

NINE

Disgust and the Collection of Bovine Foetal Blood

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To write *Every Twelve Seconds*, Timothy Pachirat spent almost six months working various jobs at a slaughterhouse in Nebraska: hanging livers in the freezer; driving cattle down the chute toward the “knocker” (the person who fires a steel bolt into their skulls); and handling food safety quality control on the kill floor. (The book’s title refers to the rate at which they killed cows at his facility: one every twelve seconds, or 2,400 each day.) His time there allowed him to deliver exactly what he promises—namely, “a close account of what it means to participate in the massive, routinized slaughter of animals for consumption by a larger society from which that work is hidden”.¹ To that end, he catalogues the nuances of butchering, explains the design and management of the slaughterhouse, and offers glimpses of how that environment affects the people who work within it. Here is a particularly memorable passage from the end of his overview of the butchering process:

He stands on a raised webbed platform at another long metal table; this one has a vertical metal screen running down its length studded with sharp metal hooks, about fifteen in all. Sometimes out of the pipe in the wall an oblong gray mass shoots that is not a lung, kidney, windpipe, or liver. When that happens the white-helmeted worker walks over, picks up the object, and carries it back to his worktable, where he takes out a knife and cuts into the gray mass. There will be a foetus inside, with smooth, slick skin, and clearly marked hide patterns. Raising the foetus up by the neck and hind legs, the man swivels to the vertical metal screen and pushes the foetus’s mouth onto one of the protruding hooks. Releasing the neck so that the body now hangs by the mouth, he

uses two hands to stick another hook into the foetus's anus. The foetus now hangs suspended by mouth and anus, and the worker makes an incision in the neck area, bringing a bottle with a straw cut at an incline up to the incision.

He then shakes and massages the body of the foetus, coaxing blood into the waiting bottle. The shaking becomes more vigorous as less and less blood remains in the body. Finally, when there is no more blood to be had, the man pulls the bottle from the incision, caps the straw, and nestles the bottle inside the chipped ice of a blue ice chest for later use in medical production. Once bled, the foetus is deposited in a gray circular barrel on top of other bled foetuses.²

Since discovering Pachirat's book, I've read this passage to my students when we've turned to animal ethics. If their faces are any guide, they find it disgusting. They know full well that, if you want steak, cows have to die. But most of them have never considered the grisly details of that process. When they do, they seem to be repulsed—and then troubled.

I'm inclined to think that, when my students are disgusted by this passage—or when people are sickened by video of piglets being slammed against a concrete floor, or by images of chickens right after debeaking—they thereby acquire a reason to believe that these practices are morally wrong.³ Not everyone agrees. Daniel Kelly, for example, claims that disgust "is not wise about or acutely attuned to ethical considerations, and 'yuck' deserves no special moral credence; rather, repugnance is simply irrelevant to moral justification".⁴ Kelly is one of several recent "disgust sceptics", all of whom have argued, on one basis or another, in favor of a view like the one summarized above.⁵ Some of these philosophers are bothered by disgust's false positives, as when people are disgusted by gay sex or interracial marriage; others are bothered by its power to dehumanize, which is often marshalled by those engaged in genocidal campaigns (the Nazis, for example, promoted the view that Jewish people were vermin). A further worry concerns disgust's evolutionary pedigree: it seems to have evolved to help us avoid things that might make us sick, which seems not to have any significant connection with the moral status of actions.

Another batch of philosophers has replied to these arguments, showing that these debunking arguments either overgeneralize or are based on questionable empirical assumptions.⁶ But while these replies may show that we shouldn't reject disgust's guidance out of hand, they fall short of showing that it in fact provides us with defeasible moral reasons. To work towards the latter position, it would help to have a theory of disgust's moral salience that fits with the empirical work that's been done on it. With that end in mind, I sketch such a theory and apply it to the case with which I began—the collection of bovine foetal blood. The payoff, I hope, is a plausible account of how disgust can guide our moral judgements, and particularly how it can be of value in animal ethics.

DISGUST: AN OVERVIEW

Before offering a theory, however, we need to be clear about the data that it ought to explain. We'll begin with the reaction itself; then we can ask about its causes ("elicitors", to use the jargon of the field) and effects.

