

Accepted for publication in *Environmental Communication*, 2016

Special Issue: Spectacular Environmentalisms (eds. Mike Goodman and Jo Littler)

**‘Vegan celebrities and the lifestyling of ethical consumption’**

**Julie Doyle, University of Brighton, UK**

### **Abstract**

Veganism offers an important critique of unethical and unsustainable food practices. Yet vegans have been largely ignored or stigmatized in mainstream media, affecting how vegans communicate about their veganism with non-vegans. Given the recent rise in prominence of vegan celebrities, this article asks, how might the cultural intermediary work of celebrity vegans make the ethics of veganism more accessible? And how do ethical concerns about the exploitative production and consumption of animals as food and by-products get reframed in the context of celebrity consumer culture? In order to answer these questions this article brings together two distinct sets of literature: on veganism and eco-feminist philosophy; and on ethical (food) consumption and celebrity culture, to provide a philosophical and theoretical framework for the analysis of two celebrity vegans - Hollywood actor, Alicia Silverstone and TV chat show host, Ellen DeGeneres. Focusing upon the educational and campaigning work of Silverstone and DeGeneres, the analysis finds that veganism is figured as a diet and lifestyle that foregrounds an ethics of care, compassion, kindness and emotion, consistent with ethical veganism. Yet these ethics are reworked through the commodity logic of celebrity culture to make it more marketable and thus consumable as a set of ideas and lifestyle practices. By downplaying the term ‘vegan’, and replacing this with ‘plant-based diet’ and ‘kindness’, potentially hostile attitudes towards veganism are circumvented. Yet, an ethical commitment that forms the basis of many vegans experiences of vegan identity is refigured through celebrity work as the individual choice to be a healthy, happy and kind self, consistent with lifestyle consumer politics. The tensions between ethical veganism as an intervention at the point of consumption within the production of exploitative human/animal/environmental relations, and the focus upon an individualised

lifestyle politics through which celebrities maintain their commodity status, thus coalesce in the work of celebrity vegans.

Keywords: celebrity, vegan, ethics, cultural intermediary, environment, feminism, climate change

## **Vegan celebrities and the lifestyling of ethical consumption**

### **Introduction**

In 2013, Forbes announced “high-end vegan cuisine” as one of the Top Ten food trends of the year (Bender, 2013), marking a significant shift in media representations of vegan food in recent years from dull to desirable (Gold, 2014). Supporting this trend is the rise in number and profile of celebrity vegans such as those from the fields of entertainment, sports and politics who have adopted a vegan diet (CBS News, 2011; Gold, 2014), for example, Al Gore, Bill Clinton, Ellen DeGeneres, Alicia Silverstone, Carrie Underwood, Natalie Portman, Mike Tyson and, for 22 (high media profile) days, Beyoncé and Jay-Z. Eliminating animal food products including meat, fish, dairy and eggs, primarily for ethical or health reasons (Jabs et. al., 1998), veganism has been historically framed in mainstream media as ridiculous and “difficult”, with vegans characterised as “oversensitive” and “hostile” (Cole and Morgan, 2011, p. 139). This denigration of veganism has affected how vegans discuss their veganism with non-vegans (McDonald et. al., 1999; Larsson et. al., 2003; Greenebaum, 2012a), often downplaying its ethical critique of animal exploitation (Adams 2010), instead presenting veganism as ordinary and healthy, to counter negative associations (Greenebaum, 2012a; Sneijder and te Molder, 2009). The recent mainstreaming of veganism through celebrity thus potentially helps reframe an ignored or stigmatised identity and practice (Greenebaum, 2012a), in a positive and accessible way (Marshall, 1997). Furthermore, given the reluctance of environmental NGOs to promote vegetarianism and veganism (Doyle, 2011; Freeman, 2010), despite meat and dairy production/consumption being one of the single largest contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions and climate change (FAOUN, 2006; WPF, 2010), celebrity vegans could help make the ethical, environmental and health benefits of veganism more ‘normalised’ and obtainable.

Celebrity involvement in food related issues and forms of ethical consumption have been increasing over recent years (Littler, 2008; Lewis, 2010; Johnston and Goodman 2015), with academic inquiry focusing upon the rise of celebrity chefs and their role in (ethical) food campaigning, and celebrity activism more generally. Often termed cultural intermediaries (Piper, 2015) for conferring particular sets of knowledges to audiences, celebrities also embody and perform the broader lifestyle project of neoliberal societies by improving the privatised and lifestyled self through reflexive modes of consumption as a form of political citizenship (Lewis, 2010). The tensions between the goals of lifestyle consumption and political activism, or citizenship, thus coalesce in the celebrity figure and their (branded) actions/campaigns (Lewis, 2010).

For celebrity vegans who specifically campaign or educate about veganism, they not only perform a campaigning role (like celebrity chefs, or other celebrity activists), they also intimately embody that role through their own (vegan) consumption habits. As such, they perform a number of different functions: acting as visible and spectacular signs (Goodman, 2010) of veganism through their celebrity status; as cultural intermediaries conferring particular sets of knowledges about what being vegan means; as well as contributing to, and defining, debates about particular types of ethical consumption. It is the confluence of these different roles, and their relationship to the definition and promotion of ethical forms of consumption through celebrity work, that this article examines. The particular focus upon veganism – as a diet, identity and ethical practice – through the lens of celebrity is also what makes this article novel.

The celebrity and neoliberal focus upon consumption habits as the primary site of an ethical self, dovetails with the vegan practice of changing individual aspects of food (and other forms of) consumption as an integral aspect of identity construction – eliminating animal products such as meat, dairy, eggs and honey, as well as animal by-products, including silk, wool and leather. Yet, whilst research has shown that people become vegan for ethical, health, and to a lesser extent, environmental reasons (Greenebaum, 2012b), it is the ethical basis that is the most historically consistent form of veganism (The Vegan Society, 2014a), enabling a more sustained and longer-term

commitment, and a secondary motivation towards environmental concerns (Fox and Ward, 2008). These ethical reasons are routinely denied articulation in mainstream media culture (Cole and Morgan, 2011). In light of these characteristics of vegan philosophy and practice, alongside negative media representations, this article asks the following: how might the cultural intermediary work of celebrity vegans operate to make vegan ethics more accessible and mainstream, firstly, through their status as spectacular signs of veganism, and secondly, by framing veganism through discourses of compassion and kindness? At the same time, as lifestyle experts (Lewis, 2008), how might the celebrity 'marketing' of compassion and kindness (for animals, humans and environment) through the discourses of a responsabilised consumer self also downplay veganism's ethical critique of the *production* of exploitative animal-human-environmental distinctions as the basis for changing unethical consumption practices? Furthermore, given the philosophical connectedness of animal rights to feminism and its critique of unequal power relations (Adams 1990, 2010; Duvnjak, 2011; Plumwood, 2002), what are the possibilities for a more radical critique of social and environmental relations to emerge through the celebrity vegan campaigning?

