

MECS2032 Care ethics in relation to Facebook and Animals

Video for discussion <https://youtu.be/p7cOwQQDI7o> (9.22 minutes)

Extract 1 from Hamington, M. (2010) Care Ethics, Friendship and Facebook in D. E. Wittkower, (Ed.) *Facebook and Philosophy*. Illinois, Open Court.

Questions:

1. Do you agree that 'Facebook may be facilitating a modern alteration of our understanding of friendship categories'? Give reasons/examples?

2. Do you value your Facebook/social networking friends in the same way as real life friends?

Extract 2 from Hamington (2010:143) 'Perhaps this is one of the most important contributions that Facebook makes to care ethics: a reconsideration of binary distinctions in those we care for. May of the early formulations of care ethics addressed the 'other' (those potentially cared-for) as either friends and family or strangers. Accordingly, those who are friends and family are easier for us to care for (Noddings describes this as 'natural caring') and strangers take more effort to care for (Noddings refers to this as 'ethical caring') thus creating a binary understanding of those who receive care. The quality and quantity of friendships on Facebook make such a rigid distinction over-simple, even if it were ever true. Care ethics has always emphasised that morality requires a complex response to each situation (rather than a rule or a calculation), but social networks add an additional layer of moral complexity for both theoretical and practical consideration because I cannot easily categorise my Facebook friends. Caring is always a choice we make. If we choose to care it takes time and effort. Facebook can be a magnificent tool for caring but the time and effort required given postmodern reconsideration of friendship will still be there.'

Questions:

1. What is the difference between natural caring and ethical caring?

2. Can you always easily categorise your Facebook friends?

Extract 1 from Adams, C. J. (2015) The Sexual Politics of Meat. In L. Kalof and A. Fitzgerald (Eds.) *The Animals Reader. The essential classic and contemporary Writings*. London, Bloomsbury.

Extract 1: P.177 'Men who decide to eschew meat eating are deemed effeminate; failure of men to eat meat announces that they are not masculine... Football players drink beer because it's a man's drink, and eat steak because it's a man's meal. The emphasis is on 'mansized portions', 'hero' sandwiches; the whole terminology of meat eating reflects this masculine bias. Meat and potatoes men are our stereotypical strong and hearty, rough and ready able males... One's maleness is reassured by the food one eats... What is it about meat that makes it a symbol of celebration of male dominance.'

Questions:

1. What is it about meat that makes it a symbol of male dominance?
2. Is vegetarianism associated with being effeminate? Give reasons.

Extract 2: p.179 'The word vegetable acts as a synonym for women's passivity because women are supposedly like plants. Hegel makes this clear: 'The difference between men and women is like that between animal and plants. Men correspond to animals, while women correspond to plants because their development is more placid.' From this viewpoint, both women and plants are seen as less developed and less evolved than men and animals. Consequently, women may eat plants, since each is placid, but active men need animal meat.'

Questions:

1. Why do you think plants have been associated with passivity/femininity?

Extract 3: p. 179 '... Mary Douglas suggests that the order in which we serve foods, and the foods we insist on being present at a meal, reflect a taxonomy of classification that mirrors and reinforces our larger culture. A meal is an amalgam of food dishes, each a constituent part of the whole, each with an assigned value. In addition, each dish is introduced in precise order. A meal does not begin with a dessert, nor end with soup. All is seen as leading up to and then coming down from the entrée that is meant... To remove meat is to threaten the structure of the larger patriarchal culture...'

p.180: 'Men who batter women have often used the absence of meat as a pretext for violence against women. Women's failure to serve meat is not the cause of the violence against them... As one woman battered by her husband reported, 'It would start off with him being angry over trivial little things, a trivial little thing like cheese instead of meat on a sandwich. Another woman stated ' A month ago he threw scalding water over me, leaving a scar on my right arm, all because I gave him a pie with potatoes and vegetables for his dinner, instead of fresh meat.'

Questions:

1. Does removing meat threaten the structure of patriarchal culture?
2. What kind of foods would you insist on being present at a meal? Is there an order?
3. Are there gender differences/generational differences in relation to meat?

