

they have a human genetic code, then, because the foetus shares the same code, it must be wrong to kill the foetus too, other things considered.

But if, say, the reason it is wrong to kill an adult human is that they are thinking, feeling sentient being, and an early foetus is not a thinking, feeling sentient being, then the analogy is weak and the argument fails.

## GAVAGAI GOULASH: GROWING ORGANS FOR FOOD Benjamin Hale

*The suggestion that we might grow human tissue for the dinner table is likely to provoke a 'yuk' response in many of us. But would it be morally wrong? Might it not, in fact, be far preferable to the current situation?*

Recent advancements in stem-cell research have given scientists hope that new technologies will soon enable them to grow a variety of organs for transplantation into humans. Though such developments are still in their early stages, romantic prognosticators are hopeful that scientists will soon be capable of growing fully functioning and complex organs, such as hearts, kidneys, muscles, and livers. This raises the question of whether such profound medical developments might have other potentially fruitful applications. In the spirit of innovation, this essay examines the ethical ramifications of a spin-off technology that has just begun being considered by scientists and enthusiastic entrepreneurs: animal organs grown, independently of their host animals, for food. Lest this sound so science fiction as to reek of the abstruse implausibility that often gives philosophers a bad name, it was but four years ago, in March of 2002, that scientists at a private laboratory in New York grew the first fish fillet in a tank. By March of 2003, the concept was taken up by a pair of Australian artists who constructed a meat laboratory in a French museum to grow frog steaks that they would eventually consume to the applause of an admiring public. By quickly comparing three of the primary arguments against the use of animals for meat production, this essay begins from the intuition that growing organs for food is not only ethically responsible, but also an ethically desirable alternative to today's enormous and environmentally destructive animal harvest industry. It proposes that the case of organs grown in a laboratory for food can help further accentuate the point that the animals have at least some moral status, despite relatively commonplace reactions to complex philosophical arguments.

Over the years, at least three dominant positions regarding animal consumption have emerged: the utilitarian view that eating animals is wrong because it causes unnecessary suffering; the neo-Kantian view that eating animals is wrong because animals have a right not to be harmed; and the Aristotelian view that eating animals is wrong because it is not the sort of thing that people of consistently good character do. These positions offer important arguments not to eat animals, each providing reasons that resonate with our everyday experiences of sheep, pigs, goats, dogs, cats, birds, and cows. However, many of the philosophical arguments still miss the mark with the average person-in-the-street and offer themselves up to familiar rejoinders. A more expedient way of approaching these issues, I believe, is by considering the simple thought-experiment/real-world prospect of the home-grown animal organs market.

The prospect of growing organs for food resonates as a somewhat startling distortion of the original intended use of organ development technologies. Indeed, upon first discussing the topic, many people find the idea discomforting, horrid, novel, and even ridiculous. But growing artificial meat need not differ substantially from growing hydroponic tomatoes, and it is my point in this essay to suggest that we — productive members of post-industrial societies, beneficiaries of technological innovation, profligate consumers *par excellence* — ought to be open to the idea; indeed, even to promote it. More than this, however, I present the homegrown organs market as a philosopher's *Gedankenexperiment* come true.

Take a brief walk with me then, into the meat market of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Imagine heading to the butcher and suggesting that he stamp out a slab of roast, that he carve a few chops from the incubator, or that he yank a juicy shank from the tank. Imagine: that in this world chicken breasts could be grown boneless; that veal could be produced painlessly; that fish connoisseurs would no longer leave the table with needle-thin bones irritating their tonsils. The possibility of organs grown for meat need not stop with present-day cuisine nor be limited to domesticated critters. The esoteric eaters of the world

could sample the meaty morsels of otherwise endangered species — komodo dragons, spotted owls, ocelots, or jaguars. Scientists could grow futuristic meats for fusion cuisine by borrowing starter cells from their housepets. Entertaining these possibilities, the opportunities for fun and gourmet innovation are virtually endless. We can imagine dog-legs a la cart, undetached rabbit-part stew, gavagai goulash, bat brains in a vat, or Schrodinger's cat, flambéed and served, on a mat of rice. Moreover, since so much research has already been conducted on growing human organs, we can imagine such frightful entrepreneurial ventures as restaurants that specialize in sheets of *human* meat. With a little planning and ingenuity, it could be engineered such that we might throw a few *human* flanks on the grill, or perhaps more grotesquely, throw our *own* flanks on the grill. Table talk would transform from 'Cook me up some grub' to simply 'Cook me up!' Rod Serling's famous episode of the Twilight Zone in which aliens gift humanity with a master manual for the human race titled 'To Serve Man' will no longer have that eerie, creepy ending when the humans discover, to their horror, that the manual is not a guide to aiding humans, but a cookbook.

