

QUESTIONING VEGETARIANISM: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MATURE CARE

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In the recent literature on animal ethics, the morality of meat consumption has been questioned gravely and is considered immoral. This paper aims to show that animal ethics demonstrates a deficit in practicing mature care, i.e., a balanced approach, as this theory propagates too much caring for animals and too little caring for humans. Meanwhile, we argue that the ethical aspects of meat consumption in animal ethics have not been adequately explored within some specific contexts, like alternative meat diets may exhibit nutritional deficiencies and threaten the safety of our health. The challenges of global availability and affordability also exist across different nations. Lastly, the conclusion narrates that the position of mature care would be able to fill the lacuna of the deviating interests of animals and humans.

Keywords: animal welfare, care ethics, holistic well-being, meat alternatives, vegetarianism

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary discourse on animal ethics and vegetarian diets, the choice of animal-based food has come under intense scrutiny and debate. Animal welfare advocates fervently assert that consuming animals presents a significant ethical dilemma, raising questions about the morality of such dietary habits. According to Eleonora Gullone (2017, 31-62), Peter Singer (2015, 110-137), and Tom Regan (1988, 40-85), the act of consuming animals violates the moral standing of animals and will have devastating consequences for their future welfare. In response to concerns over animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and ethical standards, Adrian Kreutz (2022, 123-127) and Francione (2022, 43-47) call for transitioning to plant-based diets or exploring cultured meat as an ethical dietary alternative.

It is argued in this article that the dominant framework of animal ethics shows an inherent deficit in practicing mature care regarding food choice. In this article, we contend that proponents of animal ethics are morally incorrect in their calls for a worldwide switch to a plant-based diet and the investigation of cultured meat as a

potential substitute for meat consumption. They simultaneously place an undue emphasis on caring about animals and ignore particular context's sensitivity in which human welfare is closely related. However, meat substitutes support the objective of lessening the suffering that animals and the environment cause; they cannot provide as many nutrients as their omnivorous counterparts. In the view of Nicole Neufingeri and Ans Eilander (2021, 2-25), Atul Bali and Roopa Naik (2023, e35148), Candace Croney and Janice Swanson (2023, 61-67) and Urska Dobersek et al., (2023, 3356-3573), the possible pitfalls and health implications related to entirely plant-based diets demand careful consideration, making sure that moral dietary preferences align with the well-being of humans. One important aspect of the ethical discussion surrounding meat consumption is the suggestion of meat alternatives, particularly cultured meat, as an alternative to traditional meat. Jody Harris et al. (2023, 87-104), Sghaier Chriki and Jean-François Hocquette (2020, 1-9), Victoria Miller et al. (2016, e695-703), and Maria Font-i-Furnols (2023, 2-19), this option has the potential to address animal welfare issues and satisfy human tastes for meat, but it must first be thoroughly assessed in terms of availability and cost across the globe. This analysis also considers the distinct challenges faced by developing and underdeveloped countries, where the acceptance of cultured meat is impeded by its restricted availability and cost, especially in areas where meat consumption is essential for meeting nutritional requirements and food security.

In light of contexts, as mentioned earlier, we contend that the scope of animal care ethics should be expanded to include a comprehensive concern for human wellbeing within the intricate tapestry of lives lived. Thereafter, we illustrate how, in this nuanced moral perspective, the idea of mature care, which unites the interests of humans and animals, emerges as a crucial framework. According to Tove Pettersen (2012, 366-389) and, Tove Pettersen and Marit Helene Hem (2011, 217-231), mature care is the balancing approach of care, i.e., an approach between too much care and too little care. Upholding the idea of equal worth, mature care is a theoretical framework that aims to serve the interests of both people in a caring relationship. The primary intent is to emphasize the necessity of considering the moral dilemmas present in certain circumstances rather than giving preference to one side of the argument. This method differs from applying rules and principles universally. According to this paradigm, people are moral beings who should develop their emotional and cognitive abilities and the skills required to provide competent care. Such growth makes it possible for people to react to certain situations in an efficient and morally responsible manner. Notably, some care ethicists such as Tove Pettersen (2011, 51-64), Maureen Sander-Staudt (2006, 21-39) and Carol Gilligan (1982, 109-166) mature care has been recognized by some care ethicists as a virtue in its own right.

