



The Non-Human Other and the Coronavirus.

El Otro No-Humano y el Coronavirus.

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ABSTRACT

The global Coronavirus pandemic originated out of a wet market in Wuhan, China. Thus, this virus is the product of the market conditions that lacked any sort of ethical considerations. Among the most ingrained dogmas in most human beings throughout history is the idea that mankind has non-human beings at their disposal to do with them whatever humanity's will might dictate. The ethical relation is suspended during the interaction with animals and thus humans are allowed to torture, harm, imprison, and kill animals for scientific experiments, entertainment, or to satisfy hunger or a craving. Through the Levinasian concept of transcendence, this article will propose Otherness as a category of Peter Singer's utilitarian critique of factory farming. The current virus is proposed to be the result of a system that subsumes the non-human Other as matter to be manipulated and ignores any sort of ethical responsibility.

Keywords: Animal ethics. Otherness. Factory farming. Utilitarianism. Transcendence. Dogma.

RESUMEN

La pandemia global del Coronavirus brotó de un mercado mojado en Wuhan, China. Luego, este virus es el resultado de las condiciones carentes de consideraciones éticas de este mercado. Entre los dogmas más arraigados en la mayoría de los seres humanos a lo largo de



la historia está la idea de que el ser humano puede disponer del ser no-humano para hacer con este lo que sea su voluntad. La relación ética se suspende cuando se trata de una interacción con los animales y así se le permite al humano torturar, agredir, aprisionar y matar a los animales para la experimentación científica, el entretenimiento o para satisfacer el hambre o el antojo. Mediante el concepto de la transcendencia levinasiana, este artículo propondrá a la Otredad como categoría de la crítica utilitarista de Peter Singer a la ganadería industrial. Se propondrá que el actual virus es el resultado de un sistema que subsume al Otro no-humano como materia dispuesta e ignora la responsabilidad ética.

Palabras clave: Ética animal. Otredad. Ganadería industrial. Utilitarismo. Transcendencia. Dogma.

Introduction

Humans are currently facing one of the greatest challenges the species has faced: the coronavirus. The interconnectivity of the modern age has provided the virus with a vehicle by which COVID-19 was made possible to spread around the world at an unprecedented rate. Each country has been implementing its own quarantine measures to slow the spread of this deadly virus for many people of legal age and with delicate immune systems. This global pandemic will undoubtedly have a definitive impact on the daily lives of individuals and on the world's economy. The virus has also been exposing the weaknesses and shortcomings of different political systems around the world. At this crucial time, the problems facing health systems become visible; in addition to this, the pandemic has exposed socio-economic inequality. In addition to the implications for global politics and economics, this case must also be subject to ethical criticism. This article will defend the idea that the coronavirus is the product of the treatment of animals devoid of any kind of ethical consideration. Taking the Levinasian concept of transcendence, the thesis that is defended is that the coronavirus is the consequence of a vision that does not consider ethics and therefore does not transcend; leads to death.

The consumption of animal meat and the use of animals are issues that most people do not question. The question itself is subject to ridicule. This attitude of dogmatically and uncritically



accepting the consumption of meat as part of human nature is covered up by uncritical everyday life. The discourse that defends any system or practice is not philosophy but propagation of the Totality, of the Same. Complacency in privilege and the proclamation of one's right over others is an attitude contrary to philosophy. The role of philosophy is to question, to illuminate matters covered up by dogma. Since the inferiority of non-human animals is one of the oldest dogmas in human history, it is necessary to take this idea as an object of study. This work proposes Otherness as a category of analysis in the utilitarian discuro presented by Peter Singer in his book *Animal Liberation* (2002). To this end, we will summarize some points of this book that will be useful for this article, and then incorporate the discourse of Otherness into this criticism. The argument is that the coronavirus is a consequence of the suspension of ethical responsibility for non-human animals.

Let us begin by talking about the absurdity of this task. The question of whether or not it is fair for humans to consume animal flesh seems ridiculous. Of course it's fair. This has been imposed by God, dogma, capitalism, human nature and so on. Animal rights have been mocked throughout history. Singer begins his book by saying that "... the idea of 'Animal Rights' was once used to ridicule the issue of women's rights... The author of this satirical work... attempted to refute Mary Wollstonecraft's arguments by showing that they could be taken a step further" (Singer, 2002, p. 1). In a more conservative era than today it was absurd to think about women's rights. The rights were exclusive to man. The woman cleaned the house, cooked and looked after the children. It was an approach to everyday life the proposal that these entities of the house be worthy of consideration to the state of a man. Man has certain characteristics that make him worthy of the rights he enjoys. Women lack the resemblance to men to make them worthy of consideration in order to deserve the same rights.