Many psychologists judge disgust to be one of the "universal emotions", recognizably the same in expression and function across known cultures.⁷ The experience of disgust is the experience of something being revolting. Thus, disgust has an object—one that the agent rejects as repugnant, offensive, or otherwise bad. This negative feeling tends to co-occur with nausea, a drop in blood pressure, increased salivation, and activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. It's typically expressed by "the gape face"—a wrinkled nose and raised upper lip; sometimes accompanied by an open mouth and protruding tongue. Disgust is, moreover, a withdrawal response: people tend to back away from, and subsequently avoid, things by which they're repulsed.

People are disgusted by many things: consumables; bodily waste and secretions; deformed, damaged, and dead bodies; sex acts (relative to an assumed norm); and some moral offences. But while there are similarities between the objects of disgust across cultures—*ceteris paribus*, people are more likely to be disgusted by foods that involve fermentation than those that don't—there are plenty of local differences. So, for example, Icelanders praise *hákarl*—shark meat that they bury in sand and allow to rot for a few months before further preparation—which has "a pungent, ammoniac, fishy odor which causes most newbies to gag or vomit. [It was] described by the globe-trekking celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain as 'the single worst, most disgusting, and terrible tasting thing' he had ever eaten".⁸ Additionally, there is significant individual variation in terms of the degree to which a person is "disgustable". These individual differences in reaction strength are correlated with gender, age, and certain personality traits. We know, for example, that women are generally more disgusted by sex acts than men are (with at least one notable exception—namely, the strength of straight men's reactions to gay sex); that disgust sensitivity tends to wane with age; and that people who score high on the personality trait *neuroticism* tend to have greater disgust sensitivity than do those who score high on *openness to experience*.⁹

As I mentioned, disgust is a withdrawal emotion. Moreover, this aversion transfers. If x is disgusting, then people tend to avoid it. And if x touches the previously-not-disgusting y , then people tend to avoid y too. Paul Rozin and his colleagues found that people were disinclined to drink apple juice after it had been in contact with a sterilized dead cockroach, or stirred with a new and demonstrably clean flyswatter, or when offered to them in a perfectly clean bedpan. Likewise, people tend to avoid putting on a sweater that was once owned by someone who had his leg amputated or committed a morally atrocious act (e.g., murder).

This aversion doesn't depend on contact; conceptual association is enough. If you take a nondisgusting object (such as chocolate) and shape it like something disgusting (such as dog faeces), you can get the same effect.¹⁰

There are a number of theories about disgust's evolutionary history, its current function, and the physiological mechanisms behind it.¹¹ But despite these controversies, we can make some claims about disgust with a fair degree of confidence. The core disgust response seems to be directed towards objects that, for much of our evolutionary history, were often sources of poisons or parasites (or were regularly associated with such sources): for example, faeces, rotting flesh, blood, maggots, and more. So the experiential and behavioural aversion involved with disgust isn't surprising: we thereby avoid potential sources of harm. Moreover, the gape face and nausea aren't surprising: they aid in preventing the oral incorporation of such objects, enabling and encouraging disgusted individuals to spit them out immediately.

There is much more to say about "core disgust", but the above will suffice for present purposes. What about *moral* disgust—that is, core disgust coupled with moral condemnation?¹² Early on in *The Righteous Mind*, Jonathan Haidt tells a story in which a "man goes to the supermarket once a week and buys a chicken. But before cooking the chicken, he has sexual intercourse with it. Then he cooks it and eats it".¹³ Many people are disgusted by this, and some are inclined to say that the man is doing something morally wrong.¹⁴ How did we, as a species, come to be repulsed by actions of this variety? The details are controversial, but the outlines of the account are fairly straightforward. First, whatever the cognitive machinery behind the disgust reaction, it's teachable machinery. The cultural differences between the objects of disgust form part of the evidence for this. Perhaps evolution wrote a cognitive program with "if *slimy*, then *disgusting*" among its default settings, but the Japanese have restricted it so that it doesn't apply to *natto*—a slimy, fermented soybean product—and Westerners have restricted it so that it doesn't apply to soft cheeses (which many Japanese find revolting). The disgust response can be expanded as well: it's wildly implausible that natural selection could have written a cognitive program with "if *bedpan*, then *disgusting*" among its default settings, but it's plain that some people do indeed find bedpans repugnant. Why? Because they've learned to associate bedpans with human waste, they find human waste disgusting, and disgust transfers.

