

Meat Consumption as a Precursor to Environmental Destruction and the Climate Crisis

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Abstract: This paper proposes that regular meat consumption may have contributed to humanity's psychological disconnection from nature. The repeated killing of animals may have created psychological distance between human beings and other living beings, nature, and ultimately our own natural identity. This paper argues that this disconnection may be a major overlooked root cause of environmental destruction and the climate crisis—not merely as unintended collateral consequences of human development, but as manifestations of a deeper psychological hostility toward animals and, by extension, toward nature and other living beings. Restoring our relationship with animals and, therefore, nature may be critical to preventing further destruction and recovering a sustainable relationship with the natural world.

Keywords: meat consumption, psychological dissociation from nature, human–animal relationship, psychological distance from animals, anthropocentrism, human–nature connectedness, animal killing and psychological desensitization, ecological alienation, environmental destruction, climate change.

I. INTRODUCTION

The human meat-eating habit is the root cause of our denial of nature [1]-[3], which has led to environmental destruction, including the climate crisis [4]. Today, it is well known that methane gas released by livestock plays a major role in causing the greenhouse effect and global warming [5]. But it is not well known that we may have a subconscious impulse to destroy nature, thus intentionally causing environmental destruction [6]. And meat eating may be responsible for developing this destructive human impulse [7].

II. BRIEF HUMAN HISTORY OF MEAT-CONSUMPTION

Everything started around 11,000 BC in the Mesopotamian area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This area was exceptionally suitable for human settlement because of its fertile land and favorable climate. As a result, it attracted increasingly large human settlements, and the original plant-based food sources could no longer adequately support the growing population. This pressure may have encouraged Western ancestors to turn to animals as a source of meat. Initially, groups of hunters followed animal herds and hunted them periodically. However, hunting provided meat irregularly and was not fully dependable. Consequently, they began raising livestock, particularly sheep, to secure a more regular supply of meat [8][9].

III. FROM DESPISING ANIMALS TO DENYING NATURE

In order to kill livestock regularly, they needed to create psychological distance from the animals. Furthermore, to make killing easier, they developed a psychological mechanism that allowed them to think of animals as savage, dirty, and lowly creatures with very limited emotions and intelligence. This led to the degradation of animals as living beings [10][11]. This despising of animals then led to the denial of nature, because nature was seen as the habitat of these supposedly lowly

animals [12]. This led Western ancestors to develop a mindset that viewed nature in general as worthless without human control and modification. In this way, killing animals for meat consumption contributed to the denial of nature and deeply ingrained it in Western culture [13]-[15].

IV. PLANT DESIGNED AS MAJOR HUMAN DIET

It is widely believed today that human beings are omnivores. But it is not well known that humans share about 95% of their DNA with chimpanzees [16] and that chimpanzees obtain about 95% of their food from plant-based sources. For the remaining 5%, they sometimes kill smaller monkeys, especially during the reproductive season, to attract females [17]. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that plant foods originally constituted a major component of the human diet [18].

V. ENZYMES FOR MEAT DIGESTION DEVELOPED AS A LATER ADAPTATION

Yet it is a fact that humans can eat meat. The human race originated in Africa. But some humans moved north into very cold areas where vegetation could not naturally grow. As a result, they developed the ability to digest animal foods and obtain necessary nutrients, vitamins, and minerals from them—nutrients that humans originally obtained from vegetation [19]. Thus, although humans are omnivores, their ability to digest meat may have developed as a secondary adaptation [20].

VI. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMANS VS. MEAT-EATING ANIMALS

But still, meat may not have been naturally intended as the main food for humans. That is why the human face is relatively flat and humans do not have large fangs, while dogs and tigers have pointed faces and large fangs [21]. They are physically adapted to bite into animal bodies, while humans are not. Also, many Americans now avoid eating red meat from four-legged animals because they fear developing cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other diseases. Yet, however much meat wolves and tigers eat, they do not develop these diseases in the same way. This may also indicate that humans were not originally designed for large-scale meat consumption [20]. In addition, the environmental impact of large-scale livestock production itself indicates that large-scale meat consumption may not be naturally sustainable, either [22]. In short, although eating meat became possible for humans, it may not have been part of our original biological design. Nevertheless, meat became a major part of the human diet in Western civilization [23][24].