As we posit, with its holistic approach to well-being that considers the broader moral, environmental, and socio-economic factors surrounding meat consumption, mature care can reconcile the frequently competing interests of humans and animals. This article makes a significant addition to the current discussion about animal ethics and the ethics of consuming foods derived from animals. By addressing the current gap in the discourse surrounding ethical meat consumption and providing a fresh framework of mature care, we aim to foster a more balanced and inclusive perspective

that considers both the welfare of animals and human well-being, with the ultimate goal of achieving more morally harmonious coexistence in a globalized society.

POSITION OF ANIMAL ETHICS

Advocates of animal ethics, a community intensely driven by the tenets of animal welfare and the kind treatment of animals, put forth a compelling argument that impels a significant change in how we treat and consume animals. In the view of Eleonora Gullone (2017, 31-62), Peter Singer (2015, 110-137), Tom Regan (1988, 40-85), and Adrian Kreutz (2022, 123-127), animals also hold moral status and rights that extend to the right to live dignified lives free of suffering, and it raises moral obligation for humans to reconsider their diets. Tom Regan (1988, 10-31) argues that animals also have value as they experience similar emotions, have desires and passions as humans, and can be hurt just like humans. Eleonora Gullone (2017, 31-62) holds that intensive animal farming is one of the most widespread examples of human-induced cruelty to other species. This cruelty stimulates the reflection on our distinctiveness as a species. In addition, recent decades have seen a significant shift in the belief that eating animal products is necessary for our good health. Therefore, we must abstain not only from consuming animals but also from killing them to survive; this is the ethical basis of this viewpoint. It is crucial for us to re-evaluate our dietary habits to honor our moral obligations to these sentient beings.

Some proponents of animal ethics, like Rosalind Hursthouse (2011, 119-143) and Cheryl Abbate (2014, 909-929), hold that we should be compassionate to animals and consume them as food is typically callous. Compassion towards animals and consideration for animal suffering is essential, so we should refrain from such practices that promote animal suffering. As Carlo Alvaro (2017, 776) stated, "...it is in no way compassionate to kill an animal for food." The argument is based on the fact that animals are sentient beings and capable of feeling emotions, suffering, and pain, and accordingly, deserve compassion and respect. In the words of Rosalind Hursthouse (2011, 131), "an action such as eating meat, which is exactly what a virtuous agent characteristically refrains from doing in many circumstances." There is no doubt that animals are often raised in cramped conditions, subjected to inhumane farming practices, and ultimately, brutally killed to feed people. This perspective recognizes that these conditions can lead to significant suffering. Given this suffering, proponents of animal ethics contend that it is our moral duty to re-evaluate our food choices and stop consuming animals to show empathy and compassion for these sentient creatures.

Consequently, shifting to a plant-based diet is the main suggestion that arises from this ethical stance. Proponents of the vegetarian diet counter-argue that all the vital nutrients—including protein, vitamins, and minerals are important for human health can be obtained from a well-balanced plant-based diet and challenge the widely held belief that animal products are necessary to provide the highest possible level of nutrition. Hence, Christine Korsgaard (2018, 110-113) says that we should stop eating meat and stop the suffering of animals. According to Timothy Hsiao (2015, 277-291) and Adrian Kreutz (2022, 123-127), plant-based diets can yield results that are on par with or better than animal diets. Even the recent work by Nico Dario Müller (2022,

218) stated against consuming dead animals as it violates "... a duty to self which we only have because we also have duties towards others, a quasi-interpersonal duty. Dead animals and human beings are no longer moral patients, but insofar as they *were* moral patients until recently, special duties apply to the treatment of their bodies that are duties towards self."

Proponents of animal ethics propose two alternatives to traditional meat consumption. The first one is the widespread use of plant-based diets; the second option, which is becoming more and more popular, is cultured meat. Cultured meat prevents the need to raise and kill animals for meat production, in contrast to conventional meat production. As a result, Gauri Jairath et al. (2022, 700-710), Natalie R Rubio et al. (2020, 6276), and Arie Dijkstra and Valentina Rotelli (2022, 2-18) have anchored that it has the potential to significantly lessen animal suffering in the food sector while also resolving urgent health and environmental issues related to conventional meat production.

CRITIQUE OF ANIMAL ETHICS

Argument from the perspective of Physical and Mental Well-being

However, here, we contend that their point of view is flawed as it fails to recognize the importance of human physical and mental health. Here, we contend that consuming meat is not morally wrong because eating vegetables, fruits, and a cultured meat diet depletes nutrients compared to eating meat, fish, and eggs. In the recent literature, it is well-established that a strictly vegetarian diet can lead to nutritional deficiencies. Neufingeri and Ans Eilander (2021, 2-25) stated that vitamin B12, vitamin D, iron, zinc, iodine, and calcium levels are generally lower in plant-based dietary patterns than in meat-eaters. Vegans have the lowest vitamin B12, calcium, and iodine intake, lower iodine status, and lower bone mineral density.

