

**Re; Veganism vs. Animal Liberation  
(Ishkah vs. Eisel & DxE)**

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<https://youtube.com/watch?v=QlJTJEnfWSg>

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# Part 1: Response to ‘Veganism vs. Animal Liberation’

Alright, this is going to be a response to Eisel’s video on ‘Veganism vs. Animal Liberation’<sup>1</sup> with a critique at the end about common arguments he uses in his videos.

So, as far as I know, Eisel has never tried to come up with precise wording for what his preferred definition of veganism would be, so at a guess from watching his videos, I can imagine it would be something along the lines of:

‘A personal duty to respect the dignity of animals & a desire to build a social movement to, among other things, lobby government for a higher percentage territory of managed wildlife habitat.’

And we can guess his argument for this philosophy being contained in the word vegan is that... its the best descriptive adjective for a human-centred movement. And, that the goal is to win over enough passionate people who are dedicated enough to take on the personal principle of avoiding animal products, as a basis for finding each other and organizing to making changes to our communities and institutions.

The person he’s critiquing would like to abandon the word vegan in favour of advocating the ideology of anti-speciesism, as an element of total liberation. So more like a social justice movement where anti-speciesism is one axis of oppression among other struggles like anti-racism & anti-sexism. Therefore an animal-centred movement alongside other oppressed-centred movements.

So, positives to Eisel’s critique are, by solely advocating for animals through a social justice approach, you just are going to get meat eaters being turned away from caring about animals because vegans look like deluded people who view animals as citizens.

As well as vegans feeling more justified in taking violent action for animals, who they start to view as members of our society. When in reality, like I said in my earlier video, animals can’t conceptualize a tactical war to achieve rights, so they can’t desire it.

We aren’t even able to alleviate their suffering like we could human prisoners with the optimistic notion that direct actions done in other places now, may one day lead to an end to their suffering.

Negatives are, he never acknowledges any better arguments for putting more focus on words like animal liberation.

I think we need to be fighting for incremental legal animal rights laws which make it less profitable to breed animals for food. And one philosophical and legal approach which is gaining more prominence is Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach, which we can say is about liberating animals to be able to express their capabilities in the wild.<sup>2</sup>

As well, I think he’s wrong to claim Animal Liberation is primarily tied to Singer’s views on utilitarianism. The most common association people will draw it to is the Animal Liberation Front, which people already understand that if you have activists willing to liberate animals from cages, they obviously won’t also be buying animal foods.

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<sup>1</sup> Sanity vs. Insanity: Veganism vs. Animal Liberation

<sup>2</sup> Beyond Compassion and Humanity; Justice for Non-human Animals by Martha Nussbaum – <https://activistjourneys.wordpress.com/2020/07/25/beyond-compassion-and-humanity-justice-for-non-human-animals-martha-c-nussbaum/> & The Capability Approach – <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/capability-approach/>

I have nothing against veganism as a marketable word for a boycott identity, but in terms of explaining where the principle comes from, I think legal animal rights movement, says it really clearly in the name itself about how it's a political movement, rather than veganism with it's history and etymology in vegetarianism, which was simply a lifestyle society.

So in conclusion, I think as well as and even better than a vegan identity, we need to start thinking of ourselves as legal animal rights advocates also, which can encompass arguments for animal rights, liberation and/or welfare.

## Part 2: Critiquing common arguments Eisel uses

Alright this is the point in the video where I'm going to go into critiquing Eisel's most commonly used arguments, if you never feel tempted to watch an Eisel video and couldn't care less the effect he and people like him have, that's okay, you can just click off the video now.

So, I watched Eisel's videos for a long time because he talked about a lot of topics I care about like a rewilding habitat approach to advocating for veganism, nihilism and encouraging a pragmatic, social science approach to many questions.

But, even though I was grateful to be introduced to lots of little conflicts between different world-views that I wasn't previously aware of, I felt his views on issues were somewhat simplistic.

Firstly, let's talk about his habit of arguing against the worst arguments for a world-view in order to appear superior.

### 2a. Arguing against straw-men

So, Eisel likes to make the argument that you can draw an association between the top academics making arguments for a particular issue and the ineloquent layman who got their talking points from twitter, then dismiss both their reasoning as equally baseless.

