RHETORICS OF CONSUMPTION: IDENTITY, CONFRONTATION, AND CORPORATIZATION IN THE AMERICAN VEGETARIAN MOVEMENT

by

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SIGNED: _____Patricia Marie Malesh___

This dissertation is dedicated to the following—

To my parents for their confidence in me and their undying support,

To Sharon and Jeff for their wisdom and guidance,

To Tracy for listening,

To Biko for her love and companionship,

To Carrie-Ann for her influence,

To J for his tolerance,

And finally, to Roxanne Mountford for her endless dedication and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

Inquiry into how social movements affect change has historically been grounded in either sociology or communication studies and has focused primarily on collective action in public spheres. However, important movement activity also takes place in the private sphere between individuals. Such interactions fall outside of traditional definitions of collective action and are often absent from contemporary social movement theory.

One social movement that cannot be studied adequately using existing theory and methods is the American ethical vegetarian movement. To correct this oversight in social movement theory, this dissertation undertakes a rhetorical study of the ethical vegetarian movement, focusing not only on collective action but also on the role of personal interaction in identity formation, participant recruitment, and participant mobilization. A major finding of this study is that personal interaction is the primary reason why individuals choose to adopt and advocate a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle. In order to establish how movement rhetoric works, the dissertation includes rhetorical analyses of cookbooks, organization literature, media representation, interviews with movement advocates, and vegetarian conversion narratives, collected through a national survey. The author explores the use and consequences of unintentional, religious, and embodied rhetoric as means of confrontation and conversion in the ethical vegetarian movement.

In this dissertation, Patricia Malesh argues for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of social movements that includes inquiry into personal interaction as movement activity. Such an inquiry clarifies the relationship between personal and collective identities and deconstructs the dichotomy between private and public spheres. She also establishes a rhetorical definition of individual movements, which exposes the interplay between movement goals and methods of persuasion and helps differentiate between similar movements (e.g., vegetarian and animal rights movements) and align those that are seemingly unrelated (e.g., vegetarian and feminist movements). The author concludes by discussing the future of the ethical vegetarian movement in the face of globalization and incorporation. She argues that rhetoricians—those who study the practice and implications of communication—should contribute more consistently to the study of how social identity is negotiated through language and action in social movements.

Chapter 1 Vegetarians as Radical Cultural Workers

Fine Line Feature Film's *American Splendor* (2003) chronicles the life of bitter Cleveland comic book writer Harvey Pekar. It is a dark look at Harvey's struggle to overcome lifelong disappointment with circumstance. One scene in the film details his first dinner date with his future wife, Joyce. As they look over the menu, Harvey's choice to be a vegetarian unwittingly drives the conversation.

> Harvey: "A lot of meat on this menu."
>
> Joyce: "You're a vegetarian?"
>
> Harvey: "Kinda, ya know, I mean, ever since I got a pet cat, you know, I've had trouble eating animals."
>
> Joyce: "Yeah, I support and identify with groups like *PeTA*[1], but unfortunately, I'm a self-diagnosed anemic. Also, I have all these food allergies to vegetables which give me serious intestinal distress. I guess I have a lot of borderline health disorders that limit me politically when it comes to eating."

This encounter captures a common exchange among vegetarians and meat-eaters and points out a fundamental, if often tacit, understanding about the ethics of eating. Dietary choices, which are mostly understood as intensely personal decisions, reflect cultures of consumption. In this exchange, Harvey struggles to articulate his commitment to a vegetarian lifestyle without alienating or challenging his companion. Nonetheless, Joyce's attempt to *justify* her decision to be a meateater suggests that she interprets Harvey's personal commitment to vegetarianism as a judgment on her decision not to be. In this exchange, intentionally or otherwise, Harvey represents a community of vegetarians who share a similar ethical commitment, making his decision to be a

[1] People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

vegetarian both personal and social. Regardless of whether or not he expects others to adopt his perspective, his choice to live as a vegetarian challenges meat-eaters, like Joyce, to take responsibility for their dietary choices and exposes an implicit ethics of eating. Harvey's decision, then, has inherent rhetorical value. In other words, although he may not be employing it as a strategy, his vegetarianism is nonetheless *understood* as a confrontation to meat-eating as a social convention and also to those who subscribe to it.

As a vegetarian, Harvey embodies the aims and the rhetoric of an ethical vegetarian movement that has evolved in the U.S. over the past three decades.
What makes this movement distinct as such is the interplay between its aims and means. In other words, the ethical vegetarian movement, like most modern movements, leaves a rhetorical footprint—a distinctive compilation of persuasive characteristics that illustrate how the movement attempts to recruit and mobilize constituents. This footprint is comprised of the relationship among the various methods of persuasion that a movement uses and the goals that a movement hopes to accomplish. It is the intersection between form and content, or movement rhetoric and movement ideologies, and, as such, it is what distinguishes one movement from another and suggests parallels between others. It is an extension of what Karlyn Kohrs Campbell calls a movement's *rhetorical features* or the "fusion of [a movement's] substantive and stylistic features" (74). I argue that we should shift away from the idea of rhetorical *features* and toward *footprint* in order to highlight the legacy and distinctiveness of a movement. While many movements might share similar "rhetorical features," it is the relationship among these features that characterizes distinct movement activity.

In the following dissertation I argue for a rhetorical approach to the study of social movements. I do so by examining the rhetorical footprint of one movement—the ethical vegetarian movement—and, from this analysis, highlight the usefulness of a rhetorical approach to the study of social change. I argue that such an approach needs to include a discussion of identity formation and personal interaction as movement activity. An examination of this sort yields insight into overlooked aspects of movement activity and provides us with a much needed and more thorough understanding of social movements in general.

The Rhetoric of Social Movements

Theorists who study social movements know that such scholarship is valuable because it illuminates the evolution of social thought. This is true of inquiry into both political movements—those that target public policy and legal change—and cultural movements—those that target cultural and social norms that exist outside of government control. The vegetarian movement, like many other contemporary movements, can be understood as primarily cultural in nature. In other words, it is a movement dedicated to enacting significant cultural transformation, although it often seeks political transformation as well. Individuals within this movement are responsible for implementing these changes. In order to do so, some movement adherents form communities and attempt to establish a collective identity that differs from the norm. They do so as a means of asserting their alternative cultural values, ultimately struggling to enact permanent social change.

For over fifty years, scholars have attempted to understand the nature of contemporary social movements. Much of this work has been done by sociologists who employ social psychology in order to study collective behavior, its motives, and its consequences. This often includes the study of how movement participants define these movements, how they are defined by outside forces, and how they provoke social and political transformation. This research has also explored how individual movements attempt to recruit and mobilize growing numbers of active participants. Within sociology, the study of social movements has separated into three dominant paradigms—Resource Mobilization, New Social Movement Theory, and Frame Articulation Theory—with only recent intersections beginning to emerge

Although most social movement theory has sprouted from sociology departments, communication scholars and rhetoricians have also contributed important insights into how social change is manifest through movements. These studies of social protest and other forms of movement rhetoric have been mostly grounded in discourse analysis. First articulated by Leland Griffin (1952) and later employed and complicated by successive generations of communications scholars, a rhetorical approach to the study of social movements examines the rhetorical characteristics of movements and defines a movement by these characteristics (Burgess 1968; Simons 1970; Kohrs Campbell 1973; Cathcart 1978; Sillars 1980; Hauser 1999; 2001). Malcolm Sillars, a communication and

social movement scholar, defines a movement rhetorically as

> *collective actions which are perceived by a critic. They are defined by that critic in terms of the most useful rhetorical events, conflicts, or strategies which will best explain the critic's view of the movement.* The critic may accept the limits of the movement provided by someone else or may "create" the movement. (122)

This definition underscores the importance of studying the rhetoric of a movement as a heuristic that provides insight into the movement itself. It also reinforces Michael Mcgee's earlier claim that a movement is defined not by innate qualities, but by a scholarly interpretation of it as rhetorically distinct. If this is accurate, movement theorists are responsible for defining a movement and analyzing it. By determining the important defining features of a movement, its goals, constituency, scope, and methods, scholars are better equipped to understand the intersections between these and, ultimately, the nature of the movement itself.[2]

Both sociologists and rhetoricians employ several means of analysis in their study of social movements. While rhetoricians tend to employ discourse analysis, sociologists rely on an analysis of the cognitive, psychological, and political means through which

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[2] Defining a social movement is a complex activity that is practiced by a variety of individuals and collectivities who speak from different subject positions and who have distinct motivations and aims for doing so. Although a movement is defined theoretically by those who study it, it is also defined by the organizations and constituencies of the movement itself. Additionally, a movement is susceptible to outsider definitions that come into being through media representation and countermovement activity. Audience is also a factor in how movements are understood and distinguished from one another since scholars, movement organizers, and outsiders may adjust definitions according to the audiences they hope to reach. The act of defining a social movement is complicated even further by contemporary movement theorists who perceive movements as "movement networks" (Melucci) that are less stable, more integrated with one another, more likely to share constituencies, and less civic-minded. For the purposes of this analysis, I emphasize theorists as agents capable of crafting movement boundaries and identities in order to discuss movements as theoretical, as well as tangible, entities. I also emphasize the role of theorists as movement-crafting agents in order to distinguish between those who belong to the ethical vegetarian movement (ethical vegetarians) and those that the movement claims as part of their constituency (both ethical vegetarians and health vegetarians).

movements gather resources, recruit and mobilize members, and establish collective identity. Despite the advances in understanding that have resulted from both scholarly approaches, they are limited in two important ways. First, the study of social movements is fragmented. Rhetoricians have not yet taken advantage of the work being done by sociologists, while paradigmatic divisions within sociology are just recently being dismantled within the discipline. Second, whether movement scholars hail from rhetorical traditions or from competing sociological traditions, for the most part inquiry into the nature of movements focuses on public displays of collective action and the changes they encourage.