It is postulated that being different men and women, it is absurd to speak of equality. Men and women must be treated differently because they are not equal. It is clear that men and women, Europeans and African-Americans, humans and animals are different. What is argued here is that "The basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment, but equal consideration. Considering different beings in the same way can lead to different treatments and rights" (Singer,



2002, p. 2). A man would not demand the same right of a woman to have an abortion. It is illogical to think of a dog's right to receive the minimum wage; however, we are not talking here about real equality in concrete terms. We are talking about equal consideration of the needs of all living beings.

Science and non-human animals

In the second chapter of the text, Singer describes in detail the absurdly cruel experiments that have been carried out by the American military, the scientific community, the cosmetics industry, and the pharmaceutical industry. The details are brutal and range from slowly poisoning rats and monkeys, psychologically torturing baby monkeys by depriving them of contact with the mother, or "allowing monkey babies to become surrogate mothers who could turn into monsters" (Singer, 2002, p. 33). These rag mothers released compressed air that almost ripped off the babies' skin, pulled metal spikes out of their bodies, among other wild and completely unnecessary manifestations of torture. Several experiments were intended to cause depression or suffering in animals in order to accumulate 'scientific data'. In addition, "... even when the test is performed for a medical product, it will most likely do nothing to improve our health" (Singer, 2002, p. 53). It describes how most tests of pharmaceutical products on animals are not done for conditions that would save the life of a human being. The tests that are performed are for chronic conditions of the tributary Western society. Even the idea that an animal can be slaughtered for the sake of a human being cannot be defended here. The life of the animal lacks esteem in the face of the ethical consideration of most individuals; therefore, any degree of suffering or misery imposed on it is justifiable.

To determine the toxicity of several products, a test called "LD50" is described (Singer, 2002, p. 53) which serves to determine the amount of some substance that will lead to the death of 50% of the animals in which it is being tested. Some of the products are not very poisonous, so animals are forced to consume huge amounts of the substance until they are killed. Other experiments involve caging rabbits and experimenting with the effects of certain products on the eyes, lasting weeks, causing infections and even blindness. In other experiments, animals are locked in sealed chambers and exposed to gases and vapors to see the effects of inhalation. Critics within the scientific



community itself argue that these tests lack utility or application. The list of experiments set out in the book is absurd. Psychological torture, levels of heat or cold that cause death, poisoning, addictions and withdrawal syndromes, isolation, among many others that were carried out for decades.

We tolerate cruelties being carried out on other species that would infuriate us if they were carried out on members of our own species. Speciesism allows researchers to contemplate the animals they experiment with as objects of research and laboratory equipment rather than living, suffering creatures. (Singer, 2002, p. 64).

Singer draws a parallel between the indifference of Nazi scientists who experimented with Jews and the indifference of those who experimented with animals. Indifference is conditioned towards a particular factor of discrimination. The Nazi scientist justified his treatment under the pretext of the 'inferior race', with which his morality allowed him to treat the Jew indifferently, as *being-at-the-hand*. The scientist who experiments with animals justifies in the same way his treatment under the 'inferior species', which the human being can dispose of to do whatever he wants. In both cases, scientists have to be aware that the beings they experience with feel pain and pleasure, and these conditions imply a preference that is already a will of the subject.

Think of the subject who is educated in an environment of conditioned indifference, in which it is not allowed to assault beings such as people or pets, but others are permissible to do anything.

[...] just as a rat can be conditioned to pull a lever to receive a food reward, so too can a human be conditioned to receive professional rewards to ignore the ethical problems posed by animal experimentation. (Singer, 2002, p. 71).

Singer uses this point to refer to doctors and veterinarians who are educated in today's speciesist culture. Indifference is rewarded in the scientific community. Medical students who refuse to experiment, mutilate or murder animals in their "practices" may be expelled. Then scientists who conduct tortuous and hellish experiments on animals, if compensated, it is understood that indifference will increase. Let us extend this attitude to society at large. If a child is praised in his



childhood for consuming animal meat, logically the child will associate this consumption with a good act. If a child is entertained by the suffering of any living being, an indifference will inevitably spring up that can potentially disconnect their empathy towards other human beings.