Many of the problems we have within the intellectual ghetto of 21<sup>st</sup> century vegan politics are basically the same as the problems you have with the rest of planet earth or western academia or what have you.<sup>1</sup>

And doubtless this is true in many cases, but often he never proves conclusively the association and in my view simply enjoys teeing off against bad arguments which make him look good.

So to demonstrate, imagine two rooms of people, where in both rooms one person is advocating veganism and the other is raising concerns about how it may create problems for preserving and increasing the number of people who can speak indigenous languages and play an active role in the culture.

In the first room of laymen twitter users, we're asked to imagine that the person raising concerns about veganism's impact on indigenous culture would view the threat as being so detrimental, that they would rather stick rigidly to one conception of what indigenous culture entails and not accept any idea of the culture evolving over time.

So, the meat eater asks the vegan; "do you see nothing positive in these indigenous cultures? Do you see nothing worth saving in native tradition?" And so, having laid the premise of someone putting forth a bad argument that we the listener would also be frustrated to have to answer, Eisel can jump in to save the day and answer with an apparent sense of superiority:

My answer to that is two-fold, one, when you think of culture, do you of it as a weakness or a strength? I'm dead serious, really think about it, is your culture holding you back? Is it dead weight? Is it a burden you're going to place on the shoulders of the next generation?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Veganism vs. Anti-Capitalism (vs. The Vegan Anarchist) – [https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=cFqvoTLd5\\_k](https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=cFqvoTLd5_k)

<sup>2</sup> Against Anarchism (In Principle and in Practice, esp. "Left Anarchism" – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=FaTvML9>

Cool, so for Eisel that's video over, that's the advice to remember to take away with you. But how would this actually go over, if you were in a room with a well read, articulate person offering reasonable concerns about the impact of veganism on indigenous people. Well we can imagine the meat eater asking "What about indigenous people on the bones of their asses, hunting as a cheap way of acquiring food and having a culture of sharing with elders in their community who can't do it themselves, do you see nothing about that worth preserving? And now Eisel's answer;

When you think of culture, do you of it as a weakness or a strength?<sup>3</sup>

Clearly this is inadequate, and everything about taking those actions in that circumstance and that culture is commendable. Did it sound like that argument could be put into practice just as easily on a more nuanced critique of veganism and it be just as easily refuted, as Eisel would have you believe?:

Every so often, London School of Economics has people with PhDs, who are on the far-left, making these same sorts of arguments, and they're just as easily refuted.<sup>4</sup>

So, the correct answer for me there is to say, of course I wouldn't condemn them for killing animals in that hyper specific circumstance, and I would campaign for free & better education, community gardening projects, etc. To improve their lot in life. But, if you're living in the city and your only access to hunting grounds is driving an hour out your way, then a healthier and more ethical use of your money would simply be picking up tofu from the supermarket instead of meat.

As a side note, this is also where I view my definition of veganism as an animal products boycott behaviour as having advantages over other ones like the vegan society which defines veganism as a philosophy:

Firstly, because when simply explained as a behaviour, it's less easily misunderstood as a belief-ism one needs to buy into which could negatively change everything about how one currently views the word. And rather can be related to as a tool for achieving goals one has through ones own philosophy and culture already. Like the Mi'kmaq legend of how a demi-god used magic to obtain unlimited amounts of beaver meat from a single bone, reflecting a wish for abundance disconnected from the need to hunt.

Secondly, The strong commitment is clear through it being a boycott protest, which we can really easy conceptually tie to other boycotts, where someone boycotting South African products during apartheid wouldn't feel comfortable flying over their and joining the police force themselves. More so than in other definitions where you're just saying you're abstaining from using the end animal products.

And finally, I am actually fine with my definition being softer on for example subsistence hunters. I've got a video on my channel of Penan tribes people in Indonesia explaining how it would be repulsive to them to keep animals in captivity to farm, and I think this is great animal rights advocacy, so again a positive distinction.<sup>5</sup>

## 2b. Faulty comparisons

So, a faulty comparison is when you compare one thing to another that is really not related, in order to make one thing look more or less desirable than it really is.