Lisa Harnack et al. (2021, 2401-2408) and Eliška Selinger (2023, 9926-9936) hold that some essential nutrients, such as vitamin B12, iron, sufficient protein, zinc, and vitamin D3, are often lacking in plant-based diets. From the creation of energy to the proper operation of the immune system, these vital nutrients are essential for many facets of overall human health.

Proponents of vegetarianism and animal welfare argue solely based on animal ethics. While we should consider the health of our world and the well-being of animals, it's also critical to understand that rigid vegetarianism can result in vitamin deficiencies that have serious negative effects on health. We need to balance these ethical and nutritional factors in our food decisions. Therefore, those who advocate for a worldwide transition to vegetarianism and animal ethics must acknowledge the complexity of human nutrition and health. Candace Croney & Janice Swanson (2023,65) write:

However, there is also harm in entirely abandoning meat consumption at this point in time, not just for human health, but for food equity, justice, and economic viability for diverse stakeholders, including

many of the most vulnerable in society. A purely plant-based diet is not feasible for all given constraints...

The argument concerning nutritional deficiencies and food safety also extends to another alternative, i.e., cultured meat. Sghaier Chriki and Jean-François Hocquette (2020, 1-9) and Ilse Fraeye et al. (2020, 43-47) explain that when we compare the nutritional value of cultured meat to the traditional consumption of meat, fish, and eggs, it becomes apparent that cultured meat does have that much nutritional richness. It raises our doubts about whether cultured meat is genuinely superior to conventional meat in terms of health, nutrition, and environmental impact or not.

Human's mental health has also been overlooked in the theory of vegetarianism. In recent years, an increasing amount of research has illuminated the complex connection between dietary decisions, especially the amount of meat consumed, and our psychological health.

There is now a lot of discussion and research on the relationship between nutrition and mental health. Interestingly, the research of Isabel Iguacel et al. (2021, 361-381) and Rishika Jain et al. (2022, 27-49) has surfaced in an attempt to determine whether those who avoid meat have different mental health than those who eat meat. The findings in the study of Dagmar Haase et al., (2014, 413-4330) have generated important questions about the ramifications of being a vegetarian or vegan, as well as valuable insights into the possible effects of dietary choices on mental health. Some research findings by Evelyn Medawar et al., (2019, 2-8) and Joseph R Hibben et al., (2018, 13-17) has shown that people who choose to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet are more likely to experience mental health issues. Atul Bali and Roopa Naik (2023, e35148) and Urska Dobersek et al., (2023, 3356-3573) stated that, this includes a higher likelihood of mental health issues like anxiety, sadness, and self-harming behaviors compared to those who eat meat. In the words of Christopher J Hopwood (2022, p. 20), "...meat-eaters had the lowest depression scores, followed by veg*ns and meat-reducers." These results highlight important issues regarding the intricate relationship between nutrition and mental health. So, these findings have substantial ramifications because they prompt critical thinking regarding the possible effects of different food habits on mental health. The confluence of food decisions, health considerations, and ethical principles demands a careful and nuanced investigation, recognizing that dietary choices may be motivated by self-care and basic health needs in addition to philosophical or ethical values. We must eat a balanced diet that includes plenty of plants and moderate amounts of animal products. Therefore, while it is admirable to have empathy and care for others, it is not morally sound to put our physical and mental health at risk to fulfill these obligations.

Argument from Unavailability and Unaffordability of Alternative Diets across Different Nations and Different People

The unavailability issue is there with diets like fruits, vegetables, and cultured meat. Although many people agree that eating a vegetarian or plant-based diet has ethical and environmental benefits, we argue that it is crucial to address the practical challenges associated with finding and guaranteeing a steady supply of these

alternatives. The availability barrier, which varies depending on the locale, is one major problem with these alternate diets. For instance, imports of fruits and vegetables worldwide are a major source of income for many Western nations, such as the USA and the UK. Due to this reliance, Victoria Miller et al. (2016, e695-703) and Jody Hariss et al. (2023, 87-104) say that a change in the kinds of imported produce has occurred, with tropical fruits becoming increasingly popular at the expense of conventional vegetables. It becomes extremely difficult to guarantee that everyone has access to the nutrients required for a healthy diet in places where these vital plant-based foods are scarce.

