that those have intrinsic value that must be preserve with respect to the maintenance of their ecosystems as well. Aiming on the implementation of the Seven Results, the new human ecology of Anderson (2012) seeks to promote veganism as a habit that can provide constructive change to the environment. The first of the Seven Results, which is the creation of “ healthy intact ecosystems,” would result from the prevention of human intervention, mainly in the form of hunting, fishing and all other exploitative activities against animals (Anderson, 2012; Eadie, 2012). Consumer lifestyles centered on veganism, being the second of the Seven Results, leads to the humane treatment of animals and healthy nutritional benefits to consumers (Anderson, 2012; Cherry, 2014; Smith, 1962). The third of the Seven Results, pertaining to social and economic justice demanding for institutional transparency among public and corporate institutions, arises from the new human ecology in that the prevention of animal and animal by-product consumption would entail the reduction of problems related to overpopulation and neo-predation, both of which produce profound injustices often left unacknowledged or even covered up by governments and corporations due to self-interests (Anderson, 2012; Micheletti & Stolle, 2012). The fourth of the Seven Results,

which talks about natural attrition, brings forth the need to achieve lower population growth in order to balance out the rate of resource consumption to extents that would lead to the protection of ecosystems, thus giving due regard to the right of nonhuman animals, particularly sentient beings, to exist (Anderson, 2012; Beardsworth & Keil, 1991). The fifth of the Seven Results, which leads to the creation of ecologically sustainable economic systems, and social and economic justice, provides for the humane treatment of nonhuman animals and ecosystems (Anderson, 2012; Werkheiser, 2013). The sixth of the Seven Results, relating to “ empathy, love, and compassion toward all beings and ecosystems” (Anderson, 2012), is understood as a direct outcome of veganism, given the foregoing items (Giraud, 2013). Finally, the seventh of the Seven Results ensure that consumption is made “ appropriate, sustainable, and equitable,” in that it would not harm ecosystems and entail the perpetuation of human abuse arising from overpopulation and neo-predation (Anderson, 2012). Taken together, the Seven Results aim to highlight veganism as a practice that could not only improve the dietary habits of human populations, but also introduce enhancements to efforts at keeping the world environmentally sustainable, with due respect to the well-being and rights of nonhuman animals.

Conclusion

The impact of veganism transcends beyond individual well-being, given the world-view provided by the current human ecology and the presentation of the new human ecology as a necessary replacement. Human overpopulation

and neo-predation, both being factors of the current human ecology, need to be stopped in order to create a world that is respectful not just to the rights of nonhuman animals and their ecosystems, but also to the main concern of environmental sustainability which, when neglected, could also affect humans adversely. As a movement that promotes love and respect for nonhuman animals, veganism has far-reaching consequences, mostly political, that aim for the creation of an ideal world free of unsustainable practices.

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