Armstrong and Taylor on Vegetarianism(s) and Food Choices

Food choices have historically been part of the private, rather than the public, ethic; is this changing? No? Is this good? Bad?

Angus Taylor, ch. 4, "Is it Wrong to Eat or Hunt Animals?"
- Famous vegetarians throughout history (and the good old 'Hitler was a vegetarian!!')
- What are some of the diverse reasons for (**various forms of**) vegetarianism?
- The rise of scientific ideology in "emphasizing the need to dominate nature" since the 17th century. Thus, rejecting meat-eating is a way to reject this ideology of **domination**. (Fiddes)
- "The symbolism of meat-eating is never neutral. To himself, the meat-eater seems to be eating life. To the vegetarian, he seems to be eating death. There is a kind of gestalt-shift between the two positions…" (Midgley)
- Revisiting the **pain v. death** issue (Ruth Cigman at 98)
- Is someone *really* morally responsible for the processes that went into everything they purchase? (i.e., can **our role *as citizens*** be distinguished from **our role *as consumers***?) (102-3)

Steven L. Davis, "The Least Harm Principle May Require that Humans Consume a Diet Containing Large Herbivores"
- What is the argument here, following Regan's **least harm principle**? Are you convinced? Can you see any different alternatives (see **freeganism**…) other than the ones he mentions (local agriculture, larger herbivores, 'everyone hunt')
- This article is a good example of heavily debatable statistics—how does he get his numbers?
- Does the question of **intentionality** matter? (i.e., intended vs. unintended/incidental deaths—246)

James Rachels, "The Basic Argument for Vegetarianism"
- What is the "basic argument" according to Rachels? (two steps, on 260)
- Quoting Scully's *Dominion* on pigs and the *Omnivore's Dilemma* on 'steer No. 534', in a "premodern city"
- "it is natural for people to resist arguments that require them to do things they don't want to do" (how much does this account for opposition to reform, do you think?) Also, "if all of your friends are eating meat, you are unlikely to be moved by a mere argument." (Pollan, Anthony Bourdain, and others also mention the specifically social aspects of eating, and how being a vegetarian (etc.) can often remove you from important forms of social community).
- "Eating shrimp may turn out to be acceptable" from an animal welfare perspective—are there others to consider?

[optional] Carol J. Adams, "The Rape of Animals, The Butchering of Women"
- What are the different ways, according to Adams, that animals become **absent referents**?
    - For an example: why do we say "leg of lamb" rather than "a lamb's leg"?
- "Bunny Bop" organizer—"what would all these rabbit hunters be doing if they weren't letting off all this steam? I'll tell you what they'd be doing. They'd be drinking and carousing and beating their wives."

Kathryn Paxton George, "A Paradox of Ethical Vegetarianism: Unfairness to Women and Children"
- George is saying that Regan/Singer's ethical requirements "unfairly penalize people who live in certain kinds of economic and environmental circumstances," because they are "nutritionally vulnerable….All current arguments for ethical vegetarianism treat such nutritional vulnerability as an *exception* rather than as a norm. But, the very fact that the majority is regarded as a mere exception suggests that the ideal is skewed to favor a group in power."
    - The risk is of a creating "*a moral underclass*…physiologically disbarred from doing the right thing because they are not the right *kind* of thing."
- "All risks for vegans in the US can be overcome with a well-planned and well-supplemented diet" (277), but this can be a challenging task…
- Also, "fortification and food processing requires a complex industrialized food system…all of these aspects of our food system have environmental consequences"
- "The best course seems to be a middle ground such as semivegetarianism with moderate continued food fortification and preservation." "We do [, however,] have duties not to overconsume"