Hence, a more comprehensive and deliberate approach to dietary choices needs to consider these practical challenges, recognizing the intricacy of contemporary food supply chains and the necessity of sustainable sourcing and preservation techniques.

Kalolina Chodkowska et al. (2022, 2-11) represent the same issue of the availability of cultured meat as a substantial hurdle in the widespread adoption of alternative diets. Cultured meat is still a relatively new technology. Sghaier Chriki et al. (2022, 3542) say that currently, cultured meat can only be obtained commercially in Singapore, which means that most customers worldwide cannot access it. Thus, making cultured meat a practical and widely available option for consumers is also a big challenge. The question of availability continues to be a crucial exogenous variable that significantly impacts the uptake of cultured meat as well as the overall course of alternate diets. Therefore, we contend that meat consumption is not wrong in this specific situation, i.e., the issue of unavailability of alternative diets across various countries.

When comparing the relative costs of fruits and vegetables to meat, switching to a vegetarian diet is healthier and more economical. However, here, we argued that this shift is not universally attainable. But, in the recent literature by Victoria Miller et al., (2016, e695-703) has found that numerous variables have been demonstrated to make adopting a fully vegetarian lifestyle impracticable. Cost considerations heavily influence the viability of switching to a vegetarian diet. According to Victoria Miller et al. (2016, e695), "Fruit and vegetable consumption among individuals decreased as the relative cost increased." In certain regions, the cost of fruits and vegetables can be more than that of meat and fish, which puts a financial barrier in the way of people and families who want to adopt a plant-based diet. In food production, the idea of cultured meat represents a breakthrough technological advancement. Even though cultured meat has a lot of potential to help with many global issues, especially in industrialized nations, it is important to acknowledge that the technology is still in its infancy. This poses the question of whether it is affordable in less developed or developing countries. According to Meng, Lei Li Zhang and Junfei Bai (2020, 2-7), the high expense of developing this technology is one of the main reasons why cultured meat is not being widely used in so many countries. Consequently, the initial production costs are somewhat costly, which makes it challenging for countries with poor economies to adopt this innovation. Hence, to meet their expanding protein needs, several of these nations are forced to rely on imports of cultured meat.

Mature care provides a significant way to address the problems of food availability and affordability because of its focus on balancing care and acknowledging the equal value of every person in a caring relationship. Mature care goes beyond

general guidelines and precepts to comprehend the unique ethical conundrums encountered by communities with limited access to sustainable protein sources or fresh produce. This paradigm promotes a deliberate, situation-specific approach that takes into account both short-term needs and long-term viability. Mature care, for example, helps local communities, governments, and the food industry become more emotionally and intellectually conscious of impoverished groups' difficulties. It encourages cooperative solutions, including funding wholesome food substitutes, funding regional agricultural breakthroughs, and making cultured meat technologies more affordable. It also encourages promoting initiatives like community farming, sustainable practice education, and equitable distribution systems that address affordability without sacrificing dignity or justice by placing a strong emphasis on moral responsibility and skill development. Mature care guarantees that initiatives to address food accessibility issues serve both immediate and larger societal objectives in a morally decent way by taking a balanced and inclusive approach.

Advocates of vegetarian diets may find that mature care, as a well-rounded and situation-specific ethical framework, makes a strong case that eating meat is not always bad but rather depends on the situation. In contrast to dogmatic positions, mature care aims to participate in a dialogical process that takes into account the lived realities and moral quandaries of varied communities by focussing on mutual understanding and equal worth. For example, consuming meat may be a question of survival rather than preference in areas where fresh fruits and vegetables are unavailable or too expensive. The moral complexity of these situations can be brought to light by mature care, which shows that universally denouncing meat intake ignores the socioeconomic and environmental factors that influence dietary preferences. It challenges vegetarians to acknowledge that moral judgments on food ought to be grounded in reciprocity, empathy, and the ability to react appropriately in certain circumstances.

By encouraging a balanced viewpoint, mature care incorporates vegetarianism's ethical issues into a larger discussion about diverse cultures and fair food systems rather than discounting them. It recognizes that eating meat may be a morally right decision in some situations while highlighting the value of teamwork in developing sustainable solutions, such as increasing access to plant-based substitutes. This theory fosters a more compassionate and inclusive ethical conversation by encouraging understanding and collaboration rather than polarization.