Joking aside, there are some fantastically attractive benefits of such technology. Namely, the technology overcomes many of the ethical dilemmas presented by the meat harvesting industry. It therefore should have considerable appeal to animal ethicists of almost any persuasion. Further, though the very prospect of growing such grotesque gourmet snacks is tantamount to culinary heresy, in the gut of the philosopher gourmand, contemplating this technology provides a plethora of possible responses to three of the dominant philosophical positions with regard to non-human animals. If it is the case that we can eat equivalent meats, one from an animal or one from a sheet, it takes little leap of reasoning to suggest that eating a meat sheet is the better alternative. We need not even broach the messy topic of animal *rights*, because we clearly have our reason not to harm animals: it is wasteful and unreasonable to kill an animal for food when a perfectly good replacement meat exists that is equivalent in every sali-

ent and important way but one — namely, that it is produced in a lab.

I would like now to turn to the three dominant positions on animals and address, very briefly, what I take to be the three most common, but also largely fallacious, responses against these positions.

Some have argued — Peter Singer most notably, but many other utilitarians as well — that we ought not to eat animals because the meat industry causes unnecessary suffering. While I agree that pain and suffering is a good reason not to harm animals, I have often been surprised to discover that many non-philosophers make hasty work of such an argument. They counter with the claim that farm animals can be raised to lead idyllic lives, and that animals needn't be slaughtered in a painful manner. Ponder these common rejoinders: 'Without ranchers to breed cattle, domesticated cows wouldn't exist in the first place.' Or how about this: 'Without farmers to feed chickens, the birds might not be as plump and healthy as they are.' Indeed, to those unfamiliar with the harsh realities of factory farms and contemporary farming techniques, the raising and rearing of farm animals appears to occur in a bucolic utopia. For these observers, animals are the *beneficiaries* of domestication. Plainly, this counterclaim is beset with conceptual problems, not the least of which is that it misses true import of the utilitarian argument. More importantly, however, and despite these conceptual problems, it exposes the weakness of relying on 'pain' arguments to argue on behalf of animals: one person's pain is another person's gain.

To see this, consider a case adapted from the menu of Douglas Adams's *Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. Consider a lamb that has been bred, genetically modified, to feel no pain. Or, more ridiculously, imagine a lamb not only that does not feel pain, but a lamb that revels in pain. Imagine a masochistic mutton that wags its tail at the prospect of being eaten. It baas and coos as its ovine cohorts are meticulously dismantled. On these grounds, one might say, the utilitarian could not possibly object to using the lamb for meat. Since the animal feels no

pain, there is little harm in using it for consumption. Here is a case in which it would appear that acting in ways that cause 'pain' to the animal are precisely those acts that also cause it pleasure. This is similar to our commonplace rejoinder. And yet, something doesn't ring quite true about the claim that there is nothing morally problematic about eating the animal, even if it likes and wants to be eaten.

Our 21<sup>st</sup> Century meat laboratory helps us illustrate what's missing: Given the option of eating the meat of this genetically anaesthetized ovine or the alternative of eating a laboratory grown lamb chop, the choice should still be rather clear. The pile of lamb meat does not baa or meh or even look at us with curiosity when we jab it with a knife. A genetically anaesthetized sheep *would* baa and meh if it were jabbed with a knife, or it would no doubt respond in some way. Jabbing it with a knife insults its integrity; and doing so seems both disrespectful and wasteful, despite the lamb's apparent delight at being hacked to pieces. It couldn't possibly want such a thing for itself.

Others, like Tom Regan, have suggested instead that perhaps we have a different reason not to harm animals: Animals, like people, have *rights*. Regan uses what he calls a 'subject of a life' criterion to establish that animals have value, and claims that any being with a complex mental life, including perception, desire, belief, memory, intention, and a sense of the future, is a subject of a life. One might think this approach exceptionally insightful. It appears to point out the relevant similarities between human beings, whom we take to have moral worth, and animals. And yet, most people already recognize that animals have these attributes outlined by Regan, while they also continue to believe themselves justified in eating animals. Why is this? How can this be?