[...] one of the most consistent findings reported by the FBI profiling unit was that (torture and intentional animal cruelty) appeared to be common behavior between serial killers and rapists (i.e., those with psychopathic traits characterized by impulsiveness, selfishness, and lack of remorse). (Griffiths, 2016).

In the abstracted position of any ethical concern the subject is absolutized and, both the world and those who live there, are interpreted as mediation or tool. Those who idealize meat consumption as part of human nature would have to answer whether a cannibal or serial killer would represent unconscionable human nature, free of limitations. If it is proposed that the issue is different when dealing with animals, even accepting that animals can feel and have an existential interest in staying alive, that is—in the strict sense—speciesism.

Against the argument that the human being has the right to do whatever his will, since it enjoys a higher intelligence, Singer proposes the consideration of the case of babies or people suffering from a mental disability. If the criterion for experiencing part of the consideration of the degree of intelligence, there would be no objection. However, this is not the case. The criterion is limited to discrimination by species. It is perceived, understood and proven by science that animals feel pain. They need entertainment and socialization. In laboratories, animals are raised in isolation, condemned to a life of physical and mental torture. If it is understood that the non-human animal feels pain and pleasure, it is clear that there is no ethical consideration whatsoever in the treatment of animals. Suspending the ethical relationship based on species is the same as discriminating on the basis of race, gender, or any other arbitrary determination. Scientists have a clear interest in continuing their experiments, blinding themselves to the ethical implications of their actions. However, it is dangerous to confuse the field of science with that of ethics. Let us remember the case of Nazi scientists experimenting with Jews.



Industrial livestock

Singer continues the most familiar interaction we have with the animal farm: meat. The image of animals on a farm living decently outdoors until they are executed for our consumption is becoming more and more in the past. It is true that in several rural areas around the world there are still such farms; however, thinking about the demand for meat that all the big cities of the world have, it is clear that it would not be possible to supply this demand without having huge farms in or around the city. Most of the meat in large cities is obtained from industrial livestock, which is the capitalist reduction of livestock, and always has as a priority the money that can be generated and saved. Since space and time are expensive, industrial livestock seeks to limit these investments as much as possible.

Like any business, the criterion of industrial livestock comes down to how much capital can be produced. The task of farmers is to feed the animals in very enclosed spaces and remove the accumulated carcasses of the animals that do not survive this torture. Despite the losses, they make economic sense. There is less that the farmer loses than if the animals were given more space or expanded their territory. Let us ignore for a moment the question of whether or not the consumption of animal meat is correct and consider whether this is the right way to meet that demand. There are numerous animal concentration camps all over the world to ensure that at no time does any consumer have to suffer a meal without animal meat. Although meat is often thrown away or rotted, the animal is nothing more than a source of capital and can continue to be exploited to ensure market stability.

Even when people want to think that the animal they eat did not suffer a life of torture "... those who, by their purchases, require animals to be killed do not deserve to be protected from this or any aspect of the production of the meat they consume" (Singer, 2002, p. 150). The enemy of philosophy is the invisibility of matters hidden by dogma; in this case, the idea that the human being needs and deserves to use non-human beings for any purpose. Since a city contains many human beings whose needs can only be met through industrial livestock farming, this is a necessary evil. Let



us take this logic a step further: if the world's population continues to increase, more animal meat production and more territory will be needed to plant the food of these animals.

It will, however, be the waste of the forests that turns out to be the greatest nonsense caused by the demand for meat... In Costa Rica, Colombia and Brazil, in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, forests are being cleared to provide grazing land for livestock. (Singer, 2002, p. 168).

It will be man's dogmatic naivety that causes his downfall. Thanks to the uncritical consumption of meat, the market responds and ensures to supply the demand, ignoring any other consideration. In 2019 the Amazon suffered a fire three times greater than the previous year under the government of Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right president who has expressed his disinterest in the nuisance of caring for the environment. Despite global outrage, it is forgotten that the market never responds to ethical demands. The market only understands supply and demand and this demand demands more land to plant feed for livestock. As long as there is an astronomical demand for animal meat, the market will continue to respond to this demand by ignoring any consideration. A study by the U.S. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy opined that "... approximately 80% of the global budget of allowable greenhouse emissions would be occupied by the meat and dairy industry alone by 2050, if production is not reduced" (Yirka, 2018). The daily and uncritical whim threatens to consume the cohabitants of the Earth and the possibility of life itself. We have to say that the purchase of animal meat is uncritical because of the ethical relationship and the unsustainability of the industry. We're burning the lungs of the Earth for burgers and tacos.