OUR POSITION OF MATURE CARE

In the previous sections, we have argued that there is a moral obstacle to the position that supports animal welfare and the global shift to a vegetarian diet. The issue with those who advocate a vegetarian diet for animal welfare is that, while they emphasize animal welfare, their ideology downplays the importance of human needs and specific contexts. This view holds that the theory that supports the consumption of cultured meat and a vegetarian diet as viable alternatives to conventional meat consumption can be criticized for overreliance on altruistic care. This theory is based solely on considerations of animal well-being and rights, and it ignores human well-being in general and also overlooks the specific moral conundrums. In the opinion of

Tove Pettersen (2008, 212-230) and Tove Pettersen and Marit Helene Hem (2011, 217-231), most people understand caring to be an altruistic act that is purely focused on meeting the immediate and tangible needs of the person being cared for. It is often seen as a selfless, impulsive, and sympathetic gesture. The altruistic concern is defined as caring excessively for the benefit of others at the expense of one's own interests. Tove Pettersen (2012, 366-389) has identified five essential characteristics of altruistic care, including selflessness, unconditional care-giving, and initiative. Since the activities of people and organizations committed to animal welfare reflect an unshakeable dedication to prioritizing the interests and well-being of animals, often at the personal expense of the caretakers, the idea of selfless care is implicit in animal ethics. Whereas the altruistic disposition is commendable in its intention, it presents substantial moral questions about the possibility of placing undue strain on the caregivers. The idea that a commitment to care for animals is not dependent on challenging the fundamental reasoning of an animal's need for care is known as unconditional care, and it is particularly pertinent in the field of animal ethics. Nevertheless, this viewpoint highlights how it could undermine the larger welfare framework by failing to consider the important factors that contribute to an animal's need for care.

Moreover, the discussion highlights the need to acknowledge emotions as permanent personality characteristics and the complex relationship between emotions and reason when providing care. Within the realm of animal ethics, this emphasizes how important it is to balance between empathy, emotionally charged care, and thoughtful, rational decision-making. Consequently, it is argued that altruistic care could unintentionally result in the caregiver being exploited.

Care that is motivated only by feelings and is not based on reason is what I refer to as blind care, care that is considered to be unable to appropriately address the complex details of particular situations and the general welfare concerns of both humans and animals. The caregiver's autonomy and rights may be compromised in this kind of care-giving practice, leading to self-exploitation. In the words of Tove Pettersen (2012, 369), ".....self-denying person is reduced, or reduces herself, to a means to an end". Advocates of vegetarian diets and animal welfare frequently show a disproportionate concern for animals at the possible expense of human welfare. Nonetheless, to prevent harm in the end, a balanced approach to care is necessary. The well-being of the caregiver, as well as the person receiving care, should be taken into account in the processing of care to foster well-being and flourishing.

However, here, a balanced approach to care is required. This type of care is known as mature care, and it emphasizes equal importance while navigating the narrow line between providing insufficient or excessive care, whether it is for oneself or others. Carol Gilligan first coined the term 'mature care' in her work *In a Different Voice* (1982, 186), and the term this kind of care 'the right kind of care.' Later, this concept was developed by Tove Pettersen (2008, 212) and Tove Pettersen (2012, 366–389). This viewpoint emphasizes a basic ethical precept: that the degree to which an individual devotes themselves to their own well-being should ideally correspond with their degree of devotion to the well-being of others. According to Tove Pettersen (2012,376), "The concept of mature care recognizes that, in principle, one should have as much care for oneself as for others." Many care ethicists such as Eva Kittay (2019,

117-148), Carol Gilligan (1982, 101-200), Vrinda Dalmiya (2002, 34-52), and Daniel Engster (2007, 45-98) have stressed the importance of self-care. Tove Pettersen (2008, 379) holds that mature care is a virtue that is in the midst of selflessness and selfishness. Mature care lies in the between too little and too much. In the words of Tove Pettersen (2012, 377), "Mature care can be read as a mean between two extremes, both about actions and feelings." It means that someone morally cognizant tries to find a fair middle ground and avoids going too far in terms of caring for other people or themselves.

The idea of mature care emphasizes the need for balance while also emphasizing that achieving a mutually recognized state is the result of a particular process of ethical and personal development. Doing so casts doubt on the traditional. Tove Pettersen (2011, 51-64) says that the line that separates reason from emotion and suggests that maturity is the ability to balance these two aspects successfully. According to this viewpoint, reason and emotion are essential parts of the human experience and can coexist to differing degrees. Therefore, none should be suppressed. There is a clear lack of maturity in the field of animal ethics since, as was previously said, this theory places a strong emphasis on the welfare of animals at the expense of human well-being. However, the goal of care needs to be to foster animal welfare along with human welfare, and specific moral situations should be considered. Proponents of vegetarian diets need to recognize that consuming meat is not always ethically wrong. Tove Pettersen (2012, 366-369) explains that it is important to address this issue objectively, acknowledging that the moral ramifications can change according to the situation. Our varied circumstances necessitate customized strategies, and the ethics of care offer several ways to deal with these practical difficulties.

