

Mini-Essay

Due Date: October 11th, 2020

Thesis Statement: Although I became a vegetarian because I do not support the mistreatment of animals that occurs in the meat industry, I am justified in feeling annoyed at other vegetarians who look down on people who eat meat.

Support: An individual's diet is very personal and dependent upon various factors such as health condition, resources, and culture. Therefore, the act of condemning a person who does not have the same dietary preferences as you may be considered ignorant. I find this particularly common for many vegetarians and vegans who shame meat eaters. However, those individuals who feel some sort of superiority by not eating meat likely do not realize that meat eaters may be choosing to prioritize their efforts on other major issues, in the same respect that they are focusing on this problem and perhaps overlooking other major problems. In addition, since the act of killing animals is significantly less harmful than mistreating animals and making them suffer, many people who consume meat may assume that sufficient regulations are implemented in order to prevent suffering. Moreover, a diet that is primarily plant-based also contributes to other animal-related problems through consuming products that require large quantities of land and water, such as soy.

Opposition: Despite there being regulations in place that prevent the mistreatment of animals in the meat industry, people who consume meat are ultimately supporting an industry that often results in the suffering of animals because properly regulating every meat plant can be difficult. Additionally, there are now an abundant amount of alternatives that strongly resemble meat, as well as a plethora of foods that offer the same nutritional value as meat. Therefore, it is possible to achieve a balanced diet without consuming meat. Furthermore, the meat industry greatly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions associated with primary production, processing, transport, retail, home use, and waste disposal. The presence of greenhouse gasses affect climate, which can ultimately lead to several adverse impacts on populations in many countries.

Response: Even if regulators had the resources to enforce regulations in the meat industry more diligently, this would not prevent the mistreatment of animals that occurs through other industries or by other means. Therefore, although vegetarians are not supporting the suffering of animals that results from the meat industry, this does not necessarily mean that they are not supporting the mistreatment of animals by other means. For example, if they still consume dairy products or if they purchase products, such as clothing and accessories, that are made from animal skins or coatings, there are also many problems that occur in these industries, perhaps with less stringent regulations regarding animal welfare.

Conclusion: While I truly believe that vegetarians have good intentions with respect to support of the ethical treatment of animals and spreading awareness of horrific treatment that happens in the meat industry, those who look down on people who eat meat ultimately do not set a good precedent. Not only does a condescending attitude demonstrate ignorance, but this may ultimately discourage others from being open-minded towards vegetarianism. Most importantly, vegetarians veer on the side of hypocrisy if they are not conscious of their other behaviours that may be contributing to animal suffering through other industries or methods. It is powerful to take action in order to do your part in addressing issues that are important to you, however, it is not effective to condemn others because they may not be putting forth effort in the same issues that are important to you.