For example, the comparison; broccoli has significantly less fat than the leading candy bar!

While both broccoli and candy bars can be considered snacks, comparing the two in terms of fat content and ignoring the significant difference in taste, leads to the faulty comparison.

Now in Eisel's case, here's an example from his video called Against Anarchism:

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<sup>3</sup> Against Anarchism (In Principle and in Practice, esp. "Left Anarchism" – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=FaTvML9>

<sup>4</sup> China is Right About Xinjiang – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=hqgPw5Z-Guw>

<sup>5</sup> Penan Relationship To Animals — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODG42xzqxUU>

So someone could challenge me, I'm steal-manning Theo's position here to say well look even if you don't subscribe to this long term more utopian idea of where this is going to, and even if you don't agree with this in principle, in this sense, can't you see some short-term benefit in anarchism here and now, in the same way that I can see a benefit in charity...

And if I argued back pointing out the relative historical triviality of libertarianism, look this isn't really a major influential political philosophy, but if on a scale of one to ten, if we rate libertarianism like a three out of ten, then left-wing anarchism is a zero, it has no significance at all.<sup>6</sup>

Now, the obvious mistake he made here is the pragmatic goals of right or left-wing anarchists would simply be to win people over to transitionary policy steps through left or right-wing libertarianism. So the logical comparison to make would be comparing support between right wing anarchism and left wing anarchism, or right wing libertarianism against left wing libertarianism. Not comparing the more public friendly image of right wing libertarians against the more radical side from the left wing anarchists.

Next, an example from his video on China's policies in Xinjiang towards the Uiyghur Muslims:

Is it fair to say that this is cultural genocide? My answer to that question is yes, this is cultural genocide, but we should say in the same breath without any hypocrisy that what the government of the United States of America attempted to do in Afghanistan also was cultural genocide.

So even if we examine the cultural project that the United States embarked on and compare it to the cultural project that the government of China is embarked on, we have to say the body count for what China is doing and how it is doing it is much much lower, the negative impacts are much more limited.<sup>7</sup>

Now, in reality the cultural heritage that was attempted to be destroyed in Afghanistan, if we can even call it genocide really was only aimed at disarming the movement of rural Pashtun's who chose to take up arms only 10 years earlier, naive though that aim was. Rules of engagement listed mosques as protected buildings and a conservative Islamic government was put in place.

China on the other hand is locking up millions, bulldozing it's towns and mosques, subsidizing settlers to move in on mass and take coordinator positions. All in an effort to brainwash the people into thinking of themselves as more like Han Chinese who should praise the state for their glorious history. So the level of cultural destruction is played up in the Afghan case to appear more equal and suffering as a result is played down in the Chinese case to appear better.

And finally a video he did on civil disobedience:

Do you think Israel should be ruled by the sober judgment of a hundred percent of the population participating in a democracy where they have to stand up and make rational arguments where they believe in and consider the law of the Constitution and people get to vote and all this stuff [In short...] do you think it should be a procedural rational democracy involving everyone OR do you think that a small minority of religious fanatics should just be able to go and engage in civil disobedience?

... Civil disobedience is; rule of your society by the most militant minority.<sup>8</sup>

So, this is both a bad comparison and a faulty dilemma, there are obvious degrees of punishment a government can bring down on people breaking the law, any direction the society goes in for either not controlling or bowing to protesters demands is still the moral culpability of the government and

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<sup>6</sup> Against Anarchism (In Principle and in Practice, esp. "Left Anarchism" – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=FaTvML9>

<sup>7</sup> China is Right About Xinjiang – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=hqgPw5Z-Guw>

<sup>8</sup> Civil Disobedience is the Opposite of Democracy. – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=gs9H04BjwrY>



those who participated in the party political process. There is an obvious legal and moral difference between victimless civil disobedience aimed at all people being treated equally in society like collecting salt from the sea or staying seated on the bus, to that of stealing another country's resources against international law.

## 2c. Jumping to conclusions

So, in the video I'm responding to he claims Singer has said he himself eats meat:

Peter Singer very casually talks about eating meat in his own life when he's in a particular situation at a restaurant other people order meat and he'll eat meat too for no reason<sup>9</sup>

But try as I might googling, I can't find any quote anywhere to back up his claim, so more than likely this is just part of a long running pattern of Eisel jumping to conclusions that fit his narrative.