Otherness in Lévinas and Dussel

Now let's address the discourse tool I propose to introduce into Singer's thought: Otherness. Otherness is a counter-ontology developed by Emmanuel Lévinas, a student divorced from Heideggerian phenomenology after his teacher's affiliation with the National Socialist Party in Germany; in addition to the fact that he and his family were interned in the concentration camps.



When the ontology incorporates the Other within it as an entity or *being-to-the-hand*, it remains as a violence towards the Other. This projection of the Sameness of the subject over the Others may obey the morality of the particular system of the subject in question, but it cannot obey the ethical priority. Ethics is the rupture of the order established by some system determined from the interpellation of the Other, manifested in the Face. "The notion of face... It signifies the philosophical previousness of the entity over being, an exteriority that is not reduced, as in Plato, to the interiority of memory and that, nevertheless, safeguards the self that receives it" (Lévinas, 1977, p. 75). Ontology, capitalism and all systems run the risk of becoming dissimilar and working against life. Even philosophical discourse can become a justification for arbitrariness through the absolutization of individual reason. The interpellation of the Face of the Other is the only possibility of metaphysical transcendence. Ethics is not a subject proclaiming what reality is like or what is good and evil. Ethics is the passivity that receives the questioning of the Other.

Consider current food education as one of these cold systems. The animal interpreted as an entity for consumption and use is contrary to the notion of face. Ethical significance is perverted by the arbitrary difference of being a member of another species. "Rhetoric, which is not absent in any discourse, and which philosophical discourse seeks to overcome, resists discourse" (Lévinas, 1977, p. 93). If the discourse indicates that suffering is undesirable and joy desirable, it forces us to consider the interests of all those who can perceive both of these. The only thing left to deny this consideration to non-human animals is to fall into the position that this is human nature or the universe. Rhetoric justifies the oppression and cover-up of living beings to a system of thought; resists speech.

It will be understood that the proposal of a vegetarian diet or simply reduced in meat consumption will be considered an ally to the freedom of many individuals. To those interested in philosophy, Lévinas tells us "to philosophize is to go back further here than freedom, to discover the investiture that frees freedom from the arbitrary" (Lévinas, 1977, p. 107). Absolute freedom as the arbitrary is the same thing that leads the murderer to kill, the thief to steal, the drug addict to get high and any individual to carry out his immediate desires. Capricious and unconscionable will is what threatens to burn forests, produce pandemics such as the coronavirus and make the planet



uninhabitable. Do we want to leave an uninhabitable planet for our children, nephews and grandchildren? Or continue to give money to companies that torture and murder animals, continue to support companies that cut down forests and world heritage sites to line their pockets? Freedom is not the possibility to choose what is from the menu, but to contemplate repercussions and considerations to make conscious decisions. Just as the drug addict searches for his drug without thinking about the repercussions that his actions will have, it happens with the individual who chooses to eat meat without the awareness that he is contributing to global warming, to an industry devoid of ethical considerations. Freedom is exercised as a whim and not as the contemplation of all the repercussions.

Lévinas was unable to analyze in concrete terms the question of Otherness because he understood the Other as absolutely Another; that is, it is impossible to deal with it because it is not some entity that I can delimit with the use of reason. The Other is the one who escapes my boundaries and definitions. It is the Argentine Enrique Dussel who adds a historical, economic and practical-social analysis to land the Other of Western development in the third world. The Other colonized, slave, poor and prisoner, ignored in the books of philosophy, history and economics. Without the Other, there is no Self, but the Self tends to be absolutized and fetishized.

We are dealing with the slave who was born a slave and who does not know that he is a person. Just scream. The cry, as noise, roar, cry, proto-word not yet articulated, which is interpreted in its sense by the one who has ethical conscience. It simply indicates that someone suffers and that from their pain he launches a howre, a cry, a plea. It is the original 'interpellation'. (Dussel, 1998, p. 20).

