Vegetarianism in an Anthromorphological View

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In every culture food is a medium for the expression of group identity. Everywhere people have to eat but what and how they choose to consume their food is part of a cultural habit. Therefore for my action project I chose to switch to a vegetarian diet and then later attempted to influence my family to switch as well. I roughly a one month period I hope to switch my immediate family’s diet with the prospect that a successful transition would lead to change amongst our extended family members.

As an animal rights activist, the owner of may pets, and an employee at an animal hospital, my transition to vegetarianism was the result of my attachment to animals and the hypocrisy I felt I embraced by eating them. Identified as anthropomorphism, I have a tendency to identify with animals imparting human behavioral traits into my image of them (Lien 2004: 186). Seeing an ethical dilemma to eating animals I developed an anti-meat rhetoric and so at the beginning of my junior I changed by diet from carnivorous to pescitarian, and then one month later from pescitarian to vegetarian. Gradually changing my diet due to health concerns, I first found the transition away from meat difficult, especially in a college environment where vegetarian meals are limited. However believing this diet to be necessary to my identity, I have found the few foods that I can eat and have since come to enjoy this diet. After mastering vegetarianism where cooking your own food is not an option, I asked my parents and sisters to attempt to switch as well due to our similarity in our values and the ability for them to cook their own food which makes the transition that much easier. From the onset and still to this day, both my mother and one of my sisters have been not been able to cut meat out from their diet. Taking more of a scientific approach, they feel that as long as they refrain from eating those animals that are endangered no harm is being done to the environment. On a more positive note my father and other sister have been successful at maintaining a strict pescitarian diet. Not only have neither of them had meat in the past few months but they are also gradually eliminating fish from their diet.

Unfortunately I was only able to change the dietary habits of half of my family. Though we all share the same set of values, it seems that what my mother and sister emphasize is the need to recognize animal rights rather than fully implementing them. Therefore if attempted again I might address the benefits vegetarianism has on environmental sustainability including the waste that results from meat production.

References:

Lien, Marianne E.