These critical approaches as they are currently practiced are incapable of uncovering the rhetorical value of exchanges like the one between Harvey and Joyce and, because of this, offer only incomplete glimpses into the contemporary vegetarian movement in the U.S. As the example from *American Splendor* illustrates, the impetus for Joyce's response was not merely Harvey's admission that he was a vegetarian; rather it was the implicit *ethic of eating* that his identity as a vegetarian carries with it. In this case, an analysis of discourse alone fails to illuminate the rhetoric at work. Simply by identifying as vegetarian, Harvey embodies the rhetoric of the ethical vegetarian movement, whether he employs this rhetoric consciously or not. He also belongs to a community of vegetarians that is held together by their shared experiences, language and values. Kenneth Burke examines this process of identification as a key element in the formation of social identity. As rhetoricians, we are poised to use such scholarship, like Burke's work with identity, to examine what happens when a self-proclaimed identity,

such as a vegetarian identity, is claimed in front of those who do not share this identity but who have preconceptions about it.

Integrating rhetorical scholarship and sociological models of analysis illuminates the dialectical exchange between Harvey and Joyce as more than an interpersonal interaction. It is also a confrontation between the cultural and ethical frameworks that Harvey and Joyce embody. In this respect, this dialectic of personal interaction is both intensely personal, a one-on-one encounter, and culturally representative. Although Harvey represents and embodies the ethical vegetarian movement, his acknowledgement that he is vegetarian falls outside of what theorists usually consider collective action, but it does not fall outside of the realm of rhetoric.

In order to gain insight into the contemporary vegetarian movement, I argue that we must 1) expand our understanding of what constitutes the rhetorical qualities of a movement by importing movement scholarship from sociology; 2) supplement discourse analysis with a discussion of embodied and unintentional rhetoric; and 3) examine non-traditional forms of movement activities, such as the dialectic of personal interaction and conversion narratives in addition to collective action. I argue that contemporary social movements should be defined as, aligned with, and distinguished from one another by their rhetorical footprints. I define this footprint as the ways in which the aims and ideologies of a movement intersect with one another, ultimately characterizing the rhetorical legacy of specific movements. In the case of the ethical vegetarian movement, this rhetorical footprint is characterized by the following primary features: an inherent rhetorical relationship with related social movements, embodied rhetoric, a tendency to

control definitions of identity and reconstruct oppositional terminology, personal interaction as a means of recruiting and motivating movement participants, and a dissidence between the message of the movement and the goals of the members it represents.

The intersections of these features, then, create unique possibilities and challenges for the ethical vegetarian movement. Since the movement coalesced around thirty years ago, it has undergone significant transformation. In the past few years, especially, the message of the movement has been more widely distributed and acknowledged by mainstream media and industry. This, in turn, has transformed cultural perceptions of what it means to be vegetarian. This transformation, in turn, has created new challenges for the movement. Although the practice of vegetarianism seems to be gaining recognition and popularity, the concept of vegetarianism is becoming more contested and less affiliated with the ethical vegetarian movement. As vegetarianism becomes more "trendy," movement participation, identity, and ideology are becoming unrecognizable, and the movement itself is in danger of dissolving. In response, the vegetarian movement has created new ways to "control" the terminology associated with it and fortify the relationship between terminology and the ethical impetus behind the movement. Ultimately, movement leaders, organizations, and everyday participants employ the rhetorical features that comprise the movement's footprint in conjunction with one another in order to promote permanent personal transformation from movement members and foster orthodox participation. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I attempt to define the vegetarian movement as it now stands and examine one rhetorical feature—its ability

to control definitions of identity and reconstruct oppositional terminology—as an introduction to the more in-depth analysis that follows in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

The Case for an Ethical Vegetarian Movement

In recent years, investigations into the connection between what we eat and who we are in general have multiplied as Americans have begun to explore cultures of consumption. By this, I mean rituals of eating that reflect and reify cultural perceptions about food and identity. In the last ten years, the number of books, articles, conferences, and health organizations that argue for a relationship between food and identity--especially those that reference plant-based diets as socially responsible, culturally significant, and healthier than meat-based diets--has increased dramatically. In spring 2004, the first annual Nutrition and Health conference was hosted by Dr. Andrew Weil in conjunction with the University of Arizona Program in Integrative Medicine and the UA Health Sciences Center. On the final day of the conference, UA Health Sciences sponsored a forum and panel discussion entitled "Politics, Food, and Culture" with Dr. Andrew Weil (*8 Weeks to Optimum Health*, *The Healthy Kitchen: Recipes for a Better Body, Life, and Spirit*), Eric Schlosser *(Fast Food Nation*), and Michael Pollan (*The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*). During the seminar, these three authors challenged cultures of consumption. They analyzed the relationship among the availability and cost of nutrient rich foods, privilege and poverty, ethnicity and rates of obesity and disease.

As this seminar suggests, the connection between food and culture is embedded within our understanding of identity and tied to social and economic considerations. Eric Schosser's bestseller *Fast Food Nation* (2000) and Morgan Spurlock's award winning documentary *Supersize Me*both chronicle America's growing cultural and economic dependence on and association with fast food.[3] In his highly influential book *Diet for a New America* (1987), John Robbins exposes the politics behind the American diet in a broader sense by chronicling the impact that the US Dairy and Livestock industries have had, and continue to have, on American Dietary Guidelines. He argues that our meat-based diet and cultural perception of animals as resources affect our spirituality, our health, and our relationship with the planet. Carol Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1991) unearths the connection amongst patriarchy, capitalism, and the tradition of eating animals, exposing the ways that this connection is reinforced through the language we use and the images we encourage. These intersections among food, culture, and identity helped to establish and maintain the contemporary vegetarian movement in the US and illustrate its moral and/or ideological implications. These intersections also help create community across difference in an otherwise diverse population of constituents.

In this dissertation, I define the ethical vegetarian movement as a collectivity of individuals who are committed to the practice of vegetarianism as an ethical imperative. In other words, those who subscribe to the movement believe that the practice of vegetarianism is necessary for the betterment of one or more of the following: the

[3] Selected Awards: Sundance Film Festival 2004-Best Director, US Comedy Arts Festival 2004-Official Selection, Mountain Film Telluride 2004-Outstanding Cultural Documentary, San Francisco International Film Fest 2004-Official Selection, W.V. International Film Festival 2004-Official Selection, Philadelphia Film Festival 2004-Official Selection, Hot Docs 2004-Official Selection.

condition of animals, the condition of the planet (and environment), the condition of people (by reducing starvation in non-developed countries and dangerous labor practices in developed countries), and/or the condition of the soul (vegetarianism as spiritual/religious practice). Throughout this dissertation, I often refer to this movement as either the ethical vegetarian movement or simply as the vegetarian movement to prevent repetition.

In this regard, and like the rhetoric of the Civil Rights movement and the Feminist movement, the rhetoric of the vegetarian movement should be understood as attempting to "[call] America to its moral self" (Burgess 190). Also, like these and many other contemporary social movements, it attempts to evoke cultural transformations and social reform, as well as political ones through legal reform, by highlighting moral conflict and social justice through rhetorics of oppression. This characteristic distinguishes between and separates those who adopt a vegetarian *diet* for health reasons from those who subscribe to a vegetarian *lifestyle* for ethical ones. I use the term "lifestyle" to encapsulate the many adaptations that committed vegetarians make on a daily basis in order to maintain their vegetarian ethics. These changes may include not wearing leather, not eating honey, participating in on-line communities with other vegetarians, hosting vegan potlucks, distributing free "veggie-dog" samples, boycotting circuses that use animals, and proselytizing others. In other words, the difference between those who follow a vegetarian diet and those who subscribe to a vegetarian lifestyle is the degree to which vegetarianism is understood as an aspect of identity and as ethically grounded. While the former group undoubtedly affects how the movement is understood by those outside of it,

it is the latter group that actually comprises the community of vegetarians that belong to a vegetarian movement. For this reason, I exclude vegetarians who are such solely for health reasons from the movement proper.