By my estimation, it is because what the public generally also recognizes, or at least believes, is that animals are walking meat factories. For evidence of this, one need simply put one's ear to the ground. How frequently does English vernacular refer to animals as though they are themselves lifeless farms? We speak of the cattle 'harvest', the 'live' stock, graze fees

'per animal unit', and so on. Certainly, this is a peculiar and reckless use of language. However, this reckless use of language is not clearly unveiled by deference to Regan's criteria of desires, beliefs, memories and intentions. There's nothing obviously problematic about killing a living being with perceptions, desires, beliefs, memories, intentions and a sense of the future. Indeed, we justify the killing of humans in certain circumstances all the time. If animals are walking meat factories, then it is understandable that one might think killing justified here as well. By examining the case of laboratory grown meat, however, such reckless uses of language can be made poignant. In order to speak about growing organs for food, we will be forced to develop an entirely different vocabulary to speak of what happens on the farm. Otherwise, there will be no terminological difference between farm animal meat and laboratory-grown meat. And there clearly *is* a difference. Talk of muscle 'harvests' perhaps more accurately applies to a meat laboratory than a cattle harvest applies to a farm, since slabs of cells appear to be at least qualitatively different than animals. Similarly, if we contrast our use of the term 'resources' when used in the context of laboratory grown meat, versus our use of the term in the context of the family farm, it is much clearer to us what we mean by this term and how we might conceive of animals.

Still others have argued that the reason we ought not to eat animals is that doing so conflicts with our ordinary ideas of what animals are to be used for. In an essay titled 'Eating Meat and Eating People', Cora Diamond argues against what she calls the 'Singer-Regan' position, claiming that reasoning as Singer and Regan do 'is not to give a defence of animals; it is to attack the significance of human life.' She eloquently argues that we have good reasons not to eat animals, and that these reasons are captured in the meanings of the terms that we use, not in any interests that animals may have. Her argument is complex, but it runs something like this: (a) Our conceptual framework is composed of a broad network of interrelated terms. (b) These terms carry a social significance that impacts

the way that we treat each other. (c) In order to discover the ways in which we ought to act, we need to investigate the ways in which we use specific terms. (d) If we discover an inconsistency in our employment of some concept, as might be the case when we use the term 'pet' to refer to something we eat, then (e) our isolation of this inconsistency gives us clues about what we are to do with regard to whatever concept the term describes. Conclusion: Just a brief interrogation of concepts 'animal', 'meat', 'human', and 'limb', for instance, reveals that we ought not to use animals for food.

Take the example of human limbs, as Diamond does. For Diamond, 'human limbs' are simply not the sorts of things that we eat, partly because we stand in a particular conceptual relation to humans, and they in relation to their limbs. '*We do not eat our dead,*' she says,

'even when they have died in automobile accidents or been struck by lightning, and their flesh might be first class. We do not eat them; or if we do, it is in a matter of extreme need, or of some special ritual — and even in cases of extreme need, there is a very great reluctance. We also do not eat our amputated limbs. [...] [This] is not a direct consequence of our unwillingness to cause distress to people. Of course, it *would* cause distress to people that they might be eaten when they were dead, but it causes distress because of what it is to eat a dead person.' ('Eating Meat and Eating People', in *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), pp. 321.)

To remain consistent, she argues, we should either drop the notion that amputated human limbs are somehow morally inappropriate cuisine; or we should drop the notion that it is the interests of the amputated limbs that restricts us from eating their meat.

It seems to me however, contra Diamond, that there may in fact be no direct moral prohibitions on eating human meat, provided that we come about the meat in the right way. If, say,

we grow human quadriceps or pectorals in a glass beaker, and not on someone we might know, this avoids many of our strongest moral reservations about such a practice. At least, I have no immediate moral aversion to this idea. As a matter of fact, given that it is entirely plausible that it is just such human muscle tissues that scientists will first be capable of generating, one might think that we should at least entertain the possibility of growing human muscle for human consumption. Provided that such an alternative is cost efficient and medically safe, we might then provide a rough-and-ready alternative to combat malnutrition and hunger. Laboratory grown human meat could then replace the animal flesh that now lines store shelves with an environmentally friendly and selfless alternative.

Such an idea differs dramatically, of course, from Diamond's ghastly proposition that we offer the amputated limbs and the meat of our dead to consumers. To cite just one important difference, the limbs of our dead come from people we know or can at least imagine, and we have psychological attachments to those people we know or can imagine. Eating parts of former people would offend our sensibilities of what is right, precisely because we do not want to dine on Moe or Margaret. Eating lab-grown, genetically-human muscle from stem-cell starter kits, on the other hand, does not so clearly carry such prohibitions.

Now then, we may choose against the option of eating human limbs for other reasons. There may well be social or psychological reasons not to eat the reconstituted, laboratory grown fingers and toes of our distant neighbors. Folks might, for instance, acquire a taste for such meat, and in their zealous search for carnal satisfaction, choose not to purchase dinner at the lab, but instead pay their flatmates a visit with knife and fork at the ready. But this would only derivatively prohibit eating human body parts, because we cannot tolerate a society in which dinner invitations lead, by the end of the night, to raucous funeral parties. We might also prohibit eating meat because of potential health consequences, as scrapie or Kreutzfeld-Jakob disease is thought to have been

passed through cannibalism. But these are not moral reasons. These are prudential reasons — egoistic concerns — taken practically with our own self-preservation in mind.