Second, if disgust can be redirected, then biological and/or cultural evolution can co-opt it for other purposes—for example, regulating human social interactions. Given that disgust is a withdrawal emotion, it would be particularly useful for drawing in-group/out-group boundaries and enforcing social norms: to be disgusting would be to risk exclusion from the in-group. And the research bears this out. It seems that disgust operates to enforce norms about, inter alia, diet generally, meat specifical-

ly, table manners, incest, homosexual sex, the “right” political commitments and smoking cigarettes.¹⁵

DISGUST AND WRONGNESS

Given what we know about disgust, how can we see disgust as providing moral guidance? How might it give us reason to think that something is morally wrong?

To answer these questions, let’s consider the purpose of moral emotions (e.g., disgust, empathy, shame, guilt, anger, etc.). From an evolutionary perspective, such emotions are instances of fast thinking (to borrow a phrase from Daniel Kahneman): they are immediate responses that increase the odds that agents will navigate situations in certain ways. Some emotions—such as fear, which encourages avoiding high-risk situations—serve to benefit the organism directly. But moral emotions—like compassion—tend to be other-directed, benefiting in-group members. Insofar as the well-being of the group is in the interest of the individual, these emotions provide indirect benefits, and thus they contribute to fitness in a roundabout manner. As Joshua Greene puts it, moral emotions are “psychological adaptations that allow otherwise selfish individuals to reap the benefits of cooperation”.¹⁶ Of course, this isn’t to suggest that evolution “defaults” to promoting selfishness, though it might be helpful to model some episodes in evolutionary history that way. Nor is it to suggest that people are *motivated* by self-interest (enlightened or otherwise) when they are inclined to cooperate. Rather, the idea is that evolution outfitted our ancestors with genuinely other-directed concerns for their offspring’s good, since those concerns spared them from prisoners’ dilemmas, the tragedy of the commons, and other non-zero-sum interactions where acting on self-interest is a poor long-term strategy. That is, our ancestors acquired emotional dispositions that made them less likely to seek the best for themselves at everyone else’s expense—including their own—and more likely to act in ways that are mutually beneficial.

With this theory of the moral emotions in mind, which situations should we expect to prompt disgust? To answer this question, recall disgust’s apparent social value: to draw in-group/out-group boundaries (recall the aversion/avoidance tendency) and to enforce certain social norms (since to be disgusting would be to risk exclusion from the in-group). Since sex (involving various bodily fluids) and eating (given the risk of contamination) were already triggers for disgust, it makes sense that communities would moralize these activities to create social boundaries. Moreover, since violations of especially important community norms raise questions about community membership—for example, someone using violence against an innocent in-group member—it makes sense that such violations would also be disgusting. In a modern context, this

might explain why cheating at cards (usually) isn't disgusting, but cheating people out of their homes might well be.

Moral disgust emerges, then, as a moral heuristic. It's keyed to violations of community-defining norms as well as violations of especially important community norms. But are our community norms also *moral* norms? Sometimes, it's clear that they aren't: it certainly isn't morally wrong to drive on the left-hand side of the road, as odd as that may be to Americans. But in other cases, it's equally clear that they are. Our communities don't tolerate random acts of violence; such acts violate a shared norm. And there is a clear moral justification for that norm: such acts harm the victim (and the community generally, insofar as it creates a culture of fear), they fail to respect the victim (and again, perhaps the community in general), and more.

So we can refine the proposal: moral disgust is keyed to violations of community-defining norms as well as violations of especially important community norms *that are thought to be justified by moral reasons*. And if there *are* such reasons behind our norms, then disgust can lead us to fully justified judgements about moral matters; if there aren't, then it can't.¹⁷

In some cases, we can give adequate and relatively straightforward moral justifications of our norms—and hence our disgust—in terms of harm, unfairness, and the like. Consider, for example, experiencing disgust at the thought of torture.¹⁸ If these cases were the only ones in view, there would be no reason to balk at disgust as a moral heuristic. The cases that worry the sceptics are those where no such justifications are forthcoming, such as disgust at same-sex sexual relations.