The interpellation of the Other is a prelogical moment. Before the categorization and logical discrimination, there is the body and the cry of the Other. The body makes reason possible and not the other way around. Throughout history, however, reason has been used to act against the other body. We can see that this original interpellation mentioned by Dussel is not a well-structured and convincing argument, nor is it even an articulated word. Of course, the animal suffers, screams, roars



and therefore cries out for life, even if it does not do so in Spanish, English or any other language. It would be naïve for a person, like Descartes, to reduce the animal to a robot that responds to external stimuli. The animal has the basic desires of every senseless life: to seek joy, to avoid pain and to continue its life. The conquistadors ignored the indians they tortured because they did not shout for their lives in Spanish. What is the difference with the one who tortures and imprisons animals because they do not cry out for their lives in any other human language?

There is a parallel between Lévinas and Dussel: *ontological priority* and *ethical priority* in Lévinas and *moral conscience* and *ethical conscience* in Dussel. The ontological priority or moral conscience is an individual's obedience to an abstract system. The officer who expels refugees and condemns them to starvation or death in his own country because the rules so dictate has a moral conscience. It is obedience to an abstract and anonymous, faceless idea. Throughout history, ideas have become fetishized and abstracted from any ethical considerations becoming anti-life. The subject who consumes animal meat and becomes indifferent to animals because the education of the system so dictates, has a moral conscience. Priority or ethical awareness is the possibility of transcendence. Beyond the limitations of my logical and existential projections is the Other. The Other slave that made possible the construction of the pyramids and the first world society. The conquered and oppressed Other who was covered up in the myth of Western modernity. The violated and invisible body that makes possible the development of the Western Self. The body of the animal that, isolated from social light, is tortured all its life in isolation, where no one can hear its cry. The ethical priority is openness to the transcendence of the Other, which comes beyond my horizon of the world. It is the openness to justice against the cold reason that becomes oppressive of the body that begot it.

Exteriority in Singer

In *14 theses on ethics* (2016), Dussel criticizes utilitarianism by dismissing it as a philosophy of the bourgeoisie. The limitations of pleasure and pain, the happiness proposed by utilitarianism interprets them as "... only something psychic, spiritual, typical of the single higher faculties of the brain, values,



virtues" (Dussel, 2016, p. 45). It would be difficult to argue that Singer's utilitarianism can be limited to these 'higher faculties', accepting that animals lack such faculties. What I want to describe now is a parallelism between Dussel's proposal about exteriority in Marx and exteriority as a category in Singer.

The first appendix of *Towards an Unknown Marx* (2013) proposes exteriority as the category of analysis par excellence in Marx's writings, rather than the category of totality. In a way, Dussel's idea is that, despite lacking the tool of categories and terminology of exteriority, Marx has an intuition towards this idea.

The fetishism of capital consists of its claim to *create* value from within; whereas, in reality, the production of more-value by capital comes from the fact that it has subsumed the *exteriority* of the source that creates value: living work. (Dussel, 2013, p. 371).

The living work is in Marx the corporeal exteriority from which the product is fed as a fetish; the value of the product arises *ex nihilo* of exteriority. The customer, when contemplating the product, does not see the process of exploitation that surrounds the elaboration of the products. I quote: "We bought our meat and chicken in neat plastic packs. It almost doesn't bleed. There is no reason to associate this package with a living animal, which breathes, walks, suffers" (Singer, 2002, p. 95). We see how, in parallel, although he may not know in depth the subject of Otherness, Singer has an approach to the fetishization of exteriority. In the animal product of the supermarket, the fetish of the process of torture and brutality that was necessary for it to take place is observed. The problem is that the ethical-community relationship is perverted by the mediation of the fetish. The subject does not perceive an ethical relationship or responsibility for the oppression of those who were exploited to manufacture the product, nor their ethical responsibility for participating in the brutalities that the livestock industry generates. Invisibility is the enemy of ethical transcendence and justice.

Such is this invisibility that "the average viewer should know more about the lives of cheetahs and sharks than he or she knows about the lives of chickens or beef calves" (Singer, 2002, p. 216).