Although health vegetarians mirror the goals of the movement on a practical and visible level, they do not subscribe to the guiding ideology of the movement, one defined by something other than self-interest. Despite this, movement organizations and businesses often include health vegetarians as their audience. Their inclusion is guided by the belief that health vegetarians are more likely to become ethical vegetarians than non-vegetarians. It is also guided by the belief that the larger the numbers of people who request, purchase, and consume vegetarian products, the more likely vegetarianism is to displace meat-eating as sole dominant culture of consumption in the US. Although health vegetarians do influence the ethical vegetarian movement in the U.S., I argue that this movement, and the strategies that it employs, is a culture of consumption birthed out of ethical considerations, not dietary ones. As such, the vegetarian movement seeks to create more vegetarians who are so for ethical reasons, not simply more vegetarians. Since health vegetarians do not necessarily subscribe to the vegetarian lifestyle, and tend not to associate their diet with their sense of self, they fall outside of the boundaries of the movement proper even though their role in advancing the concept of vegetarianism is an important one.

The Formation of a Unified Ethical Vegetarian Movement

Vegetarian traditions guided by these ethical considerations have a long history in the U.S. According to historians of vegetarianism, who are also usually vegetarian historians, secular vegetarianism emerged out of religious vegetarianism in the middle of the nineteenth century. In his history of vegetarianism, *Vegetarianism: A Way of Life*, Dudley Giehl claims that the first secular American Vegetarian Society was established in 1850 by William Metcalfe, a pastor of the Bible Christian Church who emigrated from Manchester, England in the early 1800's. Metcalf is also credited with writing the first book on vegetarianism published in the U.S. entitled *Abstinence from Flesh of Animals* (1823) (Giehl 207). Early American vegetarian advocates included Sylvester Graham, William Alcott and his brother Bronson Alcott (Louisa May Alcott's father), and John H. Kellogg. Their commitment to vegetarianism ranged from spiritual and health benefits to animal rights concerns. Upton Sinclair interwove these concerns with those of working class immigrants in his shocking slaughterhouse narrative *The Jungle* (1906). This powerful account of the daily lives of slaughterhouse workers and the animals they rendered not only influenced government policy about food safety and aroused concern about the plight of the working class; it also inspired Americans to steer clear of the consumption of animal flesh. Connections between the temperance and suffrage movements, twentieth-century pacifism, and vegetarianism also pepper the history of vegetarianism in America.

Despite this tradition of vegetarianism, it has not been understood as an organized and cohesive movement until recently. Citing disparaging views on health, animal

welfare, and religious affiliation as inhibiting factors, many scholars rejected the possibility of a united movement. Even as late as 1979, when his book was published, Dudley Giehl claims that although the number of people turning to vegetarianism in the 1960s and 1970s increased dramatically, “there has never been a truly unified vegetarian movement in the United States” (211-2). However, as he was making this claim, these growing numbers of committed vegetarians were beginning to coalesce and form a cohesive, if compartmentalized, movement. Marked by shared rhetorical threads that cross distinctions within the movement, members of this newly organized community defined themselves through a shared collective vegetarian identity that emphasizes the ethics of eating. Despite clearly separate factions and agendas within the movement, those distinguished by religious, environmental, animal rights, and social justice concerns, a shared voice and agenda emerged in the early 1970s and continues to drive the ethical vegetarian movement. What holds this community seeking social change together is a shared sense of collective identity that spans difference.

This collective vegetarian identity grew strong enough to launch a movement by the early 1970s, during which time identity politics emerged in response to increasing cultural hegemony in a post- industrial first world. This moment is connected to several pivotal texts. Francis Moore Lappe’s bestseller *Diet for a Small Planet* (1971) and Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* (1975) appeared as influential texts, promoting ethical vegetarianism across ethnic, gender, religious, and class distinctions. Through their writing, these authors encouraged individuals to adopt a vegetarian ethic in their daily life. Simultaneously, organizations emerged that sought to transform personal

commitment into collective activity. In 1974, the *Vegetarian Times*, a magazine dedicated to vegetarianism and related concerns, published its first issue. Sponsored by the North American Vegetarian Society (also founded in 1974), the U.S. hosted the 23rd Annual World Vegetarian Congress for the first time in 1975. By the early 1980's, other influential organizations, namely People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA) (established 1980) and Vegetarian Resource Group (established 1982), had also formed in order to organize vegetarian communities and promote the vegetarian lifestyle. These canonical texts and organizations helped to establish a vegetarian community by constructing a vegetarian identity rhetorically, an identity that is both personal and social, and by advocating a common set of goals and beliefs.

Rhetorics of Identification

A crucial component of a vegetarian identity is the definition of the term that defines it—"vegetarian." This term is universally understood to mean a diet free of animal flesh. This includes cow (beef), pig (pork), turkey, chicken, fish, crustaceans, wild and domestic game, and all other animals. Within the community of vegetarians, there are several variations such as "Lacto-ovo Vegetarian" (a diet including dairy and egg products), "Lacto-Vegetarian" (dairy products only), "Ovo-Vegetarian" (egg products only), and "Vegan" (a diet and lifestyle that excludes all animal flesh, dairy products, eggs, honey, and other animal derivatives such as wool, silk, leather, lanolin, casein, and gelatin.) The terms "strict vegetarian" and "total vegetarian" are sometimes used to signify "Vegan," although individually understood distinctions often apply. As this

terminology has entered the American vernacular, related terms have joined these traditional ones. While some of these terms, such as Veg or Veggie, tend to blur distinctions, other related terms clarify them, such as pesco-vegetarian (a vegetarian diet that includes fish) and Flexitarian (an individual who eats a mostly vegetarian diet, but who may also eat meat on occasion).[4] For ethical vegetarians, those who subscribe to the ideology of the vegetarian movement, these terms carry with them an implicit moral weight. As more and more people become familiar with this terminology, however, often times without an understanding of the ethical implications that lie behind them, ethical vegetarians and the organizations that represent them are faced with new opportunities and with new challenges.

Reclaiming Oppositional Terminology

As this terminology becomes more familiar to those outside of the movement, movement insiders, individuals, organizations, and businesses who are intimately familiar with vegetarian terminologies and the meanings behind them, are making use of this as an opportunity to advocate their cause. By advocating both a vegetarian diet and a vegetarian lifestyle, ethical vegetarians can and should be understood as members of a social and cultural movement that challenges and attempts to dismantle the cultural ritual of meateating. In order to do this, vegetarian rhetoric must first expose meat-eating as a

[4] Many people who identify themselves as vegetarian still consume fish and other forms of sea life. Although the concept of a fish-eating vegetarian violates the inherent definition of the term vegetarian, it is important to note that these individuals consider themselves part of the vegetarian community and, as such, claim a vegetarian identity. This is less the case for Flexitarians, a recently created term that describes individuals who rarely, but occasionally, eat beef, pork, fish, or fowl. These individuals follow a mostly vegetarian diet, but usually do not subscribe to a vegetarian identity.

cultural ritual and not a dietary necessity. To this end, vocal movement adherents and industries adopt discourse practices designed to appeal to those who already subscribe to movement ideology as well as outsiders they hope to inspire and educate. For those within the community trying to reach out to "meat-eaters," especially vegetarian/vegan-minded restaurateurs and food manufacturers who seek to broaden the appeal of their goods and services, the importance of terminology and consistency is paramount in order to build insider knowledge into the community of outsiders.

Many vegetarian/vegan restaurants and food manufacturers employ playful, yet poignant terminology as a way of exposing outsiders to a vegetarian lifestyle. *Native Foods*, owned and operated by Tanya Petrovna, is one such restaurant. Operating a small chain of restaurants in Cosa Mesa, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Westwood, California, *Native Foods* boasts "California Vegan" cuisine. The menu claims to offer "textures and flavors of cuisine from around the world in a fresh and fun way" in meals that are low-fat and cholesterol free. Entrees like Chinese "save the" Chicken Salad and the BLTease are accompanied by gourmet descriptions of each entrée; definitions of meat substitutes such as tempeh, seitan, and soy protein; and catchy slogans like "Remember…meat's no treat for those you eat" and "Eat Peace." This conscious effort to create alternative meals that sound like traditional favorites while glibly presenting the case for vegetarianism as a healthy and socially responsible alternative to these traditions is a common strategy within the vegetarian movement.