What matters morally here, it seems very clear to me, is how we came about the meat in the first place, and specifically how this relationship conflicts with ways in which we take ourselves to be obligated to act. Eating limbs is not in and of itself morally repugnant, neither because the limbs have interests nor because the concept of a 'limb' restricts what we can do with it. What matters is how we came by those limbs. If we borrow the amputated limbs of our hospital patients for a marinade, then we can rightfully say that this is unjustified and morally prohibited. The limbs do not stand in the right relation to the rest of the world. They were once owned, used, and valued by someone; even if they are no longer owned, used, and valued by that same person; even if the former owner authorizes their demotion to the dinner menu. If, on the other hand, the limbs grow of their own accord, in a beaker or on a tray, the limbs *do* stand in the right relation to the world. A marinade might be quite delicious; quite appropriate. The same holds for animal meat. If we come about the meat in the right way, without trampling the interests of animals, without instigating a clash between the concept of 'meat' and 'animal', then 'meat' is just meat, and little more.

The practical reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is that billions of people consume multiple billions of animals a year. Notwithstanding the important environmental, humanitarian, and other such arguments against eating meat, we can see simply in the case of organs grown for food that animals differ in a significant moral way from slabs of meat. Even though many may think of animals as mere meat factories, most of us do not *treat* animals as if they are mere meat factories. We do not treat animals as if they are meat factories because, unlike meat factories, animals *respond* to us when we interact with them. Throw a pebble at a dog and it will bark at you. Prod a bear with a stick and it will raise its paw to defend itself. Smack a cow on the rear and it will moo.



Our feelings about meat sheets versus animal slaughter shed light on our rather untidy relationship to the animal kingdom. It does appear, from at least an intuitive perspective, that given the option of slaughtering a cow for steak or peeling a T-bone from a tray, that we ought to prefer the latter. The reason for this is that we recognize a qualitative difference between organs that we grow in the laboratory and those animals that live their lives on the farm, in the forest, in the ocean, or in the air.

Ethical theorists make a great deal of the capacity of animals to think, reason, talk, play and communicate, often under the pretense of seeking qualifications for moral standing. But those outside of professional philosophy needn't rely on such abstruse arguments to make their case. We can see by contrasting the position that considers 'meat as resource' with the position that considers 'animal as resource', that living animals are more than just meat. By distancing ourselves from our relation between edible meat and walking, drooling animals, we may take up a new respect for non-humans. Perhaps when this technology is finally implemented, and only then, will we attain the adequate distance necessary to re-interpret our very relation to animals. Then, perhaps, we might recognize that humans, given the opportunity to eat meat sheets or living animals, can do right by chucking the butcher smocks and donning the lab-coats.

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## CIVIC FRIENDSHIP AND THE THIRD TERM

Mark Vernon

*Mark Vernon contrasts the Aristotelean conception of civic respect and virtues with what contemporary politicians seem to have in mind.*

The matter of civic respect has barely left the headlines since the general election of 2005. And whilst some of the announcements and discussion since have bordered on the laughable, it is an issue that goes to the heart of what politics is about and aims to achieve. Indeed, no less a political theorist than Aristotle thought that the issue was central. Reflecting on what the philosopher of the Lyceum said 2,500 years ago reveals an uncanny relevance to the possibilities, and limits, of what might be done now.

For Aristotle, civic respect stems from what can be called civic friendship. People may, of course, show each other respect without any signs of friendliness: the wise general will do as much when staring at his enemy across the battlefield. Alternatively, deferential societies may demand another kind of respect: Machiavelli says that the prince must command the respect of his subjects, but he need not himself show any respect for his people. However, for respect to exist in an equal, 'post-deferential' society not at war with itself, it must arise from a mutual sense of shared civic friendship.

Thus a proper sense of civic friendship is prior to a proper sense of civic respect. So, what does Aristotle have to say about it? Most of his discussion of it comes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the prolegomenon to his *Politics*. He holds that friendship is foundational to community — something that is natural to assume because friendship is the best reason that people have for wanting to live together — for a number of reasons. For example, he says, friendship holds states together, it being the opposite of enmity: thus, lawmakers should have a high regard for the way legislation either underpins or undermines friendship since friendship is much more effective at sustaining society than the blunt tools of justice. Alternatively, civic friend-