Here we need to tread carefully. I don't think people should trust their disgust when it comes to homosexual sex. Indeed, I think they should work to rid themselves of the reaction. However, I think we can explain why without throwing out disgust entirely.

Our norms support a way of life, and obedience to them reflects a commitment to it. So when there isn't a straightforward justification of a given norm in terms of harm or fairness, there may still be one in terms of larger social goods that are sustained, at least in part, by adherence to that norm. Granted, these goods—and their connection to the act in question—may not be ones that individuals can readily formulate. Hence, it's sometimes easy to *dumbfound* people about certain disgust-prompting norm violations. Jonathan Haidt has shown that, even when people can't identify the harm involved, they're disinclined to say that consensual, nonprocreative, adult incest is morally permissible.¹⁹ But this is no objection. If moral emotions are instances of fast thinking, then we shouldn't expect to be better at articulating their justifications than we are with respect to *other* instances of fast thinking. Upon seeing my wife's face, I know automatically whether she's upset about something, but I have no idea how to explain that recognitional ability. And that's no reason to think I'm wrong about her emotional state.²⁰

So the real question is whether, when there is no straightforward justification of our aversion, it's plausible that our response is sensitive to some larger goods—and whether those are, ultimately, more important than the restriction of freedom we're supporting by condemning the relevant action. That is, we're asking whether the norm supports a way of life worth preserving. In the case of consensual adult incest, this amounts to the question of whether there are sufficiently important goods that depend on using the family/nonfamily distinction to draw a line between those who are and aren't potential sexual partners. In the case of gay sex, this amounts to the question of whether there are sufficiently important goods that depend on using gender or sex to draw a line between those who are and aren't potential sexual partners.

Perhaps there are sufficiently important goods at stake in the case of consensual adult incest. First, the incest taboo is one of the few tools we have to discourage sexual abuse in contexts where oversight is practically impossible—namely, the home. In trying to preserve the view that family relationships are inherently asexual, we try to make the unthinkable, unthinkable—thereby judging that the interests of potential victims outweigh the interests of those who would like to sleep with their consenting, adult family members. Second, and as I've argued elsewhere, it's valuable to have close, long-lasting, socially recognized, and decidedly asexual relationships.²¹ Among other things, they create a haven from the complexities created by the mere possibility of sex, freeing us from the norms of conduct that govern relationships that *might* become sexual—norms that regulate our appearance, how we demonstrate affection, and more. Families are the natural context for such relationships, and in preserving the incest taboo, we also preserve a kind of relationship that might otherwise be much rarer. Admittedly, the taboo imposes a burden on some. However, a ban on incestuous sex leaves people with a wide array of potential sexual and/or romantic partners, and thus doesn't seem overly burdensome. Jointly, these considerations might—*might*—justify preserving the taboo.

In the case of gay sex, however, I very much doubt that there are sufficiently important goods at stake. But for present purposes, it doesn't matter whether I'm right about either case. Perhaps *no* larger good is weighty enough to justify condemning the sexual activities of consenting adults. If so, this is no mark against disgust as a moral heuristic. All it would show is that the heuristic shouldn't be applied to sex between consenting adults. The method for reaching this conclusion is simple. If there is no immediate justification of disgust's recommendation, then we should shift our attention to larger goods to which it might be sensitive. And if, after sustained reflection, we don't find any such goods, or we judge them not to be of sufficient worth, then we should dismiss our reaction as confused.

As I've already noted, it's unreasonable to demand that we have the story about social goods before we have a reason to think that the behaviour in question is wrong. Still, the longer it takes to tell the story, the more we should worry about two potential defeaters: first, that we're reacting to a feature of a situation simply because it's a trigger for core disgust, and not because it has some connection to, say, social order (e.g., anal sex repulses us because we're repulsed by faeces, rather than because it somehow damages society); second, that the relevant community's norms are unjustified. So consider sex reassignment surgery and some individuals who find it disgusting. Let's assume that, given their epistemic circumstances, they aren't *epistemically* blameworthy for condemning this procedure. Given as much, I grant that their disgust provides them with some reason for believing that the procedure is wrong. However, in this case both potential defeaters are of concern: the mutilation involved in surgery can be gross, regardless of its purpose, and we might doubt that the social goods created by a norm against surgical transformation are outweighed by the burden placed on those who seek to make such changes to their bodies. (The story is more complicated if individuals ought to know that there aren't adequate responses to these defeaters. Then disgust may never provide them with any reason to condemn sex reassignment surgery. Whether it does depends on the complex web of relationships between our epistemic obligations, available defeaters, and our reasons.)