This article firstly examines these questions by bringing two sets of different and somewhat disparate literatures together: firstly, that on veganism and eco-feminist philosophy; and secondly, that on celebrity involvement in ethical (food) consumption and celebrity culture more broadly. I do this in order to identify the dominant characteristics of an ethical vegan philosophy as a means of situating celebrity work on veganism within an existing philosophical framework, and to examine how this gets (re)articulated through the processes and practices of celebrity with its focus upon the discourses and practices of consumption, rather than the politics of production (Goodman, 2010). The critical analysis of celebrity vegan campaigning will focus upon the work of two high profile female celebrity vegans from entertainment: the actor and writer, Alicia Silverstone; and comedian and TV entertainer/talkshow host, Ellen DeGeneres. Both use their celebrity status to promote veganism – through books (Silverstone), television interviews, websites and social media. They can be considered to be part of a growing number of celebrity activists/campaigners working on food related issues and

modes of ethical consumption. Yet, no scholarly research has, as yet, focused upon the campaigning work of celebrity vegans, nor considered its implications for an ethical politics of food production/consumption within the political context of celebrity culture in late capitalist societies.

Before moving on to the analysis, it is important to acknowledge how my own subject position influences and motivates this research and its analytical perspective. As a vegan for 22 years, like many vegans, my primary motivation was concern for animal suffering, and a rejection of exploitative human and non-human relations or ideologies. Underpinning these ideologies are a number of binary distinctions reinforcing unequal power relations such as nature/culture, self/other, human/animal and masculine/feminine (Plumwood, 2002). I therefore also align myself with a feminist and ecological perspective that seeks to break down such distinctions that situate nature, animals and women as commodified and 'other' (Adams, 2010; Plumwood 2002). The significant contribution of meat and dairy production/consumption to climate change serves to further reinforce my advocacy of a vegan diet for all humans, but one that is contextual rather than ontological (Plumwood, 2002); that is, where the choice to not eat meat and dairy is supported by the availability of other forms of food.

From my own experience of living as a vegan - a journey over time that involves employing different tactics of communication and interaction with non-vegans to avoid confrontation (McDonald et. al., 1999; Greenebaum, 2012a) - I approach this analysis of celebrity vegans from a position of critical (self) reflection, mindful, on the one hand, that even a reduction in human consumption of meat and dairy will have an important material effect upon animal suffering and climate change mitigation, whilst also attentive to the possibilities and limitations of the ethical dimensions of veganism being reframed through celebrity work. Whilst Greenebaum (2012a) reminds us that non-vegans are interested in veganism "as long as it is being presented as a diet that does not include a moral agenda" (p. 310), this article asks what are the moral and ethical positions presented by the chosen celebrities, and what are the political implications of celebrity marketing of compassion and caring in the context of existing philosophies and experiences of ethical veganism? I now move on to explore the literature on veganism and eco-feminist

philosophy to situate the analysis of celebrity vegan work within the context of existing research on ethical consumption and celebrity culture. Given the choice of two US celebrity vegans, the critical analysis takes a northern western perspective on veganism, celebrity culture and ethical consumption.

### **The ethics and politics of being vegan**

In the UK, “there are about 150,000 vegans”, less than 1% of the population, with 2% of the population vegetarian (The Vegan Society, 2014b). In the USA, approximately 2.5% of the population are vegan and 2.5% vegetarian (The Vegetarian Resource Group, 2011). Established in 1944, the term vegan designates a diet based upon the non consumption of meat, dairy, eggs and honey; the non use of animal (by)products (such as leather and wool) for clothing and other goods; and the avoidance of animal tested products (The Vegan Society, 2014a, 2014b). The Vegan Society (2014b) defines veganism as “a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose”. Being vegan is not simply a dietary choice but a “philosophy and ethic” (Greenebaum, 2012b, p. 129) that constructs a lifestyle based upon non contribution to all forms of animal exploitation. The cruelty involved in animal food production that vegans oppose includes: the slaughtering of animals for meat; the insemination of female dairy cows to ensure milk production for human consumption through continual pregnancies; the removal of calves from their mothers in order to access the milk for humans; the killing of day old male calves for lack of ‘use’ as producers of dairy; the live transportation of male calves for veal production; the intensive production of eggs and the killing of broiler chicks at 6 weeks old; and the injuring of bees in commercial honey production (The Vegan Society, 2015).

The relatively small amount of academic research undertaken on vegans identifies a number of recurrent findings. Motivations for becoming vegan range from animal welfare (often termed ethical vegans) and health reasons, to environmental, usually a secondary motivation (Fox and Ward, 2008; Greenebaum, 2012b). Ethical reasons dominate (McDonald et. al., 1999; Larsson et. al., 2003; Cole and Morgan, 2011; Greenebaum, 2012b),

particularly for adolescents whose “single most important motive” for becoming vegan is a “moral concern for the treatment of animals” (Larsson et. al., 2003, p.63). Ethical vegetarians are more likely to move towards veganism (Jabs et. al., 1998), whilst research on meat eaters (Bernsden and van der Pligt, 2005) found that explanation of the moral concerns of meat eating regarding its impact upon animals and the environment was “sufficient to initiate behavioural changes in meat consumption” (p. 204).

The primacy of this ethical basis of veganism is important when considering that becoming vegan (as well as vegetarian) is often experienced as a journey involving processing information that lead to significant dietary and lifestyle changes. The consequences of such changes can be hostile attitudes from non-vegans (Jabs et. al., 1998; Larsson et. al. 2003; Greenebaum 2012a, 2012b), and conflict with family and friends, thus affecting vegans’ interaction with others (McDonald et. al, 1999). Over time, a non-confrontational approach is adopted (McDonald et. al 1999; Greenebaum 2012a), leading to the prioritization of “leading by example”, educating about the health benefits of being vegan (Greenebaum, 2012a) and the mundane and routinized aspects of preparing vegan food (Sneijder and Hedwig, 2009). The employment of such “ ‘face-saving’ strategies” (Greenebaum, 2012a, p. 309) to counter omnivores’ hostile responses is viewed by vegans/vegetarians as a “combination of [omnivores] denial, ignorance and guilt” (p. 315). As such, the ethical or moral basis is downplayed to non-vegans in order to avoid negative responses.

In Greenebaum’s (2012b) interviews with sixteen “ethical vegans”, all interviewees considered health vegans as being incongruent with the (animal) ethics of veganism. Whilst this commitment might be viewed as exclusionary, it is important to acknowledge these values in light of the ways in which vegans often experience conflict from others for their choices, affecting their own communication practices, reinforced by negative media representations. Cole and Morgan’s (2011) analysis of the discourses of veganism in UK national newspapers reveal a powerful set of anti-vegan discourses which routinely frame vegans as self-denying, ridiculous, faddish and hostile (a significant inversion of the hostility that vegans regularly encounter from non-vegans). In newspaper discourse, the views of vegans are denied and the

animal rights/anti-speciesist values of veganism ignored. The act of eating meat is normalized, leading Cole and Morgan (2011) to assert that, “the effort to continually reassert the connection between veganism and nonhuman liberation remains worthwhile, and the temptation to promote veganism under the non-confrontational guise of convenient healthy lifestyle choice may be unwise” (p. 150). The dismissal of animal ethics from discussions of veganism thus creates a double denial: of the rights of animals to live without being meat (Adams, 1990); and the ethical basis for veganism as an identity and practice.

Whilst ethical vegans seeks to avoid supporting food production and lifestyle practices that harm animals thus adopting an anti-speciesist approach, feminist approaches to veganism (and vegetarianism) help situate interconnected forms of power and oppression within and across species (Adams, 2010; Plumwood, 2002; Duvnjak, 2011). Cole and Morgan (2011) found that women are the target of both anti-vegan and sexist discourses through feminisation tactics which present vegans (and women) as over sensitive and irrational (Cole and Morgan, 2011). The gendering of veganism as feminine and emotional is similar to that of vegetarianism, where (eating) meat is equated with heterosexual masculinity (Nath, 2012): a powerful discourse that feminist vegetarian/vegans have critiqued (Adams, 1990; Duvnjak, 2011).

