

In change with time.
perhaps nothing
explains will's



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In " Virtues Versus Values", George Will defines the possible decay of our national character with the collective, linguistic embrace of the word " value" over " virtue". Will tells his audience that virtues are habits, difficult to attain, and not accessible to all; describing virtues as morally good traits or qualities. Values, on the other hand, he dismisses as mere choices - a person's principles or standards which may change with time. Perhaps nothing explains Will's sentiment towards virtue vs value than his reference to world leaders, " Hitler had scads of values. George Washington had virtues." With regards to dietary choices, it is my belief that George Will would find vegetarians to be experiencing a similar decline in character, as vegetarians also have scads of values but are distinctly lacking in virtue. From a very early age, it has always been difficult for me to separate humanity from nature. We have retained a mentality of superiority and exploitation in our encounters with other beings throughout human history, but I was brought up believing we are all equal. The cruelty that animals endure for the entertainment, food, clothing, and scientific research purposes of mankind has confused and infuriated me for years. Regrettably, humans have not yet learned how to coexist with the earthlings we share this planet with. As individuals and as a society, we do not value the lives of animals enough to improve their quality of life apace with ours. If everyone valued the lives of the animals encircling us, I believe more of us would advocate for animal rights alongside human rights. Unfortunately, the people who claim to be the voice for animals often have ulterior motives as exemplified in Laura Fraser's " Why I Stopped Being a Vegetarian." She was a vegetarian for fifteen years because she found joy in feeling morally superior to her peers. Fraser and animal rights activists alike lack the

empathy and selflessness needed in order to be the virtuous vegetarians. Singer points out that " the case for vegetarianism is at its strongest when we see it as a moral protest against out use of animals as mere things, to be exploited for our convenience in whatever way makes them most cheaply available to us." Consideration for the interests of animals alone is enough justification for this response, but the case is further strengthened by the health problems that meat and dairy consumption causes. Living in a consumerist society, we routinely seek value in many realms. As I have seen the effects of malnourishment on my own body, I have found health to be an imperative part to my quality of life as an adult. I often find myself questioning why so many people -- Americans specifically, are content with malnutrition and diseases. In our fight to make healthcare more affordable, it is clear that we desire to live healthy, long lives, but that there is an absence of education on the subject of nutrition. Meat and dairy consumption has become a luxury we are becoming progressively unable to afford. I have been a sporadic vegan for five years. I chose veganism over vegetarianism because if one refers to themselves as a vegetarian, and they claim to be doing if for animal rights, health, or the environment, then they are a hypocrite. Vegetarianism is the practice of abstaining from the consumption of meat. Veganism is more of a lifestyle than a diet in that you not only abstain from the consumption of meat, dairy, and eggs but also boycott any animal derived products. Some vegans will go as far as avoiding zoos and circuses and refraining from riding horses or swimming with sharks, etc. There are huge holes in the vegetarian argument that lead me to believe they are all frauds. If one chooses to boycott meat, but continues to eat dairy as an animal rights activist who claims to value the lives of animals, they are

<https://assignbuster.com/in-change-with-time-perhaps-nothing-explains-wills/>

either aware of the conditions of animals in dairy and egg farms and are willing to look past it or they are ignorant of where their food comes from. And if one prides themselves in their diet, then I do not know which one is worse. Dairy cows and egg chickens do not live in better conditions than animals for slaughter. To have eggs or dairy in your diet is to condone the ongoing cruelty these animals endure. If one is motivated by their health, then in the words of Fraser, being a "cheesetarian" is not the answer either. The reason we believe dairy is good for your bones is due to decades of propaganda by the dairy industry. Butter, ice cream, milk, yogurt, and cheese are not going to give you anything except acne and cardiovascular disease. The environment is not safe from the impacts of raising dairy cows either. The large amounts of waste emitted from the process contribute greatly to climate change, identical to raising cows for slaughter. The quantity of resources needed to manufacture these products is a strain on our earth. If ethics are the focus, then how do vegetarians justify consuming dairy products? To me, there is no difference. As much as I benefit from the vegan lifestyle, I have struggled to maintain it because I value experiences. My passion for travel has been a focal point in my life for as long as I can remember. Food is a significant cultural experience that I wouldn't be able to participate in if I was a strict vegan. In addition, food and eating is a communal endeavor. As much as I love animals and believe in vegan logic, I am not willing to cause social inconvenience on behalf of the movement. Veganism is an ideal diet. I don't know that I will ever be a full vegan, but I have reduced my consumption of animal products to a comfortable amount where I do not feel I am excessively over consuming, but I am still able to try new things. Through George Will's discourse, we learn that there is a subtle,

<https://assignbuster.com/in-change-with-time-perhaps-nothing-explains-wills/>

but significant difference between virtues and values. That values are essentially choices but virtues are the qualities intrinsic to our moral character. While vegetarianism is a positive step in the right direction, it can be described as nothing more than a choice, a mere value. The true virtue of abstaining from animal products lies with the philosophy of veganism, which entirely rejects the commodity status of animals. While I wish to be virtuous in my own life, I acknowledge the difficulty of doing so and the ease of prioritizing values over virtues. Perhaps, in the end, George Will would condemn me to the having same moral standards as Adolf Hitler, especially considering the dictator's own personal struggle with vegetarianism.