There are currently many people who advocate conserving dolphins, whales and wild birds, but this empathy is suspended when it comes to edible animals. Why are we outraged when a dog, cat, dolphin or elephant is mistreated, but not when billions of other animals are systematically being bred and executed around the world on a daily basis? I quote: "More than 150 million animals are killed for food around the world every day—on Earth alone... Including wild caught and farmed fish, we have a daily total closer to 3 billion animals killed" (Zampa, 2019). It would be a comforting illusion that the decisions one makes had no repercussions on the future of the planet, that one could have breakfast, lunch and dinner for a hamburger and that the only consequence was having to go to the gym to burn calories. Naivety or ignorance does not absolve the subject of his ethical responsibility. As has happened several times in history, dogma threatens to cover up a violent, capricious and excessive custom as if it were part of human nature.

John Cleese, an old English actor, once joked, "If God didn't want us to eat animals, why did he make them out of meat?" Is this rationality not parallel to that of the conqueror, the rapist or the racist? "If God did not want him to conquer America, he would not have populated it with primitive people." "If she didn't want to be raped, she wouldn't have dressed in such a way." "If the universe did not want Europeans to dominate Africans, it would not have populated the continent with slaves." In all these statements there is a assumption of the universal order by which the subject seeks to absolve himself of any ethical responsibility to the Other. The subject rejects his position of being free by embracing the prejudices behind some universalized ideology, and not a universal law. Spain was no superior to the native peoples of America. The Nazis were no superior to the Jews. Human beings do not have non-human beings on hand to feed themselves and do with them whatever their will is. All these ideas absolve the subject of immediate intersubjective ethical responsibility and of the fact that it is in practice by denying dignity to a living and sentient being.

Ethics has never consisted of a subject demanding or proclaiming his rights over others. This is the subject pronouncing the ontological priority of his worldview. The purpose of this article is not to convince anyone to be a vegetarian or to respect animal life. Ethics is not a rationality to which a subject can be persuaded to understand and follow. A neoliberal capitalist cannot be convinced that



there is an ethical relationship manifest in economic relations. A racist cannot be convinced that there is an ethical relationship when it comes to discriminating against or enslaving those of another race. A sexist cannot be convinced that there is an ethical relationship in the interaction with women. A speciesist cannot be convinced that there is an ethical relationship in the experimentation, consumption and enslavement of animals. The aim is to differentiate between the priorities mentioned. There is no ethical justification for the consumption of animals. It is the surrender to anonymity of the ontological vision. The aim of this paper is to invite those interested in philosophy and not dogma, to reflect on their prejudices.

Is the suffering of one being different from the suffering of another? Is it the suffering of a lower grade animal because you don't understand why it's suffering? Would suffering valued through understanding or intelligence, such as that of a person with an intellectual disability, then be of less value than the suffering of a person with a "higher" intelligence? That of a baby? How has intelligence become a criterion for goodness?

There are two ways to foster apathy: 1) to make the *Other* invisible from some world system or 2) to cover it up and incorporate it as an entity into some world system. In both cases, the Other becomes invisible to the ethical plane. The first case occurs when children are educated to accept that there are certain animals that exist in order to be consumed. The child, upon encountering a cow or a pig, accepts that the meat of these will be presented to him at dinner. The second is due to the distance between people and the livestock industry and their lack of knowledge of the way it operates. People don't go out and kill the animal they'll consume on their own. It simply contemplates the ready-to-cook product, the fetishization of the living being that once constituted this meat.

The 'real reality'... of living work... it's the place *from-where* 'for other eyes'... the eyes of *criticism*; it is possible to 'constitute' the *whole* of capital, not as a horizon from which intramundane entities are understood, but as an *entity* or object that can be analyzed. (Dussel, 2013, p. 369).



Dussel's invitation is to analyze the totality of capital, not as the lens through which the entities that are given in it are understood, but as an object of study. What I propose is to analyse meat consumption not from the totality of the mentality that justifies it, but as an object of study itself. What future is this excessive consumption of meat taking us into? Are we prepared to continue to complain about the burning forests which, in the end, serve to meet our excessive demand for meat while we continue to perpetuate it? Are we willing to leave the Earth uninhabitable for tacos or burgers, to continue condemning sentient beings to a life of suffering and torture on our whims? Isn't a global pandemic enough to question the violent privileges concealed by everyday life?