The upshot is this: According to the proposal that I've developed here, disgust isn't in touch with queer moral properties; it isn't infallible; it doesn't deserve unequivocal respect. It is, however, a valuable moral heuristic—one that's often a good guide to norm violations, and as such can provide us with moral reasons. Granted, disgust tells us nothing about the merits of our community's norms. But that's no objection. Heuristics are mental shortcuts, and even when they lead us aright, they don't explain why their recommendations are correct. So it's perfectly appropriate to expect our norms to require independent justification.²²

DISGUST AND THE COLLECTION OF BOVINE FOETAL BLOOD

Let's return to the case with which we began: the collection of bovine foetal blood. As we do so, it's worth noting that many standard practices in contemporary concentrated feeding operations (CAFOs) and slaughterhouses are repugnant. And when we consider practices such as debarking chickens and docking the tails of pigs—which are required by consumer demand for cheap meat, which then drives the decisions of CAFO operators—it seems that we have good reasons to condemn them. We might get there via some considerations about the relative moral importance of obtaining gustatory pleasure and relieving extraordinary

suffering.²³ Or, if we prefer, we can reach the same conclusion from the weak principle that sentient animals deserve at least some moral consideration, combined with the observation that current practices fail to afford them even that.²⁴ So when a person is repulsed by some of the everyday horrors at factory farms, and she employs disgust as a moral heuristic, it's easy to validate the negative assessment it recommends.

But we can't tell an equally straightforward story when it comes to harvesting bovine foetal blood. After all, on the assumption that the foetuses weren't yet sentient, you might well think that utilitarians would need to regard this practice as a reason in favour of slaughter (albeit not a decisive reason), for then the only beings harmed are the cows. Hence, acquiring the means to produce bovine foetal serum—for which the blood is collected—is one more benefit to be weighed against the costs to those cows. Again on the assumption that the foetuses weren't yet sentient, we don't need to worry about the foetuses being treated as mere means. Granted, it may be wrong to treat the cows as mere means, and so you might want to validate someone's disgust by insisting that collecting foetal blood is one more way in which the cows are being used. This may well be part of the story, but I doubt that it's all of it. After all, the reaction seems to be prompted by what the worker does to the foetus. On the account under consideration, the foetus is incidental to the wrong: you might make the same point about harvesting livers or eyes or stomachs. So what else can we say?

Return to the idea that our norms create and preserve a way of life. In some circumstances, our norms make certain kinds of relationships possible. Jerome Neu, for example, makes this observation about friendship:

The [utilitarian calculus] may miss the importance of "identity", where the identity of the individual is intimately connected with the coherence of a way of life distinguished by the characteristic virtues and vices and patterns of relationship recognized within it. . . . There are in fact a number of ideals in various spheres which make for absolute prohibitions. One must not betray friends, not simply because they might become angry, but because they would no longer be "friends", indeed, the betrayal might reveal that they never were. Certain sorts of loyalty may be necessary to certain sorts of friendship. And those sorts of friendship are valuable.²⁵

In light of these points, we might expect people to be disgusted by certain disloyalties—as I suspect they are—not necessarily because the betrayal has such devastating consequences, but because it calls into question the betrayer's status as an insider, as someone who shares the commitments necessary to participate in the relevant sort of relationship. In any case, the lesson from Neu is that when we shift our attention to larger social goods, those goods may be structural; they may concern the kinds of lives we lead.