According to Joan Tronto (2020, 109-114) and Sarah Hoagland (1989, 85-87), care is frequently provided in environments characterized by oppressive conditions. It is important to note that care ethicists like Virginia Held (1993, 70-83), Nel Noddings (1992, 15-58), and Sara Ruddick (1990, 115-320) do not necessarily adhere to pacifism; they acknowledge instances where violence, though regrettable, may be deemed necessary. The idea of balanced care reveals a complex moral conundrum in the way we see our relationship with animals. While it is true that eating animal products can sometimes improve our mental and physical health, placing an excessive focus on animal welfare at the expense of our self-care creates ethical concerns. This philosophy's central tenet is not that large-scale animal exploitation is a good idea but rather that to treat others with compassion, we must take care of ourselves first. It's an acceptance of the relationship between taking care of oneself, being able to care for others, and maintaining the harmony of our existence.

Promoting this mature care strategy, we try to create a morally viable and holistic viewpoint by striking an ethical balance that honors the needs of the animal kingdom as well as our own. From a mature care viewpoint, we will argue in the following sections that eating conventional meat is not morally wrong. We will also demonstrate how imbalance and immature care within the context of animal ethics become particularly apparent in three specific contexts: first, when plant-based diets are promoted, they may come with potential nutritional deficiencies when compared to omnivorous diets, and they may also have an impact on mental health; second, when cultured meat is investigated as a potential replacement for traditional meat, especially

in terms of its global availability; and third, affordability, especially in underdeveloped or developing countries. Thus, it offers a comprehensive strategy for promoting general well-being, recognizing the intricate relationship between reason and emotion and urging a cautious balance between one's own well-being and the welfare of others. These things contribute to a well-considered and progressive path through this complex ethical terrain.

So far, we have presented three arguments on alternative diets in an attempt to highlight the difficulties and limitations of limiting dietary alternatives to exclusively plant-based and cultured meat diets for human health. Although proponents of animal welfare take a passionate approach to this issue, their opinions can come across as idealistic and lacking the more nuanced viewpoint that is required. They inadvertently ignore the complex interactions of particular contexts and concerns rather than advocating for a worldwide move toward plant-based diets. The protection of the environment and the suffering of animals are unquestionably significant issues. Still, a more mature, holistic view calls for us to uphold a holistic approach that not only considers but also prioritizes our health. Whether they be animals, our fellow humans, or our planet's ecosystems, ignoring fundamental aspects of our well-being, will inevitably hinder our ability to care for others.

The article raises an open moral question for all the advocates of animal welfare and vegetarianism. Does their moral framework value human life and context sensitivity? How can we prioritize the welfare of other sentient beings when we neglect our well-being and struggle with the countless challenges of daily life? Of course, it is vital to advocate for animal welfare, but there is a moral conundrum when human well-being is substituted. Striking a balance between protecting animal rights and guaranteeing human life quality presents fundamental issues about the order of importance for ethical considerations. The discussion raises ethical concerns about whether pursuing animal welfare should come at the price of jeopardizing our well-being and, thus, calls into question the lines that draw the fine line between human and animal rights.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we underscore the importance of addressing the relational and contextual aspects when we thoroughly think of shifting to a vegetarian diet from the concept of mature care. To illustrate this, we apply the concept of mature care to the practical challenge of dietary choices. Our analysis shows that a developed care-based strategy offers a morally sound justification for animal consumption. Different strategies are required as circumstances vary, and mature care has numerous chances to solve empirical difficulties. We contend that eating animals is not always morally wrong when preserving our physical and emotional health, notwithstanding the difficulties in imagining a global move to vegetarianism. Our capacity to care for others would be hampered if we neglected our needs. Instead, it calls for a mature care perspective, especially considering ongoing human nutritional needs, as well as issues related to availability and affordability. Mature care allows for a more comprehensive consideration of these concerns and better incorporates the interests and perspectives

of humans and animals than an exclusively altruistic understanding of care. Undoubtedly, this conclusion sparks controversy, so we welcome greater engagement and further dialogue.

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