At the local health food store and the corporate grocery alike, animal free products identify themselves as veggie, vegan, parve, cruelty-free, and, of course,

vegetarian. These "alternative" products woo consumers with names like *Tofurky Jerky*, *Better Than Cream Cheese*, *Soy Dream*, *Tofutti Cuties, Veganaise*, *Smart Dogs*, *Veganrella, Gimme Lean*, and a host of other sen*soy*tional wordplay.[5] This practice of "reappropriating" familiar food names for often less familiar alternative products is a means of disarming hesitation, or even resistance, on behalf of the buyer. Companies often employ this rhetorical strategy in their descriptions of these products as well. The most prevalent example to date is the reappropriation of the term "milk" to include such non-dairy sources as soy, rice, almond, and oat. WhiteWave, makers of the *Silk* line of soy products, is one such example. By employing linguistic playfulness in their broadening advertising initiatives and their product rhetoric, WhiteWave challenges the role of dairy as an American dietary staple in an effort to replace it with non-dairy "milk" products. On their website, WhiteWave asks site visitors:

> Did you know that soymilk isn't really milk in the common cow-sense of the word? It comes from beans. Vast herds of beans. Soybeans. And while soybeans used to roam the plains, now they're confined to fields on farms. Kind of like cows. (www.whitewave.com)

As old lines are being blurred, new ones that encourage a "re-envisioning" of food traditions emerge. By constructing metaphorical landscapes through which movement outsiders gain access to the products that make membership easier, food manufacturers play an important role in advocating the movement. What seems universal in these accounts is the desire to acquaint outsiders and recent converts with the terminology and

[5] Parve is a word for products that contain no meat or dairy (including) derivatives. This term is used to identify foods that are acceptable for those who follow a strict kosher diet.

philosophy behind increasingly popular alternatives to traditional animal based foods while doing so in a playful and informative way.[6]

Although many products and organizations target outsiders as part of their mission, hoping to educate them on and convince them to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle, they also serve those who already subscribe to a vegetarian identity. Because vegetarians are not located universally within specific geographical, racial, or economical boundaries, community building is an important mission of movement organizations. As more and more people from all walks of life identify as vegetarian, and adopt a vegetarian lifestyle, movement organizations are faced with the challenge of accommodating this diversity. In March 1999, *Green People,* whose mission is to "provide resources to help empower people to live an eco-friendly, compassionate lifestyle," began an online dating service that responded to cries for community, and growing diversity within vegetarian circles (www.veggiedate.com). Like many other on-line dating sites, www.veggiedate.com

[6] Like the American Dairy council, whose ad campaigns for milk and cheese appear in popular magazines and television, Soy companies are beginning to use the same mainstream media to advocate alternatives to dairy. On April 12th, 2004, White Wave, maker of Silk soymilk and non-dairy creamers, launched a $22.3 million dollar advertising campaign for their Silk soymilk on prime-time network television. This campaign made Silk the first brand of soymilk to advertise on prime–time national television. As the press release indicates, this is a milestone for natural and alternative products because it indicates the move into mainstream society and challenges cultural norms. This is just the transformation that WhiteWave is looking for. In their press release they write:

> The $22.3 million campaign will make Silk the only soymilk advertised on prime time network television and is the most expensive advertising campaign of any natural foods company in history. In the process, it will provide another clear signal that soymilk has moved beyond its healthy roots and is quickly becoming as American as apple pie. (www.whitewave.com press release)

This attempt to introduce soymilk into the daily rituals and symbolic vernacular of the American people is also reflected on their website for their line of Silk products. The website not only lists the ingredients and the nutritional facts for every one of its Silk soymilk products, it also offers recipes and provides answers to a variety of questions suited for newcomers to soymilk and long-time users alike. Questions range from general informational questions such as "Can I bake with Silk" to more specialized questions about whether or not WhiteWave products are vegan and about the health benefits of soymilk like "how many isoflavones are in an 8 oz. serving of Silk soymilk?" However, just as the name Silk fuses Soy and Milk, so does the website fuse traditional understandings of milk--where it come from and why we should drink it--with new ones that emerge from alternative milk sources such as Oat Milk, Almond Milk, Rice Milk, and Soy Milk.

allows users to choose the sex, sexual persuasion, age, religion, and location of potential mates. However, it also subdivides members into dietary categories such as “almost vegetarian,” “vegetarian,” “veggie/veganish,” and “vegan” and asks site visitors if they are interested in casual dates, serious relationship, or activity partner/friendship. It also contains a link to the websites of Vegetarian Societies of North America organized by geography. What seems key for site users is an understanding of the nuances of each category of consumption and the values represented within distinctions such as vegetarian and vegan. On a website designed, maintained, and frequented by *insiders*, these distinctions are often assumed and fine tuned by individuals within their particular member profiles. However, these ethical intricacies, and the terminology that represent them, rarely make their way to those outside of movement communities. Outside of this community, a community comprised of individuals who subscribe to a collective identity and to the movement’s definitions of terms, specific definitions are much more nebulously interpreted.

Why Terminology Matters

Confusion about terminology ultimately reflects much deeper confusion about the values and aims of the movement in general. While those outside of a movement rarely involve themselves with what participants consider fundamental divergences within a movement, minimal knowledge about a movement can be more destructive than no knowledge. Examples of this punctuate cultural and political movements, both historically and currently. For instance, feminist theorists and movement scholars

understand competing theories and perspectives within the broad ideological category of feminist theory in a much more complicated way than those outside of the movement whose notion of feminism is that of a single movement with a common set of values. While Marxist-Feminists arrange their claims around the relationship between class and gender roles, Black Feminists emphasize the faults of an often middle-class white notion of feminism and gender roles. While some radical feminists decry heterosexuality, advocates of an ethics of care strive for a recognition of motherhood as a unique opportunity through which women develop a relationship with their children. To the respectful outsider, all of these often contrary elements, and the goals that punctuate them, may be boiled down into a soup of politically correct initiatives in the workplace or the eradication of the male pronoun as universal in textbooks. Although these initiatives may form out of a respect for feminism as a concept, the results do not always reflect the movement or the beliefs of those involved with it. The same can be said of many contemporary movements, including the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride movement; peace movements; environmental movements; and even radical right movements such as the White Power movement. So, it is vital for movements to establish terminology that suggests that the movement is complex and multi-faceted. In the case of vegetarianism, glimpses into the movement that come from the mainstreaming of associated terminology often prove more problematical than helpful, which is why the movement must claim terminology and employ it rhetorically.

The Consequences of Mainstreaming Terminology

Being a longtime insider, a vegetarian for twelve years and vegan for five and a half, I have often experienced the consequences of mainstreaming terminology first hand and the importance of claiming terminology as a rhetorical strategy. As the term "vegetarian" gains recognition independent of the ethical movement it describes, outsiders understand it as dietary choice instead of an ideology of eating and living. Although many of these individuals and businesses may attempt to accommodate a vegetarian ethic, or at least appeal to those who subscribe to a vegetarian lifestyle, their attempts are often fraught with misconception.

Chuy's Baja Broilers, for example, is a chain of Mexican themed restaurants in the southwest that boasts tasty margaritas, a family atmosphere, never-ending, self-serve free chips and salsa, and the Baja-inspired fish taco. A precarious balance between fast food and urban dining, patrons place their orders at the register on the bar then carry a grungy stuffed animal to their seats which they exchange for their meals fifteen minutes later. Like many up and coming chain restaurants, Chuy's tacitly acknowledges an increasing population of non-meateaters as potential customers by offering a vegetarian burro. Whole beans, Spanish rice, lettuce, tomato, cheese, sour cream, and guacamole are wrapped snuggly in a large flour tortilla for $5.95. However, Chuy's definition of vegetarian is not strict. The Spanish rice is made with chicken broth and the menu offers nothing for those vegetarians, like myself, who avoid dairy as well as meat. Jake the ordertaker's explanation for this apparent discrepancy is that most vegetarians are so for health reasons so chicken broth is ok.

At a pit beef restaurant in the Texas heartland where the door handles are made of antlers, the seats cowhide, and the walls decorated with Buffalo heads, I found that vegetarian meant no beef. Green beans with bacon, black-eyed peas with ham, and rice with chicken bits are all vegetarian, according to the lone middle-aged waitress. Similarly, a health food store nearby did not sell tofu, or vegetarian jerky, but it did offer six kinds of organic beef.

Although it is not surprising that Texas, long steeped in Cowboy culture, may not be the easiest place for a vegetarian to find a peaceful meal if we consider the connection between food and culture, even more accommodating dining experiences often fail to offer vegetarian-friendly fare. College campus dining services are especially responsible for providing options for their vegetarian clientele since, for many students, university dining facilities provide most, if not all, of their meals. Because of the increased demand for vegetarian fare, prompted by organizations such as Vegan Outreach that offer "Adopt a College" instructions for vegetarian students, college dining services are more likely to accommodate the demands of their students.