The gendered dualisms of human/animal, nature/culture, and mind/body within western cultures reinforce unequal power relations which also present the environment, and ecological issues, as separate from human (masculine) culture. Val Plumwood (2002; 2012) has explored the ways in which the environment is othered through rationalist and productivist discourses of science and neo-liberalism that objectify and propertise the environment. Plumwood eloquently argues for a feminist ecological ethics which places compassion, emotion and care as its central tenet. Likewise, Adams (2010) has also reasserted the need to adopt a feminist-vegan position with an emphasis on “attention/nowness/compassion” (p.315) to challenge dominant power structures – a focus upon compassion that will be explored later through the campaigning work of celebrity vegans.

Given the difficulties vegans have faced in communicating the ethical basis of veganism, how might celebrity vegans help make the ethical and compassionate basis of veganism more mainstream? Whilst the recent prominence of veganism within US culture has been attributed to its health benefits (Freedman and Barnouin, 2005) rather than ethics, the celebrity vegans analysed here – Alicia Silverstone and Ellen DeGeneres - have specifically campaigned for veganism as part of a compassionate lifestyle. Before moving on to the analysis I will briefly present existing research on food celebrities and ethical consumption in order to examine how ethical veganism is (re)framed in the campaigning work of celebrity vegans.

### **Celebrity and the cultural politics of ethical (food) consumption**

Celebrities play key roles in the cultural politics of food and ethical consumption, helping articulate and define the types of (ethical) lifestyles that we should live (Littler, 2008; Lewis, 2008; Johnston and Goodman, 2015). Whilst celebrities are increasingly positioned as primary ‘taste’ makers, lifestyle experts and ethical guides (Lewis, 2008, 2010), celebrities who educate about (their) veganism contribute towards, and capitalise upon, two specific areas of ‘expertise’ and concern: an increasing celebrity involvement in food campaigning (dominated by celebrity chefs) that draws attention to unethical and unsustainable food practices (such as battery egg production and overfishing); and the mainstreaming of diverse forms of ethical consumption, such as fair trade, organics, local produce, cruelty free products, anti-consumption, consumer boycotts, sweat-free labour and environmentally ‘friendly’ products (Littler, 2008; Lewis and Potter, 2011). Whilst the political effects of different ethical consumption practices are contested what they demonstrate is the “growing politicization of life and lifestyle practices” (Lewis and Potter, 2011, p. 5), creating new forms of citizenship through the privatised consumer, which may (or may not) contribute to collective changes. Celebrities who campaign on the ethical issues associated with food, including celebrity vegans, thus contribute to the politicisation of lifestyle through a focus upon changing consumption practices, which may also highlight (but not necessarily alter) unethical or unsustainable food production processes.

As “ethicalized cultural intermediaries” (Lewis and Huber, 2015, p. 290), celebrities are also media creations and branded commodities (Johnston and Goodman, 2015); products of the political economy of neo-liberal societies with individualised consumer lifestyles as prioritised forms of citizenship. Celebrities are intimately bound up with the processes of celebrity production that require the commodification of the celebrity as a brand (Lewis, 2010), and thus of their views and ideas for consumption. Celebrity vegans achieve their status as celebrities first, before migrating into other social fields (Driessens, 2013). Indeed, celebrities can only develop different fields of expertise through the “rapid circulation of celebrity commodities” (p. 649), which forms the basis of celebrity culture, and the processes of celebritization. Driessens (2013) identifies three cultural forces at play in celebritization: mediatisation, which acknowledges the role of media, industries and processes in the construction of celebrity; personalization, with the increasing focus upon individualisation within neoliberal ideology at the expense of the collective; and commodification, through which the individual celebrities, and their “relationships or ideas” (p. 652), have economic value and are consumed. Whilst vegan celebrities complicate any neat distinctions between production and consumption processes, as a change in food consumption has an (in)direct impact on food production processes, we need to consider how changing consumption practices as a result of being vegan also function with an economic and branded logic of celebrity commodity culture.

Goodman’s (2010) research into the increasing celebritisation of development explores the “shifting embodiments” of fair trade from “poor farmers to media stars” (Goodman 2010, p.105). Goodman argues that the political purpose of fair trade – linking the producer to the product and de-fetishising the commodity – has shifted to a focus upon the spectacular signs of celebrity endorsement, leading to the loss of fair trade’s “political ‘soul’” (Goodman, 2010, p. 112). Whilst celebrity vegans also act as spectacular (commodified) signs of veganism, they do so by calling attention to unethical consumption via their own vegan practices and communication activities, rather than simply endorsing a (fair trade) product. Yet, given the role of celebrities as branded commodities, we must also be attentive to the possibility of the celebrity vegan body becoming further commodified as a

spectacular sign of ethical consumption, in a celebrity consumer culture which prioritises certain bodies over others – a tension which will be explored in the analysis.

In some ways, the cultural intermediary work that celebrity vegans perform in educating about veganism is similar to the work of non-celebrity vegans. Yet, given the hostility that vegans have faced in communicating about veganism, the accessibility and aspirational quality of celebrities potentially offers an important entry point for non-vegans to access information about being vegan. Indeed, as sites “for the dispersal of power and meaning into the personal and therefore universal”, celebrities function within an “affective economy” (Marshall, 1997, p. 247), thereby prioritising the personal and emotional as a primary space for meaning. Nunn and Biressi (2010) have explored the “emotion work” of celebrities as part of the broader conditions of intimacy that characterise public-celebrity relations. Their identification of emotion and intimacy as an ideological contract between public and celebrity is helpful when thinking about the kinds of affective relations that vegan celebrities can potentially create with their audiences. As veganism involves a change to eating as well as other consumption practices (e.g. not buying leather or wool), the emotional work that vegan celebrities may do in creating a relationship with their audiences through the intimate act of eating has the potential for creating positive effects. This emotional work – or relationship- may also help communicate the ethical basis of veganism with its particular focus upon compassion, for animals, humans and environment (Plumwood, 2002; Adams 2010)

In light of these discussions, this article now moves on to examine the promotional work of two celebrity vegans – Alicia Silverstone and Ellen DeGeneres – through an analysis of their official websites, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and other media activities (TV interview with DeGeneres) and published book (Silverstone). Critical discourse analysis is employed to analyse the discursive meanings of the visual, written, spoken texts in the context of wider socio-political relations concerning dominant (and silenced) discourses of veganism, the cultural intermediary work of celebrities in defining and promoting forms of ethical consumption, and the broader commodity relations of celebrity culture and consumer-citizenship. The

analysis thus explores how veganism is discursively framed by celebrity vegans in order to consider how the ethics of veganism are (re)framed through celebrity work.

### **Alicia Silverstone – The celebrity lifestyling of vegan kindness**

Hollywood actor, Alicia Silverstone, came to prominence at 18 years old in her title role in the 1995 film *Clueless*. Since then, Silverstone has combined her film, television and theatre acting career with animal and environmental activism, citing animal cruelty as her original reason to become vegan in 1998. She also publically supports PETA campaigns, controversially appearing naked in a TV advert for the organisation in 2007. In 2009 she published, *The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet*, accompanied by an environmental lifestyle website/blog called The Kind Life, described as a “community around Alicia Silverstone and The Kind Diet where friends, doctors, experts in green living, and members share vegan tips” (The Kind Life, 2014a). This online community is supported by a Facebook page, repeating the same posts as the website/blog, and a Twitter feed, displaying a wider range of personal and professional/promotional messages. All three online platforms include the same visual header: a headshot of Silverstone smiling against a backdrop of green foliage, next to the text, “The Kind Life with Alicia Silverstone”. Silverstone’s most recent publication, *The Kind Mama* (2014), extends her vegan philosophy into the area of fertility and parenting through discourses of health and emotional well-being (not analysed here).