In this vein, I propose that our norms make certain kinds of *virtues* possible. Consider, for example, the claim that torture is unequivocally wrong, and suppose we face a situation in which a terrorist has planted bombs around the city that are scheduled to go off in a short while, and torture seems to be the only way to locate and defuse them. Might we need to affirm the unequivocal wrongness of torture if we're to be a compassionate people—even as, in this horrific scenario, we go on to torture someone? To insist that we were *justified* in torturing counts against our being people who understand the horror of what we did; it counts against our being people who are moved by suffering wherever it occurs. To insist, rather, that our hands are dirty is to admit that we couldn't live up to an important ideal (even if the fault is the world's, not ours), and being willing to make that admission is partially constitutive of having the virtue. If we make this link between the norm and the virtue, then we may be able to explain the rationale for horrified reactions to arguments in defence of torture. The detractors might well feel the weight of the ticking bomb case against an absolute ban. Still, there's something disturbing about ever thinking that, should we act so cruelly, we could act blamelessly. (Again, the idea isn't that the detractors actually have this in mind. Rather, the thought is that we might have reason to value a rich variety of compassion, and hence to condemn actions that would prevent us from possessing that virtue were we instead to affirm them.)

This, I think, is how we should defend disgust at harvesting foetal blood. It is, in part, justified by this practice failing to provide cattle with the measure of respect they deserve. But it's also warranted by the tension between, on the one hand, an ideal of compassion, and on the other people being prepared to treat new life like *that* (or what would have been new life like *that*). Admittedly, we may not want to pin the lack of virtue—or a corresponding vice—on the individual worker. A host of factors may converge to make this particular job the only live option for the person doing the harvesting, and he may hate his work; hence, it may not be reasonable to think of his character as being marred by his actions. But we might think that management isn't adequately compassionate, or those who run the medical lab that support the practice, or we as consumers who turn a blind eye.

Alternatively, we might follow Paul Woodroof in thinking that *reverence* is a virtue. According to his secular account of this trait, it "is the well-developed capacity to have the feelings of awe, respect, and shame when these are the right feelings to have".²⁶ And we might say that to be in awe of, and to feel respect for, animal life—and animal bodies, even when dead—is partially constitutive of one version of this virtue. We might see glimmers of this in the impulse towards burying the bodies of companion animals: thanks to our relationship with them, we're moved to honour them in something like the way we would members of our

own kind. This variety of reverence asks us to go further, though, and recognize that if we honour their deaths for their sake, then we have reason to honour other deaths too—not, perhaps, by burying each body we come across, but at least by recognizing that something of value was lost when that life was extinguished. Taken this way, harvesting foetal blood is a kind of moral myopia, a failure to see that there is value in lives that aren't immediately related to our own.

These proposals aren't mutually exclusive; indeed, they're mutually reinforcing. That animals deserve respect grounds the call for more demanding conceptions of compassion and reverence, and the virtues themselves give form and content to the respect that animals merit. And with these reasons in place, we can see that disgust justified our condemning the blood collection. It pointed us towards weighing moral considerations against this practice, and against the larger exploitative practice of which it's a part. It served us well as a moral heuristic.²⁷

DISGUST AS A MORAL HEURISTIC

The upshot is this: If we are disgusted by the collection of bovine foetal blood, then we have a reason to think that this practice is wrong. This is because disgust is a moral heuristic, and we can, on reflection, validate our initial negative assessment. On the one hand, the practice is worrisome because of the way it treats cattle. On the other, it's a failure to exhibit certain valuable virtues.

Of course, a person need not be able to articulate any of this to acquire a reason to condemn that which they find morally disgusting. It suffices that, upon reflection, these analyses are available. Furthermore, I've not argued that disgust gives a person a decisive reason against collecting foetal blood. If it turns out that we can't fill in the details of the deontological and virtue-based arguments that I've sketched here, then the presumption in favour of disgust might be lost.

But suppose we can. Then the position I've developed explains why we aren't engaged in emotional manipulation when we expose people to the realities of slaughterhouses. Quite the contrary: we're inviting people to see whether their moral commitments—at least as summarized by one moral heuristic—allow them to tolerate standard operating procedures. Thankfully, an increasing number find that they don't.