However, attempts to accommodate vegetarians in the university are not necessarily any more informed than those of the waitress at the Texas steakhouse. The Student Union dining court at the University of Arizona, for example, offers many vegetarian options, but does so under the assumption that vegetarianism is a diet, not a lifestyle. *Louie's Cheesesteaks* serves a hot veggie sub which is often cooked side by side with the restaurant's namesake, where beef fat seeps into vegetable as it melts and where each pile of sub filling, both meaty and veggie, is tossed by the same metal spatula. At

Domino's pizza, bits of pepperoni or ham occasionally ship out on veggie pies due to hasty slice work from one pizza to the next while chunks of sausage find their way onto the vegetarian special as tag-alongs from the green pepper bin.

Whether the limited perception of vegetarianism that Jake the ordertaker has, as someone who does not understand or has not been exposed to an ethic of eating, or the purposeful blurring of terminology that is sponsored by movement organizations is to blame, the consequence is a frustrating experience for those whose dietary choices are guided by a complex interaction between ethical, environmental, ideological, religious, and health reasons. These examples suggest that as aspects of the movement gain more widespread recognition—in this case vegetarianism as a diet—without being understood as part of a movement, the movement faces new challenges about identity and ideology. In other words, although more vegetarian-friendly products are appearing in grocery stores and on menus, the movement may be weakening. In response, vegetarian organizations and movement adherents have begun mainstreaming the term "vegan." Unlike the term "vegetarianism," which has long been defined in dietary terms, the term "vegan" inherently connotes an ethical impetus for this diet/lifestyle. By mainstreaming the term "vegan," the ethical vegetarian movement seeks to fortify the relationship between the ethical reasons behind vegetarianism and the lifestyle.

The Future of the Movement

Without doubt, the mainstreaming of vegetarianism has the potential to change the very nature of the movement. It is causing movement boundaries, aims, and strategies

to adjust to the fluctuating context of vegetarian awareness. As vegetarian products and menu items sprout up in unexpected places like Burger King, which recently added a veggieburger to its menu and Sysco, which just introduced its new line of MoonRose[tm] soymilk, membership potential is increasing and the movement is facing new challenges as well as new possibilities. Increased membership is advantageous because as more people become familiar with vegetarianism and its variations, movement adherents, such as vegans, face less discrimination in restaurants. However, it is also damaging to a movement that is bound together by its identity because a vegetarian identity extends out of a vegetarian *lifestyle* even though it is being marketed and understood as simply *dietary preference*. The ideology of the movement is being buried or lost even though some of the movement's goals, mainly decreasing the consumption of animals and increasing the number of meatless meals eaten, are being attained.

The most obvious example of this loss of identity within the movement is the corporatization of the movement. As Soymilk has become more profitable and more readily available at grocery stores and discount warehouses such as Costco, natural food companies that embodied the ethical ideology of the vegetarian movement such as Whitewave[tm] and BocaBurger[tm] have been bought by large corporations, in this case Dean Foods and Kraft respectively. The corporatization of the veggie food industry increases exposure for and distribution of such products which, according to many vegetarians, is an important factor in their ability to maintain a vegetarian lifestyle. However, although these types of buy-outs encourage the consumption of vegetarian/vegan alternatives, they violate the ethical principles on which the movement

rests. Companies such as Kellogg, which just inherited the Morning Star Farms line in 1999 through its acquisition of Worthington Foods, and ConAgra (producers of the Lightlife line of vegetarian meats) are changing the identity of the movement by employing their vast capital and launching multimillion dollar advertising campaigns. This corporatization and increasingly institutionalized nature of the movement grants the movement the power to affect and ultimately destabilize internalized cultures of consumption, thereby challenging identities that are tied to them.

Despite this, the increasing profitability of processed vegetarian foods is also accelerating the rate at which the terminology and characteristics of the movement are being separated from its ideology. In a recent article in *Forbes* online entitled "Vegetarian Sales Get Meaty," statistics on product sales illustrate this trend. According to the global market research firm, Mintel, writes Tatge "Vegetarian food sales doubled since 1998, hitting $1.6 billion in 2003 . . . [and are forecast[ed] to grow another 61% by 2008" (Tatge para. 1). Of vegetarian products, non-dairy alternatives to milk have seen the most growth. According to Mintel, these sales increased 68% from 2001 to 2003 to approximately $301 million in revenue (Tatge para. 11).

However, a statistic conducted by Harris Interactive for the Vegetarian Resource group in 2003 which is also cited in the article, claims that only 2.8% of the adult population consider themselves vegetarian. What the *Forbes* article does not clarify is that in this case the survey results only include vegetarians who "NEVER EAT: Meat, Poultry, Fish/Seafood, Dairy Products, Eggs, Honey" (*Vegetarian Journal* issue 3, 2003). This is a small percentage in comparison to the 6-10% that considered themselves

"almost vegetarian" and the 20-25% that considered themselves "vegetarian inclined." This small percentage is also the same percentage that is most likely conforms to a vegetarian lifestyle as well as a vegetarian diet. Despite an obvious increase in the number of Americans who are interested in and purchase processed vegetarian food, the increase in those who "NEVER EAT: Meat, Poultry, Fish/Seafood, Dairy Products, Eggs, Honey" has not risen accordingly, shifting from .3% to 1% of the population in 1994 to 2.8% of the population in 2003 (www.vrg.org). Despite this, the sales of these products continues to increase. Nonetheless, the corporatized version of the movement may be missing its heart.

While movement advocates understand the danger of promoting a vegetarian diet as independent of the ideological and moral foundations that it characterizes, the companies that are now responsible for crafting a vegetarian identity may not. Because they are strictly motivated by profit, these companies may eventually abandon their promotion of vegetarianism in favor of other more lucrative cultures of consumption, like the current "low-carb" phenomenon that advocates heavy consumption of meat and dairy. The aim of a corporation is to increase profits. If vegetarianism fades in popularity, companies may no longer feel motivated to produce and market vegetarian-friendly products.

As the capitalist model gets hold of the vegetarian movement, it is emptying the movement of its ethical core. Although increased product availability undoubtedly makes it easier to maintain this lifestyle and to introduce it to non-vegetarians, it does not provide the necessary motivation or *impetus* for individuals to adopt a vegetarian ethic

that characterizes lifelong commitment to social transformation and attempts to confront and dismantle dominant consumption narratives. While product availability may mean that more people ask for soymilk in their latte, it does not necessarily encourage them subscribe to it as an ideology, or more importantly for the movement, to argue for it as social practice.

As these inconsistencies suggest, the vegetarian movement and the identities that are associated with it are both advanced and endangered by the mainstreaming of the movement. More vegetarian alternatives are being manufactured and sold, which suggests that fewer animal products are being consumed. Despite this, the number of committed vegetarians in the U.S. is still surprisingly small. For these movement adherents who advocate a world in which vegetarianism replaces meat-eating as the dominant culture of consumption, these statistics are hopeful and indicate progress. However, statistics gathered by the United Soybean Board in 2001 claim that although more and more people seem to be following a vegetarian diet, 72% do so for health and dietary concerns (http://www.forbes.com/commerce/2004/09/15). This does little to advocate the ethical vegetarian movement as it is rhetorically constructed and understood by those within it.

Where We Go From Here

Those who study ethical vegetarianism in the US as a cultural movement must consider the political and economic nature of changes within the movement that arise organically out of an environment in which advanced capitalism and technology shape

culture. Because the movement has changed significantly since it solidified in the 1970s, especially in recent years, we must investigate how and why these changes have manifested in order to understand the current and future state of the movement. As a scholar studying the evolution of the contemporary vegetarian movement in the U.S., I am particularly interested in understanding how movement evolution is linked to changing notions of identity within and outside of movement communities and how this changing identity affects movement participation and membership. I am also interested in exploring overlooked areas of movement activity, those that take place outside traditional interpretations of the "public sphere," and the role that these encounters have in advancing the movement. As a vegetarian rhetorician, I begin this inquiry with what I know.

In order to understand the relationship of social movements to the dominant cultural ideologies they attempt to transform or replace, and related discursive constructions of identity, scholars must ground their research in specific sites of inquiry and work within paradigmatic boundaries. In this dissertation, I ground my analysis in the study of the ethical vegetarian movement in the United States and I do so as a rhetorician, one who studies the practice and implications of communication. I have chosen this movement because of the insights we gain into nontraditional sites of movement activity and the light that this particular movement shines on the relationship between personal and collective identity.