As part of The Kind Life brand, the books, website and social media presence work as an integrated platform to promote Silverstone’s vegan lifestyle and philosophy as a personal commitment that she wants to share with others. Her ‘Kind Life’ adheres to the ethical principles of veganism by promoting animal rights and anti-speciesism, and a secondary motivation towards health and environmental awareness (Fox and Ward 2008). She also presents her veganism as a journey of the self (McDonald et. al., 1999; Greenebaum 2012a), involving increasing understanding of animal exploitation, and health and environmental impacts. Yet these ethical principles and experiences are reworked through the processes of celebrity

culture and lifestyle politics to present a commodified version of vegan kindness as a route to the 'authentic' self. The ways this is done are explored here.

Silverstone's book, *The Kind Diet* (2009), introduces her vegan philosophy as being opposed to animal suffering, and anti-speciesism (Adams, 2010): "The dairy industry is, in a word, cruel: That is why I gave up dairy in the first place" (p. 42). Throughout the book, she specifies the very real impacts of meat and dairy production and consumption upon animal suffering. Yet, aware of negative associations and hostile attitudes towards vegans from non-vegans (Jabs et. al., 1998; McDonald et. al., 1999; Greenebaum 2012a), Silverstone adopts a friendly, fun and emotionally understanding tone to pre-empt barriers to understanding and avoid confrontation: "I now what you're thinking: 'Dairy...nasty? How could that be? It's so good for you! Without milk where am I going to get my calcium?' I hear you. I grew up on dairy too" (p. 34). Silverstone thus corroborates other vegans' experiences (McDonald et. al., 1999) through her presentation of becoming vegan as a journey of increasing awareness about the processes involved in meat and dairy production: 'Our bodies are not meant to drink any milk expect our own mother's milk, and only when we are babies!...Did you know that we are the only animals that drink another species' milk?' (p. 35). Silverstone assumes a cultural intermediary role, educating others through a distinctively personal and emotional narrative. She draws upon her celebrity status as a lifestyle expert, and seasoned animal rights campaigner, to offer 'authenticity' to the vegan experience and journey. This simultaneously works to counter potential hostility to veganism through 'access' into a celebrity's private life and the creation of an emotional relationship with her readers (Nunn and Biressi, 2010).

Central to her *Kind Diet* is an intimate focus upon the self as a site of authenticity and enlightenment. Utilising discourses of self-help and healing, being kind to oneself and others is the basis to becoming vegan. Through a plant-based diet, Silverstone proclaims you can find "your authentic self" through your "heart" (p. 1). A language of positivity, authenticity, emotion and love is deployed, countering perceptions of vegans as "ascetic" (Cole and Morgan, 2011, p. 139): "You will not feel deprived" (Silverstone, 2009, p. 2).

Silverstone (2009) eulogises: “Your heart will open more than ever and that love will start to spread, affecting all the people in your life” (p. 2). By eating a plant-based diet, you will be kind and “good to yourself” (p. 6), which will extend “to the earth itself” (p. 7). Silverstone’s commitment to ethical veganism importantly foregrounds a more wholistic understanding of the effects of animal food production and consumption on animals, humans and environment (Plumwood, 2002; FAOUN 2006). Yet, the route to this wholistic view is not through a collective call for politicised action, but rather through changing individual consumption practices as part of the reflexive consumerist self.

Silverstone’s mode of address reproduces the transformational discourse of lifestyle and makeover shows, where the ‘real you’ is achieved via the journey of the makeover process (Doyle and Karl, 2008), premised on gendered and classed ideologies of the good citizen, and culminating in the ‘big reveal’ at the end of the show (Palmer, 2008). Like the presumed ‘hard work’ involved in lifestyle makeovers (Doyle and Karl, 2008), and in becoming vegan (Greenebaum, 2012a ), Silverstone explains that her journey to a plant-based diet did not happen “overnight; it took some time, as most transformations do” (p. 7). Whilst Silverstone acknowledges some of the difficulties of this journey she also celebrates this process by focusing upon the benefits of a growing sense of self awareness. As a celebrity cultural intermediary educating about veganism, she thus draws upon existing philosophies and experiences of being vegan (often ignored or downplayed in mainstream media), and reworks these through a motivational discourse of lifestyle politics. Thus, her narrative of transformation also problematically reinforces the classed and gendered politics of lifestyle makeovers where to be a respectable white, middleclass, heterosexual woman is the ultimate goal – a position that Silverstone already inhabits.

Silverstone’s existing status as a Hollywood celebrity is capitalised upon as a visible and spectacular sign (Goodman, 2010) of veganism, which trades upon her exclusivity and perceived accessibility as a celebrity sharing her private life with us. Photographs in her book include ‘private’ family ones of Silverstone as a young girl posed next to animals, and more recent ones with her husband in poses of domestic bliss. As a conventionally attractive

white woman, these photographs visually reinforce the focus upon the (white heterosexual female) body as both the site and goal of transformation that is the focus of Silverstone's vegan philosophy. For example, moving from a vegan diet to one that incorporated the macrobiotic meant that Silverstone "shed the few extra pounds I was holding on to and brought me to my perfect body effortlessly...my body was trying to tell me things all the time, and once I stripped away all the layers of crap inside, I could hear it" (p. 12). Visually and textually, her body signifies as a slim, healthy, kind, vegan body that fits with the idealised and commodified female body in celebrity consumer culture.

Silverstone's spectacularised kind/vegan body signifies as both accessible and exclusive. She works hard to normalise her body and her philosophy through recourse to an intimate connection with her implied audience through the creation of a "public private self" (Marshall, 2010, p. 45). This is a gendered intimacy, with the implied reader a heterosexual woman. Silverstone (2009) calls herself "the luckiest girl on Earth" (p. 10) when her boyfriend (now husband) states that he will also become vegan, and the kind diet "is about treating yourself like a total goddess and putting yourself first" (p. 7). Her four week food and lifestyle plans - comprising 3 different levels of engagement which she calls Flirting, Vegan and Superhero - are the length of "one menstrual cycle" (Silverstone, 2009, p. 81). Kindness is gendered as female and women are the central focus of lifestyle and bodily changes, which become naturalised as the site for individual change. Thus, a feminist linking of animal rights with women's rights (Adams, 2010; Duvnjak, 2011) is curtailed. Instead, a normative heterosexual ideology underpins Silverstone's philosophy of vegan kindness and individual responsibility to the self as a mechanism for kindness to humans and non-humans, overriding a politicised linking of interconnecting issues and a critique of the commodified female body.