VII. DEEPLY INGRAINED HUMAN PREFERENCE FOR CIVILIZATION OVER NATURE

You may personally reject the idea that you deny nature, claiming that you love nature. Yet when you are forced to choose between visiting Disneyland and going hiking, the majority may choose Disneyland without hesitation. Also, if you had to choose between living in a wooden house and living in a highly modern reinforced-concrete house, you might instantly choose the modern house. This is how the denial of nature influences us. Civilization is often preferred and chosen over its natural counterparts [25].

VIII. FROM THE DENIAL OF NATURE TO RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

However, this despising of nature also created other serious problems in human society. One of them is racial discrimination. Some Western people came to consider people of color inferior and viewed white skin as a sign of greater distance from nature [26]. Thus, they brought Black people from Africa to exploit them as slaves for forced labor. Later, Hispanic and Asian people were also subjected to discrimination and exploitation. They also carried out genocide against Native American people, who even helped them by teaching them how to grow corn and other crops when they first arrived from England [27]. To them, even this kindness was not enough to allow these people to live equally together. The denial of nature was used to justify Westerners' belief in their supremacy over other racial groups. And this attitude still continues among some white Americans today.

IX. FROM DENIAL OF NATURE TO DENIAL OF HUMAN IDENTITY

But it did not even stop there. The denial of nature also started to eat away at Western people from within. Humans are natural beings, just like all other animals. Thus, the denial of nature clearly contradicts and begins to deny their own identity. They came to feel uncomfortable with breastfeeding their babies and even with physically cuddling them because such behavior was considered animalistic [28]. They started having babies sleep in cradles or in separate rooms from their parents, rather than sleeping side by side, as is more common in some Eastern cultures. This could contribute to early emotional neglect because babies biologically need close physical contact with their parents [29]. Even within the Catholic Church, many young women have confessed to masturbation as a form of self-abuse [30]. Furthermore, combined with the frontier spirit, the expression of natural feelings and emotions came to be viewed as undesirable in Western culture [31].

X. NATURE-DENYING HUMANS AROUND THE GLOBE

The fact that they cannot accept their natural identity indicates that they are dissociated from their true identity: they are born and live as part of nature but cannot accept nature [32]. Yet the worst part is that the rest of the world is now copying Western culture, especially American culture, admiring its flashy and powerful but unnatural appeal [33]. It means that billions of people around the world are now carrying an impulse to destroy nature on this natural planet [34]. This is exactly what is causing environmental destruction today. And now it is reaching the point where we are witnessing actual damage in our daily lives, such as abnormal weather and extreme rainfall. If things continue as they are, it may only be a matter of time before the Earth reaches an apocalyptic state [35].

XI. FURTHER DESTRUCTION THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL PROJECTION

All of this is happening today because Western ancestors crossed the line by killing and eating animals regularly against their natural design [36][37]. This led to the despising of animals, the denial of nature, the denigration of people of color, and the denial of our own natural identity. All of this happened because it was not the original plan of nature, which is designed to orchestrate everything in perfect balance on Earth. Furthermore, our psychological projection—that we carry natural elements within ourselves that we cannot accept—may be promoting the destruction of nature as a way to feel secure by destroying and keeping distance from the outer natural world [38].

XII. ARTIFICIAL MEAT AS A PROMISING PATH

We must fix this root cause. And one possibility is to expand the successful examples that already exist. Manufacturing fake meat that tastes exactly like real meat is a promising path. Plant-based dietary interventions are currently being investigated among firefighters, as a potential strategy for improving cardiometabolic health [39][40]. Bill Gates, who has said that he is very particular about the taste of meat, says that the taste of fake chicken is almost perfect [41]. Yet the taste of artificial beef hamburger patties is not there yet. But considering today's level of technology, which can even create almost human-like robots, I believe it will be fully within our technological reach in the very near future.

XIII. CONCLUSION

Last but not least, I believe that the apple that Adam and Eve ate was actually meat without doubt [42]. God knew that hunting and farming animals for meat would make humans as shrewd and calculating as they could eventually challenge Him by destroying the whole planet which *He* created for them. Thus, *He* banned them from eating it so clearly, fearing its apocalyptic consequences. I also believe that now is the time for real to abandon this wrong habit forbidden by God and normalize our way of life on this miraculous planet before our paradise is truly lost.

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