The Wuhan Market and Ethics

Wuhan's wet market is famous for selling meat from animals of all kinds. In China, animal meat had until recently been a luxury that only a few could afford. Reforms of the Chinese market after Mao's rule in 1978 led to the consolidation and regulation of beef, chicken, or pork production. Small farmers who chose not to join these large state enterprises then created markets where turtle meat, snake meat, among other animals not controlled or monitored by the state were sold (Lynteris & Fearnley, 2020). As this illegal market grew, a new demand was perpetuated that this market became interested in satisfying: the sale of wild animals. Still illegally, meat or live specimens of beavers, deer, crocodile, koalas and even lions began to be sold. Any effort to simply want to isolate the species that caused the coronavirus outbreak and find a way to make sure it doesn't happen again remains within the realm of closed and inconsequential ontology. The basic problem, the basis that led to this current situation, is ignored.

Clearly, this pandemic did not take many experts and analysts by surprise who had already commented on the deplorable conditions in which China's wet markets find themselves. "Conservationists and health experts have been warning for years against wildlife trade in Chinese and other Asian markets, both because of its impact on biodiversity and the potential for disease spread." (Arana, 2020) Wet markets then lack ethical considerations, which lead to transcendence. The system of production and consumption that existed in Wuhan are examples of the consequences



of a system completely devoid of ethical criticism, completely enclosed in the logic of capital. The ontologization of life subsumes the non-human Other as an entity, as matter to the disposition of the subject's will. Then the system becomes a consumer of life; its praxis is the consumption of life and therefore inevitably leads to death. It is necessary to introduce the interpellation of the Other to question the logic of the system, to enhance life rather than the perpetuation of The Sameness. A less ambitious questioning will not succeed in changing the foundation, but will simply be a restructuring of the system that leads to death.

The current pandemic is clearly the result of a daily life that concealed many violent practices towards the Other. This situation has exposed the lack of ethical considerations that existed in many areas of society. The lack of ethics in the economy has led to the greatest impact being on the economy of the most vulnerable, those who need to work daily in order to survive. Unethical political systems lead to under-resourced health systems and an exercise of power that represses those most frustrated during this situation. However, I think it wise to take advantage of the current crisis to highlight another area where there are no basic considerations for safeguarding life: the consumption of animals. It is common to consider the control and health errors that led to the coronavirus outbreak. However, I propose to take criticism to a more extreme level, from outside the system itself, from ethics, from transcendence. The coronavirus is a clear example of the result towards which the inconsequentiality that practices without ethical considerations lead to the Other. Even "correcting" this error of the system would be to return to a normality that is based on inconsequential practices.

Conclusions

I have said that the intention of my speech is not to convince anyone to change any prejudice or opinion. That change is not a movement that can be transmitted to another subjectivity. But I will leave you with this reflection of Singer:



Philosophy should question the basic assumptions of the era. Thinking critically and carefully what most of us take for granted is, I think, the main task of philosophy, and the task that makes philosophy worthwhile. (Singer, 2002, p. 236)

If what we want is to follow dogma and perpetuate uncritical everyday life, then let us abandon the subject. However, if what we are interested in is ethics, transcendence, philosophy, and therefore the questioning of our assumptions no matter how entrenched they are, I invite you to question critically and ethically. The system always threatens the individual with impotence. It makes no sense to change everyday habits because the individual is only one. However, it is not the first cause for justice that has occurred in the history of mankind. The dangers that lie ahead are linked to inconsequentiality. Inconsequential thinking leads to discrimination and inequality, to savage and uncritical capitalism, to cold and brutal science, to the deterioration of our planet, and to the outbreak of new viruses that make manifest the inconsequentiality of these practices. If we do not begin to open up and introduce our critical vision to question our daily lives, we will be condemning life.

Capital obeys supply and demand considerations. If we do not start demanding a change, it will never be offered. I am not proposing that meat consumption is bad in itself, but that the industry has disconnected itself from any ethical considerations to supply demand. Animals will continue to suffer tortuous lives and forests will continue to be burned. If we seek to transcend uncritical everyday life, it is necessary to change our thinking and our daily activities. In general, the idea is to reduce market demand in protest against brutal practices. Ideally, this would involve getting to know which cosmetics and product companies are testing animals and stop incentivizing the continuation of these practices through the consumption of these products. I also invite those concerned to combat the conversion of our planet into an uninhabitable desert and to ensure the survival of the next generations. We must wield the responsibility for freedom implied by the nature of the human being, and not indulge in the anonymity of ideas of arbitrary superiority. The future of all species depends on overcoming speciesism.



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