The personalised, intimate and gendered mode of address is replicated in Silverstone's official website/blog promoting "The Kind Life". As a branded extension of her book, it offers a shorthand for Silverstone's positive vegan, or kind, philosophy. Categorized under the headings, "Kind 101", "Delicious", "Mama", "Animal Love" and "Green Life" (The Kind Life, 2014a), Silverstone's philosophy combines vegan discourses of animal welfare, health and

environmentalism, with a consumerist discourse of the (female) self as the site of responsibility and kindness. Silverstone's values are articulated as: kindness as the basis for life; vegan food as appetising and plentiful; motherhood as foundational and natural to living a kind life; love of animals; and eco-friendly living. Presenting "the basics of living a kind life", blog posts in "Kind 101" range from food recipes, nutritional advice, book promotions, philosophies, eco-fashion, movie promotions for Silverstone's friends, restaurant reviews, relationship advice, guest blogs, and personal videos and photographs of her family (husband and son). It is an intimate snapshot of a celebrity's life that is presented as both ordinary (through the normative discourses of family and women's lifestyle magazines) and extraordinary (through her promotion of other celebrities).

The emotional and caring persona that Silverstone embodies is part of the emotional relationship – or ideological contract (Nunn and Biressi, 2010) - she establishes with her audience, although one which does not involve her responding to readers comments on her website or facebook page. Yet, there are numerous comments from facebook users, most of which are overwhelmingly positive, with expressions of love and inspiration from both women and men. Silverstone's Twitter account potentially offers a more intimate relationship between Silverstone and her 249,000 followers. Yet with only 96 followed, the emphasis is upon others following Silverstone. Silverstone's tweets are a mixture of the public private self communicated via her books and website, but also offer a more 'private' snapshot of her life, for example, tweeting what she or her son ate for lunch: "Bear [son] just ate cauliflower, black eyed peas, and tofu for lunch.. yum & #protein packed" (@AliciaSilv, June 27 2014).

Silverstone's confident and appreciative persona is established through the gratitude she gives to other celebrities for their promotion of her work (including retweeting these endorsements), further contributing to her own celebrity commodity status:

Thanks @RachelZoe for #thekindmama shoutout as a perfect #babyshower gift! <http://thezoereport.com/alicia-silverstone-baby-book/> ... @AliciaSilv June 16 2014.

In turn, she promotes other celebrities and their commodities: “Thank you @RMRobertMatthew for this elegant vegan bag, it's so cute!” (@AliciaSilv May 28 2014). The personalised appreciation positions Silverstone as a caring and kind person who looks after her (celebrity) friends, whilst allowing the audience to share an intimacy with her through a voyeuristic gaze into an exciting and aspirational life. She also retweets non celebrity tweets which include reference to her books. This implied intimacy – through access to her celebrity life and by acknowledging the positive impact she has upon her fans – is supported through the monthly competition, “From my closet giveaway” (The Kind Life, 2014b), where she gives away an item of her clothing to her fans.

Being kind involves forms of commodity activism – purchasing ethical products –and consumer-citizen activism - supporting animal sanctuaries (through monetary donations) and political letter writing (for example, against fracking). Actions are largely focused upon supporting animal causes (consistent with Silverstone’s journey towards veganism), with a specific partnership with PETA forged through a monthly blog post from the organisation. Living The Kind Life thus involves performing reflexive modes of commodity consumption through a lifestyle politics that is gendered as female and that seeks to encourage more ethical modes of commodity consumption rather than a more radical critique of animal food production processes, more apparent in Silverstone’s book. The Kind Life website presents a lifestyle oriented magazine format that draws heavily upon Silverstone’ celebrity status in order to present a branded lifestyle of kindness and compassion without overt reference to being vegan or veganism.

Overall, Silverstone’s Kind Life brand positions veganism through a positive framework of compassion, care and emotion (Plumwood, 2002; Adams, 2010), extending from the self to others (animals, humans and environment). In focusing upon the self, and the body, as the site of ethical transformation, Silverstone combines discourses of lifestyle politics and the responsabilised self with those of ethical veganism. Yet this combination is dependent upon the signification of Silverstone as both a spectacular and ordinary sign of veganism. It is through the celebrity figure of Silverstone that these competing discourses coalesce: combining an individual lifestyle

transformation, and an ethical critique of animal food production and consumption processes. Silverstone's celebrity status is crucial to the marketing of her brand of kindness and compassion that manages to be both radical and normative.

### **Ellen DeGeneres – The tensions of vegan mainstreaming through celebrity**

Originally a stand up comedian, Ellen DeGeneres first came to prominence as a TV actor in the comedy drama *Ellen* (1994-1998). In 1997 her neurotic character, Ellen Morgan, 'came out' as lesbian on the show, at the same time that DeGeneres herself 'came out' via *Time* magazine, and on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (Jacobs, 2013). Her 'coming out' received widespread hostility, leaving DeGeneres out of work for three years (Jacobs, 2013). DeGeneres regained some of her mainstream popularity hosting the 2001 Primetime Emmy Awards, followed in 2003 by her daytime talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Combining humour, celebrity interviews, real life stories and audience participation, the show is in its 12<sup>th</sup> series, with viewing figures of 4.4 million (Friedlander, 2013). DeGeneres' hosting of the 2014 Oscars further secured her celebrity status: her 'selfie' with a group of high profile celebrities was the most retweeted photograph of all time at 2 million retweets (Addley, 2014), demonstrating the celebrity pull of DeGeneres and her clever use of social media within the mediatization and personalization processes of celebritization (Driessens, 2013). *Forbes* (2014) cites DeGeneres as the 5<sup>th</sup> most powerful celebrity of 2014.

DeGeneres became vegan in 2008, with a high profile vegan wedding to actor, Portia De Rossi, in the same year. The wedding reinforced the celebrity status of DeGeneres, followed by her migration into vegan lifestyling in 2011 with the launch of her website, 'Going Vegan with Ellen' (Pollack, 2011). Yet, in contrast to Silverstone's integrated presentation of her veganism across platforms, DeGeneres' veganism represents only a part of her celebrity profile. Indeed, the 'Going Vegan with Ellen' website has now become subsumed within the main Ellen DeGeneres Show website, under a section called "Ellen's Healthy Living" (Ellen DeGeneres Show, 2014a). The website itself is a branded extension of her TV show, with "Ellen's Healthy

Living” webpage a small part of her brand identity: a fun, caring and kind celebrity whose relationship with her audience is central to her celebrity status.

“Ellen’s Healthy Living” mainpage prioritises health approaches to veganism through a focus upon recipes which seek to normalise vegan food through reference to their meat equivalents, for example, recipes for ‘Gluten-free spaghetti and lentil meatballs’ or ‘wild west eggplant bacon’. Yet, what becomes normalised is eating meat, rather than being vegan, reinforced by the lack of reference to the word vegan (Ellen DeGeneres Show, 2014b). Other categories on the page include: “Recipes”, “Tips”, “Famous Vegans”, “The Gentle Barn”, “Getting Started” and “Resources”. Like other vegans experiences, being vegan is presented as a journey (Getting Started) requiring information (Resources and Recipes) and support from other vegans (Tips). Yet, these common discourses of vegan experience (McDonald et. al 1999, Greenebaum 2012a) are reproduced through the lens of celebrity, presenting a personalised and aspirational lifestyle approach to being vegan, rather than an explicitly ethical stance against cruelty to animals, or secondary environmental motivations (Fox and Ward 2008). Unlike Silverstone, DeGeneres does not adopt the persona of an enlightened and transformational expert, but rather presents a fun and friendly approach to becoming vegan, which avoids confrontation or politicised appeals. Degeneres’ presents veganism through discourses of health that downplay an ethical identity and the critique of exploitative food production processes (Plumwood, 2002; Adam, 2010).

