

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Coming Out of the Pantry: Queer Reflections on Veganism

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From the 1999 film *But I'm a Cheerleader!* to the 2014 film *Pride*, film makers have created comedy out of the connection between veganism and queer sexuality in the public imaginary. Those who are abnormal with respect to their alimentary appetites, the logic seems to go, must be abnormal in their sexual appetites as well. Beyond cultural representations, queers have themselves embraced the connection between queerness and veganism in works such as Rasmus Simonsen's "A Queer Vegan Manifesto"¹ and Sarah Brown's *Queer Vegan Food* blog². This volume takes up the connection between veganism and queerness to explore what queer theory can offer to food politics. *Coming Out of the Pantry* will be a co-edited volume that collects contemporary perspectives on and at the intersections of queerness and veganism.

In this volume we are interested, firstly, in the relations between regulatory discourses about sexual identity and regulatory discourses about alimentary identity: the fact that we frequently hear that "we are what we eat" (gustatorily)³ as well as "we are what we desire" (sexually) shows the extent to which food and sex are presumed to be deep-seated, defining, and revealing features about personal identity.⁴ However, the point isn't to just focus on how discourses about queerness and veganism are disciplinary and regulatory. For, second, the volume seeks to understand how both queerness and veganism can become forms of political resistance, both to compulsory heterosexuality and to (what we might call) "compulsory carnivorism"⁵: in what ways might veganism and queerness constitute counter-discourses, practices of resistance, and occasions for self-transformative practices?⁶ In other words, in what ways can we ethically and aesthetically refashion ourselves and our relations to others through our alimentary and sexual practices?

Ecofeminists have long explored the relations between ethical veganism and feminism by pointing to the interconnection between sexism and speciesism and by underlining the moral value of plant-based eating (Cf. Probyn, Adams, Wyckoff).⁷ Our volume will expand on this literature by emphasizing the interrelations among queerness, queer theory, and veganism. The projected contributions to the volume would pursue questions such as: How can queer theory help us think through food politics? Is what Annie Potts and Jovian Perry have described as “vegan sexuality”⁸ a queer sexuality? What is the relation between regulatory discourses of sexuality and regulatory discourses about food? Are there similar “confessional logics” or “epistemologies of the closet”⁹ when it comes to “outing” oneself as a vegan or a queer?¹⁰ Are there similar logics at play in the construction of “human superiority” over non-human animals by instrumentalizing other species and the construction of “compulsory heterosexuality” over non-heterosexuals by marginalizing other sexualities? Are there ethical motivations for queers to be vegan¹¹—indeed, to reformulate Bartky, why aren’t all queers vegan?¹² In what ways is veganism marked by ethno-race, religion, class, and other social factors?

Authors are asked to send abstracts (500 words) and bios (200 words) to eloy@ualberta.ca and chloe3@ualberta.ca by September 15, 2017 and completed papers by January 15, 2018. Based on a book prospectus including author information and chapter abstracts, this volume will be considered for Routledge’s Gender and Sexuality series.

¹ Rasmus R. Simonsen, “A Queer Vegan Manifesto,” in *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* (2012), vol. 10, no. 3: 51-81.

² <https://queerveganfood.com/>

³ Cathryn Bailey, “We Are What we Eat: Feminist Vegetarianism and the Reproduction of Racial Identity” in *Hypatia* (2007), vol. 22, no. 2: 39-59.

⁴ See Chloë Taylor, “Foucault and the Ethics of Eating,” in *Foucault Studies* 9 (2010): 71-88.

⁵ For the related notion of “compulsory carnism,” see

<https://thenoteswhichdonotfit.wordpress.com/2015/02/28/the-asexual-community-vegn-communities-part-4/>

⁶ See patrice jones, “Eros and the Mechanisms of Eco-Defense,” in Carol Adams and Lori Gruen, eds., *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014: 91-105; and Greta Gaard, “Toward New EcoMasculinities, EcoGenders, and Ecosexualities,” in the same volume: 225-40.

⁷ Jason Wyckoff, “Linking Sexism and Speciesism,” *Hypatia* (2014), vol. 29, no. 4: 721-37.

⁸ Annie Potts and Jovian Perry, “Vegan Sexuality: Challenging Heterosexual Masculinity through Meat-free Sex,” in *Feminism & Psychology* (2010), vol. 20, no. 1: 53-72.

⁹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

¹⁰ For one discussion of coming out as vegan versus coming out as queer, see Valerie J. Korinek’s article on k.d. lang, “‘Meat Stinks/Eat Beef Dyke!’: Coming Out as Vegetarian in the Prairies,” in Franca Iacovetta, Valerie J. Korinek, and Marlene Epp, eds., *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.

¹¹ On whether feminists are morally required to be vegetarian, see Kathryn Paxton George, “Should Feminists Be Vegetarians?” in *Signs* (Winter 1994), 19 (2) and the commentaries on George’s article by Carol Adams, Greta Gaard, Lori Gruen, and Josephine Donovan in *Signs* (Autumn 1995), 21 (1).

¹² For the question, “Why aren’t all women feminists?,” see Sandra Lee Bartky, “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power,” in *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (London: Routledge, 1990): 63-82.