In chapter two, I argue for a tighter relationship between the study of social movements that is being done by rhetoricians and that which is being explored by

sociologists. I argue that the tendency of these theorists to rely on scholarship from within their own discipline while overlooking scholarship being done in other disciplines limits our understanding of social movements. To better facilitate this relationship, I review the major paradigms within sociology and rhetoric studies in order to design a more interdisciplinary perspective that makes use of the most significant contributions that each paradigm has to offer and that offers us new ways to distinguish between and align movements with one other. As part of this model of inquiry, I infuse the dominant sociological paradigms—Resource Mobilization, New Social Movement scholarship, and Frame Theory—with rhetorical approaches to discourse analysis and identity construction.

In chapter three, I argue one specific contribution that a rhetorical analysis of the ethical vegetarian movement can offer: insight into dialectics of personal interaction as movement activity. I look at this dynamic primarily through conversion narratives and testimonials that I solicited from a wide array of movement participants. By examining the movement significance of non- or less-public encounters such as one-on-one encounters between vegetarians and non-vegetarians and encounters between animals and humans, I explore embodied rhetoric as an important, yet misunderstood, form of rhetoric. I argue that understanding the confrontational nature of embodied rhetoric is fundamental for the ethical vegetarian movement and, possibly, for the study of social movements in general.

In chapter four, I examine cultures of consumption and their effect on personal and collective identities. Specifically, I analyze how the culture of meat is sustained and

how the vegetarian movement attempts to dismantle it. As part of this, I examine how a collective, yet compartmentalized, vegetarian identity is constructed and sustained by individuals and organizations who are affiliated with the movement. I argue that movement organizations and advocates attempt to present vegetarianism as an aspect of personal identity as well as collective identity and movement advocacy as a part of membership. I argue that movement participants internalize this rhetoric as suggested by the religious rhetoric that they use to describe their conversion to and commitment to vegetarianism.

Finally, in chapter five, I examine what impact this all has on the future of the movement as it becomes more mainstreamed and argue the value of a rhetorical approach to the study of social movements. I discuss how the rhetorical features of the vegetarian movement are transforming as a result of the corporatization of vegetarianism. I continue my discussion of how the movement is changing as it is becoming corporatized and mainstreamed. I examine counter-movement initiatives and the movement's struggle to keep vegetarianism aligned with the ethical imperatives that guide it. This is evidenced by the dissidence that exists between the message of the movement and the various goals of the members that it represents.

When I began my research, my immediate interest in defining the vegetarian movement rhetorically was motivated by my desire to distinguish it from other similar movements, such as the animal rights movement, in order to more clearly understand the precise aims of the movement and the means it employees toward those goals. My focus was on the history of the movement and the contemporary movement. My goal was also

to use the knowledge I gained through this inquiry to further illuminate the potential of the individual through inter- and intrapersonal interaction for manifesting large scale cultural and social transformation. However, as I learned more about the transforming nature of the ethical vegetarian movement and how it is interwoven with the corporate model, I also became interested in the future of the movement. After exploring the rhetorical features that distinguish the ethical vegetarian movement from other movements, I argue that those original features must continue to define the movement if it hopes to continue to resist incorporation into the very social and cultural structure that it has historically fought to dismantle.

As more and more movements are threatened by corporatization, the study of social movements becomes even more essential to those interested in the potential of individuals to assert their agency and claim their own identity. We are approaching an important time in the scholarship of social movements when different disciplines, nations, and paradigms are beginning to integrate the insights of each other towards this end. As Roberta Garner recognizes,

> Social Movement Theory promises to be one of the most active areas of the social sciences in the opening of the twenty-first century. It is a prime site for bringing mainstream academic sociology and Marxist theory together with each other and with new developments in cultural studies, feminism, and postmodern thought. (42)

Garner's claim is only true, however, if we can reconcile incongruities in the study of social movements by integrating contributions being made by each paradigm and use this

knowledge to secure the safety of movements that resist blind tradition and challenge us to claim our own future. Approaching these movements rhetorically allows us to do just that.

Chapter 2 Social Movement Scholarship from Seed to Harvest

Traditional social movement scholarship in the U.S. formed as a means of understanding how and why visible displays of collective action and social protest, such as early labor solidarity strikes, functioned. Theorists focused on independent, long-standing political movements with clearly delineated constituencies and boundaries. In the past thirty years, however, the landscape of social movements has changed drastically. Current social movement scholars struggle with voluntary cultural movements where identity politics determine constituency and where social and cultural transformation are as important as, or more important than, political change. In other words, contemporary social movements often attempt to critique and adjust social norms by encouraging participants to claim an identity of their own making instead of, or in addition to, working for changes in public policy and legislation. These cultural movements challenge theorists to re-adjust their perceptions of what constitutes a social movement.

For sociologists, explorations into what constitutes a social movement and how we study one has meant vacillating between paradigms that study *how* movement organizations acquire resources in order to affect change and *why* individuals choose to participate in these movements in the first place. In order to explore these facets of movement activity, sociologists rely on several theoretical models. These include the Resource Mobilization Model, the New Social Movement Model, and Framing Processes Model. Although scholars within each of these paradigms struggle to articulate why and how movements form and evolve, they rarely speak across paradigmatic boundaries.

Similarly, communication scholars and others who are interested in rhetorical approaches to the study of social movements tend to gloss over the contributions being made by sociologists. Ultimately, however, the most comprehensive model in the study of social movements is one that is capable of incorporating insights from each approach organically. Studying a movement by its rhetorical footprint is one approach.

An amalgamation of this sort needs to be grounded within the study of a specific movement and work outward. The valuable contributions that each paradigm has to offer are in part determined by the movement they are applied to, since each movement prioritizes different methods of persuasion and establishes distinctive connections among these methods of persuasion. For example, narrative as a persuasive strategy is employed by numerous social movements; however, it is employed for different reasons and to facilitate different ends. While the Farm Workers movement of the 1970s used narratives from the civil rights movement to assure participants of the possibility of success and create a connection between the aims and constituencies of both movements, the anti-war movement used “sit-in” narratives to mobilize individuals and groups to participate in acts of civil disobedience. While the Farm Workers illustrate how narratives served as a bridge between two movements—the Farm Workers movement and the Civil Rights movement, the anti-war example illustrates how a movement created and disseminated its own narrative in the hopes of encouraging others to act in accordance with this narrative.

From a theorist’s perspective, then, the case can be made that movements are distinguishable from one another by the way that they *employ* strategies for persuasion, even if they use the same strategies. In other words, a movement can be characterized by

its rhetorical features or by the “fusion of [its] substantive and stylistic features” (Kohrs Campbell “Oxymoron” 74). While social movement scholarship has historically been grounded in sociology, political theory, communication studies, and psychology, it is this organic relationship between the study of social movements and rhetorical theory that allows us to distinguish among movements by the interplay of *what* a movement seeks to accomplish and *how* it does so. Despite this, rhetoricians have only contributed peripherally and sporadically to the conversations about social movements, mostly through discourse analysis in the public sphere. I will discuss the contributions and limitations of rhetorical scholarship on social movements in more detail later in this chapter and ultimately argue for a revival and evolution of such scholarship. However, a thorough discussion of this scholarship can only take place in relation to the work being done by sociologists. Since most of the scholarship on social movements has historically been done by sociologists, it is important to begin any discussion of social movements with a review of the work that has characterized inquiry into how social change is manifested.

In this chapter, I review the distinct features of each of the three dominant paradigms in sociological approaches to the study of contemporary social movement: Resource Mobilization, New Social Movements, and Frame Analysis. Within this review, I explore what these paradigms can tell researchers about a specific site of study—the ethical vegetarian movement. As part of this analysis, I also examine the limitations of each of these models. I uncover assumptions that limit their effectiveness and argue for a more integrated approach that combines rhetorical theory with sociological scholarship. I

argue that while each paradigm contributes important insight into movement formation and transformation, as well as constituency recruitment and mobilization, taken alone each paradigm fails to provide a thorough understanding of how movements evoke social transformation because they do not define a movement rhetorically—by the relationship between a movement's means and its aims. Nor do they make use of rhetorical scholarship on identity formation and persuasion, both essential attributes of contemporary social movements. Throughout this chapter, I illustrate the flaws and contributions that each model could make to a study of the ethical vegetarian movement. I begin this discussion with a brief history of the study of social movements in the U.S.

Planting the Seed—Early Inquiry into the Study of Social Movements

As social movements themselves weave in and out of political arenas and embed themselves more deeply in cultural manipulation, social movement theory is becoming more multidisciplinary. As a result, theorists' understanding of what actually constitutes a social movement is changing. What remains the same, however, is an emphasis on collective action as a means of social protest and a tool for social change. According to American sociologist Roberta Garner in the introduction to *Social Movement Theory and Research: An Annotated Bibliographical Guide* (1997), "social movements are usually defined as collectivities engaged in non-institutionalized discourses and practices aimed at changing the existing condition of society" (1). Similarly, rhetoricians like Sillars and Cathcart emphasize a study of movement discourses, both verbal and non-verbal, as rhetorically constructed collective action that confronts dominant cultural practices.