Media representations of vegans as ascetic (Cole and Morgan, 2011) are countered by the exhortation: “Start with food you already love. Sometimes you can get lost in the things you *can’t* have, but there is a world of food out there that you can still eat, and some of it is sure to be among your favorites”. Likewise, the ordinariness of veganism (Jabs et. al., 1998) is asserted, “you’ll realize how easy this is going to be”. The ordinary is combined with the aspirational: of vegan food and of a celebrity lifestyle. For example, DeGeneres’ undertakes restaurant reviews, including one for Crossroads, LA, which serves “refined plant-based cuisine” through “a decadent and indulgent dining experience” (Crossroads, 2014). DeGeneres

declares, “I’ll see ya there!” (Ellen DeGeneres Show, 2014d). Apart from the restaurant reviews, there is very little sense of DeGeneres directly authoring these webpages, and, unlike Silverstone, her ‘voice’ is noticeably absent from the written content. Indeed, the “Tips” section includes tips from her audience rather than DeGeneres herself, many of which are focused upon dietary choices and vegan ‘substitutes’ for meat and dairy.

DeGeneres’ existing status as a celebrity brand and spectacular sign of veganism lends credibility to the website as a form of information about veganism. Furthermore, unlike the very self-focused approach of Silverstone’s, DeGeneres authentication of herself as a vegan is in relation to other celebrity work, with the “Famous Vegans” link including information about celebrity vegans from entertainment, sports and politics. DeGeneres is thus explicitly situated in relation to other celebrity vegans, reinforcing her own celebrity and commodity status (Driessens, 2013). The celebritization of veganism, and DeGeneres’ own celebrity, is further reaffirmed through the featured recipes from celebrity chefs, including Wolfgang Puck, Tal Ronen and Roberto Martin (personal chef to DeGeneres and DeRossi), and other celebrity vegans, such as Alicia Silverstone and DeGeneres herself. Each recipe contains a link to the celebrity’s cookbook, reinforcing the commodity relations of celebrity (Johnston and Goodman, 2015; Driessens, 2013).

Although veganism is overwhelmingly presented as a healthy diet through celebrity endorsements, its ethical basis is also established via the “The Gentle Barn” link: an animal rescue organization whose mission is “Teaching people kindness and compassion to animals, each other and our planet” (The Gentle Barn, 2014). The organization’s promotion of a “plant-based diet” and its prominence on DeGeneres’ website points towards a philosophy of veganism (presumably shared by DeGeneres) that, like Silverstone’s, is based upon the concept of compassion and kindness to animals, humans and environment. The focus upon compassion helps to re-present veganism as a plentiful and positive approach to life through reflexive dietary choices, helping to counter negative associations of being vegan. Yet in doing so, a more politicized engagement with the cruelties of industrial animal food production and its environmental effects is bypassed for a focus upon the ethics of food consumption.

“Ellen’s Healthy Living” website offers a snapshot of a celebrity endorsed vegan lifestyle that is health focused, whilst simultaneously aspirational and achievable. Yet, it is through other media platforms that DeGeneres reasons for becoming vegan are revealed as more consistent with those of ethical vegans (Greenebaum, 2012b). In a web interview with Katie Couric, DeGeneres discusses her journey to becoming vegan as one of increasing awareness of animal cruelty (CBS News 2010). Whilst the one to one interview is a vehicle “for the production of celebrity intimacy through the relaying of the life-story” (Nunn and Biressi, 2010, p. 50), DeGeneres appears uncomfortable in the interview and in relaying her vegan life-story –illustrative of her potential discomfort with a focus upon the private self (Marshall, 2010). Yet her story follows a similar trajectory to other non celebrity vegans, as increasing information about the cruelties of animal food production leads to dietary and lifestyle changes. Like Silverstone, this journey develops incrementally over time: first reading *Diet for a New America* (1987) by John Robbins, which horrified her but, “I did what most people do – I just had a disconnect” and continued eating meat (CBS News, 2010). After reading *Skinny Bitch* and “forcing myself to watch a documentary called *Earthlings*” showing inside footage of factory and dairy farming, DeGeneres realised, “I can’t participate in that” (CBS News, 2010). DeGeneres explains she is vegan because “I love animals and I saw the reality and I just couldn’t ignore it any more”, but acknowledges that “a lot of people do it for other reasons” (CBS News, 2010), such as environmentalism. Although healthism is prioritised on DeGeneres’ website as the dominant discourse, Couric’s interview communicates an ethical approach to being vegan that presents as a core belief system for DeGeneres.

Discrepancies between the discourses of the website and those expressed in the one to one interview point towards a tension: a mainstreaming of veganism through health and celebrity, and a more politicised and ethical engagement with being vegan as an identity that DeGeneres navigates. Indeed, when Couric suggests animal rights as the reason for DeGeneres becoming vegan, DeGeneres laughs, downplaying this politicised view: “animal rights sound like they are about to get the right to vote”, preferring Couric’s reframing as “animal welfare” (CBS News, 2010).

Part of this tension lies with the celebrity brand that DeGeneres has created over the years. Her affable, warm and empathetic persona has made her a mainstream success, suggesting a crafted public self that functions through an “affective economy” (Marshall, 1997), enabling a private self to be maintained. Whilst the one to one interview ensures “the maintenance of the celebrity as a viable public commodity” (Nunn and Biressi, 2010 p. 50), it is usually DeGeneres as interviewer rather an interviewee. DeGeneres’ TV show depends upon conducting interviews with high profile celebrities, through which her own celebrity status is continuously reaffirmed. In a similar way, her veganism is authenticated in relation to other celebrities. The discomfort that DeGeneres displays in her interview with Couric thus reveals a public person uncomfortable with revealing her inner feelings and sense of identity, echoing a previous high profile interview. Indeed, Couric explicitly refers to DeGeneres ‘coming out’ interview in 1997. DeGeneres has to ‘come out’ again, this time as a vegan.

Couric’s interview with DeGeneres reveals some of the ethical limitations of celebrity. Celebrities must maintain their brand identity through establishing and sustaining a relationship with their audiences as well as other celebrities. DeGeneres success is built on her ability to appeal to a wide audience, which includes other celebrities, using humour to draw attention to social issues without being overtly political or confrontational. Her accessibility is crafted through the routines of her TV show (including communal audience dancing) and those of Twitter. DeGeneres has a staggering 29.7 million twitter followers (Silverstone has 249,000). Her tweets replicate the humorous and caring public self of her TV show and website - combining stand alone jokes, jokes with other celebrities, celebrity promotions, excerpts from her TV show, social and political issues (such as anti-bullying and LGBT equality) and funny/cute animal stories. Thus, her veganism – potentially viewed as a radical identity – is marketed as a healthy and kind dietary choice that other celebrities endorse and that can be marketed as part of her caring celebrity identity.

DeGeneres’ advocacy of kindness echoes the work of Silverstone, but it is Silverstone who is able to more consistently (across media platforms) market an ethical vegan identity. DeGeneres is partly limited by her celebrity

brand identity which, unlike Silverstone, has not been built upon a history of animal rights activism, nor the more 'secure' experience of being a conventionally attractive white heterosexual woman. To present being vegan as an ethical identity, which involves a questioning of perceived norms about the self in relation to others (Adams 1990, Plumwood, 2002), may be deemed too radical for DeGeneres' mainstream audience. Furthermore, given DeGeneres status as an 'out' lesbian and her experience of 'coming out', her identity already calls into question normative values, extended by her choice to become vegan. Thus, whilst her intimate beliefs are revealed as being congruent with ethical veganism, her public self conforms to a more marketable brand of kindness and compassion towards animals and people that avoids a more politicised engagement with the ethics of animal food production.