My proposal about disgust, combined with my application of that proposal to the collection of foetal blood, suggest a general strategy for exploring the merits of our visceral responses to our interactions with nonhuman animals. If no obvious justification of our negative moral assessment is forthcoming, we should switch our attention to less obvious goods that might be at stake: social goods, varieties of relationship, certain virtues. (As before, if none emerges upon reflection, or if they aren't

sufficiently valuable, then we should set aside our revulsion. How quickly should we conclude that we've come up empty-handed? I submit that our patience with this process should be guided by how often our disgust has been a good guide in a particular domain. In animal ethics, this probably means taking ample time for our search.) So if we are revolted by some aspect of animal experimentation, or our way of dealing with an invasive species, or the consequences of some new farming technology, there will be times when we should direct our attention away from narrowly utilitarian and rights-based reasoning. Instead, we should consider the kinds of communities we hope to build, the kinds of relationships with animals we hope to have, and the kinds of people we hope to be.²⁸

NOTES

1. Timothy Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 4.

2. Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds*, 79–80. Medical labs purchase foetal blood to make foetal bovine serum, which they use in cell culture. Synthetic alternatives are widely available, and there is evidence that they are actually preferable. There is controversy as to whether some foetuses are capable of feeling pain at the beginning of this process. For more, see Carlo Jochems et al., "The Use of Foetal Bovine Serum: Ethical or Scientific Problem?", *ATLA-Nottingham* 30 (2002): 219–28.

3. A defeasible reason—though that's hardly an objection.

4. Daniel Kelly, *Yuck!: The Nature and Moral Significance of Disgust* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 147.

5. See, for example, John Kekes, "Disgust and Moral Taboos", *Philosophy* 67 (1992): 431–46; Christopher Knapp, "De-moralizing Disgustingness", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 66 (2003): 253–78; Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Peter Singer, "Ethics and Intuitions", *Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 331–52; Joshua Greene, "The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul", in *Moral Psychology: Volume III*, ed. Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 35–80.

6. See Michael Hauskeller, "Moral Disgust", *Ethical Perspectives*, 13 (2006): 571–602; Dan Demetriou, "There's Some Fetish in Your Ethics", *Journal of Philosophical Research* 38 (2013): 377–404; Alexandra Plakias, "The Good and the Gross", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 16 (2013): 261–78.

7. For a helpful overview, see Paul Rozin, Jonathan Haidt, and C. R. McCauley, "Disgust", in *Handbook of Emotions*, 3rd ed., ed. M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones, and L. F. Barrett (New York: Guilford Press, 2008), 757–76.

8. Rachel Herz, *That's Disgusting: Unraveling the Mysteries of Repulsion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 4.

9. J. M. Tybur, D. L. Lieberman, and V. G. Giskevicius, "Microbes, Mating, and Morality: Individual Differences in Three Functional Domains of Disgust", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 29 (2009): 103–22; Mary Kite and Bernard Whitley, "Do Heterosexual Men and Women Differ in Their Attitudes toward Homosexuality? A Conceptual and Methodological Analysis", in *Stigma and Sexual Orientation: Understanding Prejudice Against Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals*, ed. Gregory M. Herek (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1998), 39–61; V. Curtis, R. Aunger, and T. Rabie, "Evidence That Disgust Evolved to Protect from Risk of Disease", *Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biological Science Series B* 271 (2004): S131–S133.

10. Paul Rozin, Linda Millman, and Carol Nemeroff, "Operation of the Laws of Sympathetic Magic in Disgust and Other Domains", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986): 703–12.

11. For an overview, see Kelly, *Yuck!*, 11–41.

12. We might think that, rather than narrowing our attention to one species of disgust, we're considering a different phenomenon altogether. For empirical evidence against this view, see Hannah Chapman and Adam Anderson, "Things Rank and Gross in Nature: A Review and Synthesis of Moral Disgust", *Psychological Bulletin* 139 (2013): 300–327.

13. Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon, 2012), 3–4.

14. I teach an ethics class of 380 students every semester. When I tell this story, about half report that the man has done something wrong.