The reality is not much better, but the fact is Singer acts vegan when at home and vegetarian when travelling and there are no vegan options in the restaurant he wants to visit.

When I'm shopping for myself, it will be vegan. But when I'm travelling and it's hard to get vegan food in some places or whatever, I'll be vegetarian. I won't eat eggs if they're not free-range, but if they're free-range, I will. I won't order a dish that is full of cheese, but I won't worry about, say, whether an Indian vegetable curry was cooked with ghee.

Singer's book 'Animal Liberation' promoted a preference consequentialist view which makes veganism an obligation, it was only later he started to slide towards hedonistic utilitarianism.

I also found a particularly hilarious example of Eisel not watching the video he's responding to at the end and making a response video critiquing the guy for burning a poster of Mao Zedong, which he in fact doesn't do and Serpentza gives the same reasons for not doing it that Eisel is supposedly critiquing him for doing.

So, Serpentza makes a video saying how he couldn't understand at first why Chinese people don't reject putting up posters of Mao Zedong in the same way German people reject putting up posters of Hitler today, but he learnt to sympathise with the fact it's part of the culture to see him simply as a symbol who kept the country strong and independent.

Eisel's response; 'why would you burn a poster of Mao Zedong, you don't have any sympathy for the Chinese people or their culture, you ignorant, unresearched, lazy fuck.' Hahaha

[The communist party are] very good at engineering what people think from a very young age through education and through various different social programs. People still believe that if it wasn't for him, China wouldn't be the way it is, people still believe that he's a great man who maybe made a few small mistakes and if you want to call a few small mistakes murdering millions of people, so be it...

So at the end of the day, am I going to burn this portrait of Mao Zedong? No I'm not going to burn it and you all know why because I respect my Chinese friends, I respect my Chinese family and I respect Chinese people and their opinions, at least to a certain degree. And while I do not agree with everything that this man stands for – and why honestly if I could have met him in real life, just like most people say about you know taking out Hitler, if they met him in real life that's something I would have done – at the end of the day though because I do respect my Chinese friends, family and Chinese people, I will not burn

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<sup>9</sup> Sanity vs. Insanity: Veganism vs. Animal Liberation – <https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=iXghrCRoz5s>

this because it's distasteful, because it shows a massive lack of respect towards the Chinese people.<sup>10</sup>

So he had a video recently in which he featured himself burning a portrait of Mao Zedong. I guess I'll give the link below this video and currently that video has over 200,000 views, so I certainly can't hope to challenge that by reaching an audience of equal size and you know he's reaching that audience because he's telling people something they already want to hear...

I am not in a position to say to people who put his poster on the wall this is all that Mao Zedong represents this is the only thing it represents and this is what it must mean to you...<sup>11</sup>

I think it comes down to a trend of Eisel's to jump to conclusions about a persons position so that he can believe he has superior positions to the person and mock them. It's part of a conspiracy mindset. Like believing with confidence the assassination of both Kennedy brothers was done by the CIA and that people like Abby Martin are government agents for Russia.

I'll link to another funny example where he did this to me in the description box down below.<sup>12</sup>  
But yeah, that's the end of the video, all the best, peace.

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<sup>10</sup> Chairman Mao – Why do people worship this MURDERER? By Serpentza – [https://youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_ZCf1dZv6g](https://youtube.com/watch?v=R_ZCf1dZv6g)

<sup>11</sup> Against Serpentza, re: Chairman Mao's Portrait on the Wall – [https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=W\\_AFVx0S0Zk](https://web.archive.org/https://youtube.com/watch?v=W_AFVx0S0Zk)

<sup>12</sup> Eisel's use of faulty comparisons to oversimplify problems. – <https://philosophicalvegan.com/viewtopic.php?p=48462>

The Library of Unconventional Lives

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[youtube.com/watch?v=QLJTJEnfWSg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLJTJEnfWSg)

Response video on where the vegan movement should be heading, the need I think to focus more on lobbying for legal animal rights laws, as well as vegan advocacy. And a critique of Eisel's commonly used bad arguments.

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