DeGeneres, however, is also able to make more effective connections between human and animal rights, highlighting issues of gender and sexual inequality, which Silverstone does not. The resources tab on "Ellen's Healthy Living" webpage links to films, interviews and books about gay equality, animal cruelty, and anti-bullying. In the Couric interview, DeGeneres also talks openly about the importance of gay rights and equality, as well as the pressures on women regarding body image, and (like Silverstone) of the need for love, compassion and kindness. In highlighting structures of inequality and power across all species, DeGeneres moves beyond a generic concept of kindness to more explicitly name those groups who experience inequality, and in doing so moves closer towards articulating a feminist-vegan ethic (Adam, 2010; Duvnjak, 2010; Plumwood, 2002). This interlinking of animal, women and LGBT issues, however, exists in tension with the commodity processes involved in the continual reaffirmation of DeGeneres' celebrity status through which her veganism is more publically communicated and mainstreamed.

## **Conclusion**

Given the significant contribution of meat and dairy production to global greenhouse gas emissions, and the suffering that animals experience through industrial animal food production, veganism offers an important critique of these unethical and unsustainable food practices. Yet, this identity and

practice has been largely ignored or stigmatised in mainstream media, affecting how vegans communicate about their veganism with non-vegans (McDonald et. al 1999, Greenebaum 2012a). Noting the recent rise in prominence of celebrity vegans, this article asked, how might the cultural intermediary work of celebrity vegans make the ethics of veganism more accessible and mainstream, and how do ethical concerns about the production and consumption of animals as food and by-products get (re)framed in the context of celebrity consumer culture? In order to answer these questions, this article brought together two distinct sets of literature: on veganism and eco-feminist philosophy; and on ethical (food) consumption and celebrity culture, to provide a philosophical and theoretical framework for the analysis of two celebrity vegans: Alicia Silverstone and Ellen DeGeneres.

The analysis found that both celebrities figure veganism as a diet and lifestyle that foregrounds an ethics of care, compassion, kindness and emotion that is consistent with ethical veganism (Greenebaum, 2012b), yet reworks it through the commodity logic of celebrity culture to make it more marketable and thus consumable (Driessens, 2103) as a set of ideas and lifestyle practices. By downplaying the term 'vegan', and replacing this with 'plant-based diet' and 'kindness', potentially hostile attitudes towards veganism are circumvented. Yet, an ethical commitment that forms the basis of many vegans experiences of vegan identity (Jabs et. al, 1998; McDonald et. al., 1999; Greenebaum, 2012b) is refigured as the individual choice to be a healthy, happy and kind self, consistent with the motivational practices of a lifestyled consumer politics.

For Silverstone, kindness to animals, humans, and environment – as the basis of being vegan - is achievable through the individual self as the site of ethical transformation. This transformation utilises familiar discourses of lifestyle and makeover shows (Palmer, 2008; Doyle and Karl, 2008) to present the journey to a kind self/life as both achievable and desirable. This desirability is dependent upon the celebrity status of Silverstone, as a Hollywood actor, and her cultural authority as a vegan, and animal and environmental campaigner. As such, her brand of vegan kindness is intimately bound to her commodity status as a well-known celebrity, reinforced through her presentation of *The Kind Life* as a (seemingly) seamless integration of her

public and private self for public consumption. Silverstone (2009) does explicitly articulate an animal rights and anti-speciesist approach to being vegan, and calls attention to the detrimental health and ecological impacts of meat and dairy production and consumption. Yet this more radical interlinking of issues exists in tension with her status as a spectacular female celebrity sign (Goodman, 2010), through which the figuration of a kind life is legitimised and commodified.

For DeGeneres, whilst kindness and compassion are part of how she presents being vegan, this is not through an explicit marketing of these values, but indirectly through her celebrity public persona as a caring and empathetic person. In contrast to Silverstone's very explicit marketing (via books, social media and other media activities) of a kind (vegan) life, DeGeneres publically presents her veganism as a part of her celebrity life, rather than its main focus, seeking and gaining cultural authority as a vegan through her relationship with other vegan celebrities. Like Silverstone, animal rights and anti-speciesism are the basis of her decision to become vegan, yet this ethical position is not explicitly articulated through her public persona, revealed instead as an aspect of her private self through Couric's interview (CBS News 2010). DeGeneres' status as a spectacular celebrity sign of veganism thus differs from Silverstone: where Silverstone embodies veganism through the branding of a kind self and life, that she consistently lives and markets, DeGeneres' signifies as a spectacular sign of veganism through her status as a celebrity entertainment figure, who is *also* vegan. To maintain her viability as a "public commodity" (Nunn and Biressi, 2010, p. 50), and to avoid confrontation (Greenebaum, 2012a), her ethical commitment to veganism is downplayed in favour of healthism and (other) celebrity endorsements of a kind, vegan lifestyle. Yet, as a celebrity who has experienced prejudice which impacted upon her ability to maintain her celebrity status, it is DeGeneres', rather than Silverstone, who makes important connections between animal rights and gender and sexual inequality, calling attention to unequal power relations that eco-feminist philosophers have foregrounded (Adams 1990, 2010; Duvnjak, 2011; Plumwood, 2002).

In establishing affective relationships with their audiences as part of the processes of celebrityization, both celebrities importantly offer different points of access to veganism that focus upon the positive. Yet, as “ethicalised cultural intermediaries” (Lewis and Huber, 2015, p. 290), their presentation of veganism is circumscribed by the logic of celebrity commodity culture, with the focus upon lifestyle consumption as the point of ethical intervention, and maintenance of their own viability as celebrity commodities affecting how they publically discuss their veganism. The tensions between ethical veganism as an intervention at the point of consumption within the production of exploitative human/animal/environmental relations (Plumwood, 2002), and the focus upon an individualised lifestyle politics through which celebrities maintain their commodity status, thus coalesce in the work of celebrity vegans. Whilst a reduction in meat and dairy consumption is welcome, the longer term influence of celebrity vegans in facilitating collective social and political changes to exploitative animal food production and consumption processes, will require further study.

## References

- Adams, C. J. (1990). *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York: Continuum.
- Adams, C. J. (2010). Why feminist-vegan now? *Feminism and Psychology*, 20(3), 302-317. doi: 10.1177/0959353510368038
- Addley, E. (2014, March 7). Ellen's Oscars selfie most retweeted ever – and more of us are taking them. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/mar/07/oscars-selfie-most-retweeted-ever>
- Bender, A. (2013, October 28). Top 10 Food Trends of 2013, *Forbes.com*. Retrieved from [http://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewbender/2013/10/28/top-10-food-trends-of-2013/?&\\_suid=140353318023101706050734501332](http://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewbender/2013/10/28/top-10-food-trends-of-2013/?&_suid=140353318023101706050734501332)
- Berndsen, M. and van der Pligt, J. (2005). Risks of meat: the relative impact of cognitive, affective and moral concerns. *Appetite*, 44, 195-205.

CBS News (2011, January 5). Vegan Diets Become More Popular, More Mainstream. Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/vegan-diets-become-more-popular-more-mainstream/>

CBS News (2010). Katie Couric interviews Ellen DeGeneres. Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/katiecouric-ellen-degeneres/>

Cole, M. and Morgan, K. (2011). Vegaphobia: derogatory discourses of veganism and the reproduction of speciesism in UK national newspapers. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 62 (1), 134-153. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-4446.2010.01348.x

Crossroads (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.crossroadskitchen.com/>

Driessens, O. (2013). The celebritization of society and culture: Understanding the structural dynamics of celebrity culture. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16(6), 641-657. doi: 10.1177/1367877912459140

Doyle, J. (2011). *Mediating Climate Change*. Abingdon: Ashgate.