Italian sociologist and New Social Movement theorist Alberto Melucci describes this confrontation as “a form of collective action based on solidarity, carrying a conflict, and breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs” (“Symbolic Challenge” 795). Benford and Snow, who adapted frame articulation theory to the study of social movements, use these collective action frames to study movements and the related identity claims of their participants. According to Benford and Snow, “a frame is ‘an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environments’” (qtd. in “Master Frames” 137). These frames, then, serve as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (“Framing Processes” 614).

A key element of social movement activity, and a defining characteristic of social movements, is the conflict between movement participants and the institutionalized norms that movement discourses and actions consciously attempt to dismantle or adjust. However, this aspect alone cannot account for how change is manifest on an individual level. While the dynamic between movement and structure is an important site for analysis, so also is the dynamic between individuals who represent, consciously or otherwise, the ideology of the movement or dominant culture. I argue that we also need to examine and understand the dialectic between individuals that takes place in less- or non-public arenas as movement activity and that, in order to do so, we must study their discourse practices and rhetorical strategies in these less-public encounters.

One of the reasons that this area of inquiry has been overlooked is because, historically, the study of social movements has been located outside of rhetoric studies. Despite the organic relationship between rhetoric and the study of social movements, social movement scholarship has traditionally been the domain of social psychology and sociology, which is concerned more with collectivities than individuals. The degree to which this was the case, however, has shifted over time. In her article "Fifty Years of Social Movement Theory: An Interpretation," Roberta Garner traces the evolution of modern social movement theory as understood within sociology. She identifies three distinct periods beginning around the end of WWII, each period marked by major paradigm shifts that she claims were caused by internal developments of the field, shifting intellectual currents in larger culture, and changes in the nature of movements.

According to Garner and her history of social movements, the first period of social movement activity and theory spanned the postwar period (1945-60) and focused on collective action as a product of individual psychology. In this post-WWII climate, scholars employed social psychology and psychoanalytic theory to develop collective behavior/action models and mass society theories. The most universal of these analytical frame works is now referred to as classical collective behavior theory. In *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism* (2000), Steven Buechler outlines the core assumptions of classical collective behavior theory.[7] He claims that collective behavior theorists viewed acts of collective behavior--ranging from crazed mobs to social movements—as relatively patternless, unpredictable and irrational psychological acts. As

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[7] Term attributed to Robert Park, 1903 (Garner 13).

such, collective behavior was extremely non-institutional and separate from the "patterns and rhythms of normal daily life and caused by societal stress, strain, or breakdown" ("Social" 20). Because these forms of frustration and anxiety seemed to be located within the individual, psychological investigation became the main tool for theorists examining and explaining "the translation of individual discontent into genuinely collective action" (20). In this respect, collective behavior theory was created by scholars to help them interpret how cultural forces were transformed into individual motivations, predispositions, and propensities.

This interpretation of how and why collective action emerged assumed that individuals who were involved in social movements were products of psychological manipulation instead of rational participants. Although this early work was the most directed towards understanding how individuals come to identify with movements—specifically how individuals become motivated to join social movements, how individual identity becomes intertwined with collective identity, and how collective identity inspires action—each individual was understood as acted upon, having little or no agency of her/his own. A rhetorical approach to the study of social movements—one that takes interpersonal interaction into account and revisits the how intersections between personal and collective identity form—could advance social movement scholarship by returning to individual interaction as a sites of movement activity without attributing such activity to psychological indoctrination.

The dominance of the classical collective behavior model of inquiry during the early days of social movement scholarship is due to an increase in what seemed to be

"spontaneous" movements. In other words, theorists struggled to explain what seemed otherwise unexplainable. The rise of Nazism in Europe and the willingness of German citizens to subscribe to it, the equally forceful communist revolution in Cuba, and the rise of fascist dictatorships around the globe suggested that collective behavior was intoxicating and unexpected. Guided by Theodor Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), theorists of the early period focused on movements that threatened liberal democratic institutions and ideology, such as the rise of these fascist dictatorships, while ignoring more subtle, but influential, turmoil bubbling up within America's borders (Garner 10-12).

Despite growing dissent within the US, scholars who understood social movements in this way also understood America in the 1950s as relatively homogenous and unmarked by rash and powerful acts of collective behavior. According to Steven Buechler, it was "characterized as a culture of affluence, progress, and prosperity," where challenges to the system appeared to emerge from outside of the system instead of from discontents within it ("Advanced Capitalism" 31). Buechler cites McCarthyism as an example of how external threats prompted social movements in a time when

> relations between management and labor appeared harmonious, when race relations had yet to "heat up," when images of marital bliss and familial harmony pervaded gender arrangements, when unprecedented educational and housing opportunities were becoming available to untold millions of Americans, when images of technological progress and material affluence were ubiquitous, and when the United States was the indisputable leader of the "free world." (32)

In Buechler's assessment, the "American Celebration" simply eclipsed any internal opposition while the need to band together against external forces, such as the communist threat, blossomed.

The limits of this model of analysis became apparent when the libratory movements of the 1960s began to emerge. This model's inability to explain goal-oriented movements, such as "rights" movements, that sought to transform the political system promoted a change in the way scholars understand social movements. Unlike the "spontaneous" movements of the 1940s and 1950s, these movements argued for ethical consistency by calculating and consciously employing the most effective means toward that end. Movement participants suggested that the enemy was not outside the system but within the policies and ideologies of repression that lived within the social and political structure of the system. In the US, normalized rhetorics shifted away from the "red threat" and toward the "black" one as race violence and civil disobedience grew louder, especially in the south. On the world stage, Congolese uprisings against imperialist Belgian rule represented this conscious type of collective action and social movement activity that proclaimed liberation as its goal and that worked for social as well as political transformation. In other words, these "new" movements sought to transform how people think as well as the laws that reflect this thinking. These movements—the civil rights movement in the US, decolonization initiatives worldwide, and other emerging voices for liberation and equality—challenged a new generation of sociologists who were coming of age in the 1960s to develop theories about social movements that could account for these new libratory forms of movements. Because of the shifting

landscape of social movements, the world they existed within, and the emergence of a "new" generation of sociologists who examined these movements in context, social movement scholarship underwent a sea change at this time.

An important part of this sea change was an abandonment of individual psychology paradigms that emphasized the phenomenon of mass society in favor of a study of organizations. Movement scholars began to look more carefully at movement organizations as tangible representations of the aims and means of a movement. Because the rise of movement organizations implied rational thinking and purpose-driven actions on the part of movement participants, these organizations served as valuable sites of analysis. Scholars replaced the study of individual psychology with the study of *structure* as "the patterning of activities and relationships, abstracted from and existing independently of individual motivation" and as "a set of limiting conditions on individual action" (Garner 19).

Almost exclusively dominant during the 1960s and early-mid 1970s especially, this emerging paradigm, known as Resource Mobilization, emphasized organizations as intentional manifestations and movement participants and activity as rational and cogent, unlike the previous period. While early theorists assumed collective behavior was both spontaneous and a product of mob mentality, this new generation of sociologists understood organizations as "undertaking rational strategies to change structural conditions" (Garner 5). As a result of this changing perspective, sociologists identified the emergence of, to use Garner's terminology, a second period of social movement scholarship. She claims that this period (1960s-present with paradigm modifications in

early/mid 70s) is guided by several theoretical approaches to understanding how and why movements form and function. This period is primarily associated with the Resource Mobilization Model, the New Social Movement paradigm, and Frame Articulation Theories.

Resource Mobilization

> *PETA is not just the most raucous of the big humane groups, but it deserves the trophy right now for doing the most for the largest number of animals—those that feed us.*
>
> –Los Angeles Times

> *In September of 1982, The Vegetarian Resource Group was founded by a vegan doctor, vegetarian nurse, a Master's swimmer, and two activists. Our goals have always been to: 1) Provide scientific and practical information; 2) Go beyond those who are already vegan and reach the various segments of the community; and 3) Reduce the barriers to becoming vegetarian.*
>
> –*Vegetarian Journal* 2002 Issue 3

In his speech "Effective Advocacy: Stealing from the Corporate Playbook," Bruce Friedrich of PeTA encourages activists to think consciously about the decisions they make in relation to the changes they hope to evoke, the policies they want to effect, and the way that their actions impact members outside of the community. He argues that "if we want to have the greatest impact possible, I believe that we have a moral obligation to stop, step back, and think strategically about the most effective ways to lessen suffering." As an advocate of social justice for over 20 years, Friedrich also encourages activists to reflect on their actions and ways to make them more effective. He writes that

> Empathy isn't enough. And neither is arbitrary action. We have to always be aware that every time we choose to do something, we're choosing not to do something else. So it's crucial that we strive to use our time as

> effectively as possible. One of the most common reasons why we go wrong is that even if we are working extremely hard and even if we are dedicated to animals and making our activism for them a priority, few of us are working to become more effective. (www.GoVeg.com)

This metacognitive awareness on the part of movement participants refutes earlier claims that social movements were the result of spontaneous, unpredictable and mostly irrational action brought about by mob mentalities. It also confirms movements as self-aware and self-reflective. This type of movement is drastically different from those being studied during the 1950s and before. Since more of these self-conscious and organized movements were becoming influential, scholars in the 1960s needed to rethink their analytical methods.

