

Freeganism is not easy, it's Anarchy.

a reaction to "Freeganism is not anarchy, it's just easy".

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INTRODUCTION

This is an answer to the text "Freeganism is not anarchy, its just easy".

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/freeganism-is-not-anarchy-its-just-easy>

It might be better to read the other text first, since most of the points made in this text are answer to objections to freeganism done in the other text. What I write here is just one freegan view, other freegans may have other ideas, but my take on freeganism is quite far away from what is described in the other text.

I think the origin of the difference in point of view here is a difference in the philosophical approach. "Freeganism is not anarchy, it's just easy" has a rather dogmatic approach, when I have a rather consequentialist one.

It is no more blurring a line to eat dairy products found in a dumpster than finding vegans consuming luxury products imported from the other side of the earth (don't want to name too many companies, but coffee, chocolate, fancy vegan restaurants etc)

So let's take the same structure for the text, and propose different arguments :

ANIMALS ARE NOT PRODUCTS

First of all, freeganism is not about not spending money. table diving, consuming animal 'products' that were bought for you by someone else (charity, family, etc) are not freegan actions. Freeganism is about creating no demand in the economical system. it doesn't matter if this demand is created directly or indirectly through other actors.

The fact of consuming animal 'products', found through dumpster diving for instance, has nothing to do with "honouring" or "respecting" the animal. it has to do with not wasting. I agree that this implies using animals as a 'product' to a certain extent, but it's neither anthropocentric nor entrenched in capitalistic ideas. A freegan won't go in any restaurant, even a vegan one. more on that in the "consumer choice" chapter.

Basically, using animal 'products' that were thrown away is a compromise that a freegan choose to make when confronted to the alternative of letting it be processed by the waste management company (which has nothing in common with being "reabsorbed by the ecosystem as they would naturally"). Every production has an ecological impact, and the huge amount of production that is wasted is one of the biggest factors of mass extinction of species. With a consequentialist point of view, freeganism has less negative impact on animal condition and

ecology than veganism, because the waste (and we are not only talking animal 'products' here, most of what freegans use is actually vegan) is here, and there is not a whole lot that we can do about it.

One point still stands, it's that by accepting to eat/consume animals in whatever form, a freegan contributes to the normalisation (or rather the status quo that it's normal) of consuming animals. This negative effect has to be counted, and as much as possible the freegan actions have to be accompanied with explanations.

Freeganism is a pragmatic transition towards a vegan society. It comes from an acknowledgment that our societies are shitty, that all problems are linked, and that refusing overproduction, especially when this production is or leads to animal exploitation.

THE MYTH OF SUSTAINABILITY, AND CONSUMER CHOICE.

Here again, I must say that there is a difference between dumpster diving and shop lifting. Shop lifting is not freegan (once again, I'm talking about my view of freeganism, there are as many takes on freeganism than there are freegans), because it still has an impact on the production.

The main objection to freeganism in this paragraph is that it's dependant on the pre-existing capitalism and waste to be possible. With some arguments like "personal greenwashing" "passive in it's nature" "does not confront the unfair distribution of food".

Freeganism is and can only be a transition. That is something that all freegan that I met agree on. When we find a full dumpster, we are not happy. I've never met a freegan that didn't want a society rid of capitalism, rid of the overproduction, and rid of oppression. We are aware that it's a band aid, and that it's a reaction to overproduction, not a solution to it. That doesn't mean that we stop there.

The non spending does interact with supply and demand. Not accepting a system does not mean not trying to understand it. The main motivation of any capitalist entity is profit. Cutting profit to supermarkets do impacts them. Less than burning it, I'll give you that, but still more than consuming in it.

On the flip side of that, there are a lot of capitalist entities that uses veganism as a trend to make profit. Not all of them, and that doesn't say anything on veganism itself, but buying vegan in a supermarket, or worse buying a MacVegan (or whatever vegan products from any multinational) can also be seen as consumer choice, and let's face it, it is for a lot of vegans (it's actually exactly what the vegan argument "If you buy meat, you empower the animals exploiter/killer" or "when I buy vegan, I increase the incentives for 'CompanyX' to invest in vegan products" means). Refusing to consume is the only tool against capitalism that an individual can use. And it doesn't prevent to make group actions. And it is efficient. Consume less => less profit for companies and less need to work for the individual.

I'm in no way attacking vegan ideology here. As I said, to me freeganism is just one approach of veganism, that focuses more on consequences than on dogma (no bad connotations on dogma, it's just a descriptive philosophical term here). I'm not saying that one is better than the other, but that they are two sides of the same objectives.

FREEGANISM IS NOT EASY, IT'S ANARCHY.

First of all, not buying a product does slow it's production down. The growth of the vegan and vegetarian movements is a threat to the animal exploitation industry for instance. It may not be the intention, at least not for all vegans, but it still happens. That's not a reduction to the boycott strategy, but a description that, wanted or not, it is also one. And -thought experimnt- if 99% of

the whole world becomes vegan, thus not buying anything from animal exploitation, no one is going to produce these crap. Why would they? Capitalism feeds on profit, cutting profits works.

Freegans tend to get a lot of food and don't want to waste it. Networks of freegans redistribute food as well as they can, and I've seen a lot of people rely on this distribution. There is no freegan luxury industry when there is a vegan one.

Eating freegan is not easy. Most dumpsters are locked, people tend to accept dumpster divers even less than vegans, most freegans are actually vegans that make compromises because they estimate that doing so is actually more efficient. Most of freegans I know actually redistribute meat to people who would have otherwise buy it, because they don't want to let it in the dumpster but still draw a line.

Freeganism is not passive. One can not discard the political analysis behind it without arguments, even less without presenting what the ideology could be.

The redistribution networks, the refusal to participate in economy, and the refusal to accept standart food "distribution" challenges social relations and hierarchy. it's true that to challenge human domination over everything, freeganism msut be accompanied with an explication of the idea.

PRIMITIVISM, HUNTER-GATHERERS AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF WILDNESS

I've not much to say here, except that a freegan that says

"scavenging through bins and finding road kill as something that equates to being some sort of 'modern hunter-gatherer' and [...] it is a natural way to live, by 'returning to our inner wildness' or using fabricated/appropriated 'ancient hunting rites' to claim that they are fulfilling some sort of 'promise' or paying 'respect' to the hunted person (...)"

is a dumbass, not a freegan.

TOWARDS TOTAL LIBERATION

nothing against freeganism here (except it's not "radical" but I'll let that for now).

If this answer to the text can participate to the whished debate in conclusion of "Freeganism is not anarchy, it's just easy" then we acomplished something.

CONCLUSION

When I talked about veganism in this text, it was never to attack vegan arguments or to present anti-vegan arguemnts (no anti-vegan arguments stands except "I know all about it but I don't care") but to illustrate that the arguments against freeganism fail (most of the time, I precised otherwise when it was not the case) at the same point at the arguments against veganism.

That some vegans are confused about what it means and implies to be vegan doesn't mean that the vegan ideology is bad. Same for freeganism. Some vegans go to McMyass, and some freegan are freegan only because it spares money. Both those are terribly wrong, but let's not use them to argue against one of the ideology.

A lot of the points against freeganism in the original text were said but not argued, that's why t was not always easy to answer. When there was no argument, I either ignored (freeganism not intersectional in comparaisn with veganism? ok... might be but I have no idea how or why, and seriously doubt it) or tried to give arguments instead of counter arguments.

Anyways, go Vegan, fight Waste, and when it's one or the other, chose with the best of your knowledge and abilities.

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