Doyle, J and Karl, I. (2008). Shame on you: Cosmetic surgery and class transformation in *10 Years Younger in Exposing Lifestyle Television: The Big Reveal*, Gareth Palmer (Ed), Aldershot: Ashgate.

Duvnjak, A. (2011). Joining the Dots: Some Reflections on Feminist-Vegan Political Practice and Choice. *Outskirts*, 24. Retrieved from <http://www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-24/duvnjak>

Ellen Degeneres Show (2014a). Ellen's Healthy Living. Retrieved from <http://www.ellentv.com/tags/EllensHealthyLiving/>

Ellen Degeneres Show (2014b). Tips. Retrieved from <http://www.ellentv.com/2011/10/01/vegan-tips/>

Ellen DeGeneres Show (2014c). Getting Started. Retrieved from <http://www.ellentv.com/page/2012/06/29/getting-started/>

Ellen DeGeneres Show (2014d). Retrieved from <http://www.ellentv.com/2013/04/03/ellen-recommends-crossroads-restaurant/>

- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (2006). *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*. Rome: Italy.
- Forbes (2014). The World's Most Powerful Celebrities. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/celebrities/>
- Fox, N. and Ward, K. (2008). Health, ethics and environment: A qualitative study of vegetarian motivations. *Appetite*, 50, 422-429.
- Freedman, R. and Barnouin, K. (2005). *The Skinny Bitch*. Philadelphia: Running Press.
- Freeman, C.P. (2010) Meat's Place on the Campaign Menu: How US Environmental Discourse Negotiates Vegetarianism, *Environmental Communication*, 4:3, 255-276.
- Friedlander, W. (2013). Ellen show gets highest ratings in series history. *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://variety.com/2013/tv/news/ellen-show-gets-highest-ratings-in-series-history-1200994325/>
- The Gentle Barn (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.gentlebarn.org/>
- Gold, M.(2014). Vegan goes to Hollywood. *Outrage*, issue 175, pp. 16-17.
- Goodman, M. (2010). The Mirror of Consumption: Celebritization, Developmental Consumption and the Shifting Cultural Politics of Fair Trade. *Geoforum*, 41, 104-116.
- Greenebaum, J. B. (2012a). Managing impressions: "Face-saving" strategies of vegetarians and vegans. *Humanity and Society*, 36 (4), 309-325. doi: 10.1177/0160597612458898
- Greenebaum, J. B. (2012b). Veganism, Identity and the Quest for Authenticity. *Food, Culture and Society*, 12(1), 129-144. doi: 10.2752/175174412X13190510222101
- Jabs, J., Devine, C. M. and Sobal, J. (1998). Model of the Process of Adopting Vegetarian Diets: Health Vegetarians and Ethical Vegetarians. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 3 (4), 196-202.

Jacobs, M. (2013, April 14). Ellen DeGeneres on TIME Magazine: Comedian came out 16 years ago on iconic cover. *The Huffington Post*. Cover. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/14/ellen-degeneres-time-magazine\\_n\\_3072564.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/14/ellen-degeneres-time-magazine_n_3072564.html)

Johnston, J. and Goodman, M. (2015). Spectacular Foodscapes: Food Celebrities and the Politics of Lifestyle in an Age of Inequality. *Food, Culture and Society*, 18 (2), 205-222.

The Kind Life (2014a). <http://thekindlife.com/>

The Kind Life (2014b). <http://thekindlife.com/blog/2014/06/from-my-closet-giveaway-yoga-attire/>

Larsson, C. L., Rönnlund, U., Johansson, G. and Dahlgren, L. (2003). Veganism as status passage: The process of becoming a vegan among youths in Sweden. *Appetite*, 41, 61-67

Lewis, T. (2008). Transforming Citizens? Green politics and Ethical Consumption on Lifestyle Television. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 22 (2), 227-240.

Lewis, T. (2010). Branding, Celebrityization and the Lifestyle Expert. *Cultural Studies*, 24 (4), 580-598.

Lewis, T and Huber, E. (2015). A Revolution in an Eggcup? Supermarket wars, Celebrity Chefs and Ethical Consumption. *Food, Culture and Society*, 18 (2), 289-308.

Lewis, T and Potter, E (eds). (2011). *Ethical Consumption: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Little, L. (2013, December 19). High-end vegan cuisine named top food trend of 2013 by Forbes. *Ecorazzi*. Retrieved from <http://www.ecorazzi.com/2013/10/29/high-end-vegan-cuisine-named-top-food-trend-of-2013-by-forbes/>

Littler, J. (2008). *Radical Consumption: Shopping for Change in Contemporary Culture*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Marshall, P. D. (1997). *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Marshall, P. D. (2010). The promotion and presentation of the self: Celebrity as marker of presentational media. *Celebrity Studies*, 1:1, 35-48, doi: 10.1080/19392390903519057

McDonald, M., Cervero, R. M. and Courtenay, B. C. (1999). An Ecological Perspective of Power in Transformational Learning: A Case Study of Ethical Vegans. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50 (1), 5-23.

Nath, J. (2010). Gendered fare? A qualitative investigation of alternative food and masculinities. *The Australian Sociological Association*, 47(3), 261-278.

Nunn, H. and Biressi, A. (2010). 'A trust betrayed': Celebrity and the work of emotion. *Celebrity Studies*, 1(1), 49-64. doi:10.1080/19392390903519065

Palmer, G. (2008). Introduction – The Habit of Scrutiny', in Palmer (ed) *Exposing Lifestyle Television: The Big Reveal*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Piper, N. (2015). Jamie Oliver and Cultural Intermediation. *Food, Culture and Society*, 18 (2), 245-264

Pollack, H. (2011, August 10). Ellen launches vegan website. *VegNews*. Retrieved from: <http://vegnews.com/articles/page.do?pagelId=3535&catId=8>

Plumwood, V. (2002). *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. London: Routledge.

Plumwood, V. (2012). Animals and ecology: Towards a better integration. In V. Plumwood (edited by and L. Shannon), *The Eye of the Crocodile* (ebook). Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Silverstone, A. (2009). *The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet*. New York: Roedale.

Sneijder, P and Hedwig, H. t. (2009). Normalizing ideological food choice and eating practices. Identity work in online discussions on veganism. *Appetite*, 52, 621-630.

The Vegan Society (2014a). History. Retrieved from  
<http://www.vegansociety.com/society/history>

The Vegan Society (2014b). Key facts. Retrieved from  
<http://www.vegansociety.com/society/key-facts>

The Vegan Society (2015). Compassion for animals. Retrieved from  
<http://www.vegansociety.com/sites/default/files/CompassionForAnimalsedited.pdf>

The Vegetarian Resource Group (2011). How Many adults are vegan in the US?. *The Vegetarian Resource Group Blog*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.vrg.org/blog/2011/12/05/how-many-adults-are-vegan-in-the-u-s/>

World Preservation Foundation (WPF) (2010). Reducing Shorter-Lived Climate Forcers through Dietary Change. Retrieved from  
<http://www.worldpreservationfoundation.org/Downloads/ReducingShorterLivedClimateForcersThroughDietaryChange.pdf>