15. Carol Nemeroff and Paul Rozin, "Sympathetic Magical Beliefs and Kosher Dietary Practice: The Interaction of Rules and Feelings", *Ethos* 20 (1992): 96–115; Daniel Fessler and Carlos Navarrete, "Meat Is Good to Taboo", *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 3 (2003): 1–40; Shaun Nichols, "On the Genealogy of Norms: A Case for the Role of Emotion in Cultural Evolution", *Philosophy of Science* 69 (2002): 234–55; Debra Lieberman, John Tooby, and Leda Cosmides, "Does Morality Have a Biological Basis? An Empirical Test of the Factors Governing Moral Sentiments Relating to Incest", *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 270 (2003): 819–26; Yoel Inbar et al., "Disgust Sensitivity Predicts Intuitive Disapproval of Gays", *Emotion* 9 (2009): 435–39; Yoel Inbar, David Pizarro, and Paul Bloom, "Conservatives Are More Easily Disgusted Than Liberals", *Cognition and Emotion* 23 (2009): 714–25; Paul Rozin, "The Process of Moralization", *Psychological Science* 10 (1999): 218–21.

16. Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them* (New York: Penguin Press, 2013), 23.

17. In making this claim, I'm ignoring certain varieties of sentimentalism according to which emotional experiences can justify moral claims by themselves. But my task would be easier on such views—if emotional experiences *do* justify by themselves, I see no obvious reason why disgust wouldn't.

18. Again, we might think that the term *disgust* is being used loosely here, reporting our disapproval rather than psycho-physical revulsion. For empirical evidence against this view, see Chapman and Anderson, "Things Rank and Gross in Nature".

19. Jonathan Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment", *Psychological Review* 108 (2001): 814–34.

20. I suspect that the free-riding problem is a further issue here. Lots of social goods depend on *most* people contributing (in whatever form), but not everyone. Hence, there often won't be any serious harm in one person's not playing along, and the lack of an immediate harm always weakens the case for restricting personal freedom.

21. See Robert William Fischer, "Why Incest Is Usually Wrong", *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 19 (2012): 17–31.

22. It's interesting to ask whether disgust is a wholly intracommunal response: perhaps there's no reason to expect its reliability beyond the borders of the community, since quite different emotional dispositions may serve to promote social order in different environments. I suspect that some concessions need to be made in this direction, but it can't be the whole story. Insofar as we take some of our moral beliefs to be justified in the face of disagreement, we might likewise trust disgust across communal boundaries. Moreover, given what we know of human nature, there are probably limits to the norms that could preserve social order for any length of time; this may provide the basis for some cross-cultural critique.

23. Alastair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases", *Philosophical Perspectives* 18 (2004): 229–45.

24. David DeGrazia, "Moral Vegetarianism from a Very Broad Basis", *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 6 (2009): 143–65.

25. Jerome Neu, "What Is Wrong with Incest?", *Inquiry* 19 (1976): 36.

26. Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8.

27. Is it possible to extend this line of argument to show that it's wrong to consume the meat with which harvesting foetal blood is associated? Perhaps. The answer would have two parts: one moral, one psychological. The first would be based on the well-worn observation that (*ceteris paribus*) it's wrong to benefit from wrongdoing. As Jordan Curnutt observes, the Nazis made lampshades from human skin, and that was wrong ("A New Argument for Vegetarianism", *Journal of Social Philosophy* 28 [1997]: 153–72). Moreover, if you happen to acquire one of these lamps now, you shouldn't sell it to the highest bidder. To do so would be to show insufficient respect towards those who were tortured to bring that artefact into existence. More mundanely, if I steal some chocolate from the grocery store, and my wife knows I stole it, she shouldn't say, "Well, I guess I'll enjoy it since it's here". Instead, she should refuse to eat it and insist that I pay for what I took. The second, psychological answer is based on the idea that disgust transfers: if x is disgusting, and x is associated with y , then y becomes disgusting too. In the present case, this means that meat becomes repugnant—and thus wrong—because of its association with the collecting of foetal blood. Here, too, we might think of disgust as a moral heuristic that helps us avoid profiting from evil. Incidentally, this proposal fits neatly with the view that disgust marks community boundaries. Suppose that we construe our disgust in this case as responding to an absence of respect, or compassion, or reverence. Then it draws a line between two visions of how life should be lived, and in being disgusted someone might find that he was wrong about the form of life he embraces. He might have thought that he could be respectful, compassionate and reverent while eating meat. But as it turns out, he can't—even by his own lights.

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