With the rise of the libratory movements of the 1960s and as postwar perceptions of movements as irrational dissolved, the next generation of scholars birthed new approaches to the study of social movements. Of these, the Resource Mobilization model emerged as dominant. It was developed in response to the changing nature of movements and of the individuals who participated in them. Scholars no longer categorized movement participants as irrational and unpredictable. Instead individuals were understood as rational actors whose most effective means of collective action were establishing and maintaining influential movement organizations. In this respect, the focus of analysis shifted from individual participants to structural manifestations.

As part of this shift, scholars abandoned efforts to explain *why* movements came into being for the study of *how* they functioned once they existed. What their research indicated was that the types of goals that these movements sought differed from previous movements. Unlike earlier movements, such as the bourgeois revolution in France and

the rise of Nazism in Germany, these movements did not attempt to dismantle the system of government so much as they aimed to gain a voice within it. Civil Rights activists wanted a seat at the table, literally and figuratively, and although many of the more radical members, like the Black Panthers, sought a revisioning of the system as a whole, the movement was designed to effect change from within. Similarly, the anti-war movement demanded a change in the national agenda, but it was willing to participate in or facilitate the process of change within the system instead of by dismantling it.[8] The cry of these movements, though powerful, was one of liberation, not revolution.

As these movements emerged, scholars developed the Resource Mobilization paradigm to analyze them. Since then, it has continued to influence sociological approaches to the study of social movements. Traditionally, Resource Mobilization theorists study how movements organize participants and resources in order to influence civic society. They explore individual movements by analyzing how movement organizations structure themselves, advocate their cause, and effect change. Interested in understanding what made a movement *successful*, or capable of affecting large-scale change, these theorists abandoned the quest to understand why movements came into being and with it the study of individual motive. Instead, they replaced this concern with more tangible analyses of the ways that *organizations* increase membership, implement tactics, maneuver around constraints, and acquire resources. These resources include not only hard funds, but also media support, philanthropic support, and lobby power, as well

[8] Resource Mobilization scholars have long emphasized the extra-systemic means through which social movements act. However, they have been much less concerned with the location of the goals of these movements. It is these goals that I refer to as working within the system. In this respect, these movements act as reform movements instead of revolutionary ones.

as the time and energy of the activists themselves. In this respect, the key area of inquiry for Resource Mobilization scholars was organizations and their ability to facilitate change. For these scholars, individual agency, then, is best understood as participation in movement organizations which dictate movement rhetoric and activity.

The study of movement organizations is valuable because it emphasizes the strategic characteristics of specific movements, including the ways in which organizations purposefully craft collective identity. For the ethical vegetarian movement, an investigation of this sort might examine how vegetarian organizations have affected the evolution of vegetarian terminology and how, in turn, this shifting terminology inspires change in the way vegetarians define themselves. Scholars might also examine how PeTA uses Hollywood to elicit media attention for the promotion of vegetarianism or how it recruits members nationwide to participate in public demonstrations. This model, however, is limited in several respects. Because they focus on how movements work instead of why they form, Resource Mobilization scholars tend to devalue the role of the individual in movement activity. They also tend to analyze civic-minded movements, while overlooking those that seek civil transformation such as identity movements. Finally, they do not differentiate movements rhetorically, which blurs important distinctions between separate movements, such as the animal rights movement and the vegetarian movement.

The reasoning behind this model of movement analysis assumes that social transformation is primarily manifested by movement organizations that represent the collective agency of these individual agents. Because *organization* rhetoric and activity is

more visible than that which takes place on an individual level, these organizations are understood as being more equipped to attain and disseminate movement resources, which in turn provides further opportunity for effecting social change. The more successful a movement organization is in gathering resources and mobilizing its community, the more influential its work becomes. According to Resource Mobilization theorists, this makes the study of these organizations, as structural representations of individual movements, the most viable site for analysis. The effectiveness of movement organizations then indicates the degree to which a movement is well-established and has a recognizable constituency, reliable ways to communicate with and engage that constituency, clear allies and adversaries, and established avenues between a movement and the structures it hopes to influence.

From a Resource Mobilization standpoint, the status of an ethical vegetarian movement is tied to the effectiveness of the organizations that represent it. Although countless regional and local advocacy groups contribute to the ethical vegetarian movement, several key organizations dominate the movement nationwide. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA) is the most notorious of these organizations. Although PeTA defines itself as an Animal Rights group, as part of their animal rights agenda PeTA has advocated the vegetarian movement for over twenty-five years. Along with PeTA, the Vegetarian Resource Group (est. 1982) and Vegan Outreach (est. 1998) supply the growing community of vegetarians and interested outsiders with information about the movement and about opportunities for participation. Collectively, these

organizations helped to establish and revise the identity of the movement and use their resources to affect both civic and civil changes to the ritual of meat-eating in the U.S.

However, the ethical vegetarian movement lies outside of the traditional domain of Resource Mobilization scholars. This is primarily because the Resource Mobilization model was designed for movements whose aims were state-centric or civic in nature. Although Resource Mobilization theorists are beginning to look at movements that seek to affect civil society as indicated by Mayer Zald's article in *Mobilization* "Ideologically Structured Action: An Enlarged Agenda for Social Movement Research" (2000), Resource Mobilization scholars have historically overlooked these movements. They have been primarily concerned with large-scale, highly organized movements seeking civic and related economic transformations.

Libratory movements such as the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement typified the well-known, large-scale movements that Resource Mobilization was designed to study. Not surprisingly, Resource Mobilization scholars often focused on how these movements used public displays of civil disobedience, such as boycotts and protests, as leverage in their fight to be heard by a government that denied their concerns. Movement theorists looked at how these subdivided members by degrees of activism and organized leadership within the movement. John McCarthy and Mayer Zald's famous 1977 work "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory" outlined an economistic approach to Resource Mobilization that emphasized "the supply and demand aspects of movements, competition and differentiation within social movement industries, and so on" in addition to their emphasis on internal movement structure (Zald

2). In this way, theorists could begin to learn from the similarities and differences they studied within and among movements.

However, this type of analysis is less useful in the study of movements that intersect and overlap with one another and whose primary means of recruitment happen on a one-by one basis. What distinguishes these types of movements from one another is their unique rhetorical identity. Because Resource Mobilization theorists do not define a movement rhetorically—by its rhetorical footprint—the ethical vegetarian movement has appeared indistinguishable from related movements. Since affiliated organizations like PeTA often advocate the objectives of related movements, such as that of animal rights or eco-conservation, as their primary domain, they are not typically identified as vegetarian movement organizations. In addition, the ethical vegetarian movement's primary agenda is civil, about identity and cultural reform, and is manifested outside direct organizational influence.

For the vegetarian movement, unlike many movements, *permanent individual* transformation is an essential demand of the movement. As part of their membership in the movement, individuals must embody the defining characteristic of the movement—they must become vegetarian. Numerous "conversion narratives" or first-hand accounts of this transformation suggest the impetus for this transformation is often another individual, or a particular text, not an organization. I will go into further detail about this in chapter three.

The tendency of Resource Mobilization scholarship to overlook these important sites for analysis, as well as their tendency for ignoring cultural movements, eventually

led to critiques of this model. Brought on by what Roberta Garner labels a "period of deconstruction" and characterized by the emergence of counter movements and the recognition of cultural movements, scholars called for a new type of movement analysis that could explain not only *how* movements functioned, but also *why* they formed. In the mid-1970s, social movements and the study of them shifted once again. According to her history, the third period in social movement scholarship is characterized by challenges to Resource Mobilization that centered on the paradigms' dismissal of the role of the individual and of the role of ideology in the formation and success of social movements. These critiques eventually led to changes within Resource Mobilization approaches to social movement scholarship. While Resource Mobilization researchers credited the paradigm with "provid[ing] an important and capacious paradigm for theorizing and research" for over three decades, they too began to investigate faults within the paradigm (Zald "Social Movements" 2).

Just as traditional notions of collective behavior came under scrutiny as scholars began to recognize intentional, rational movements, the restrictions of the Resource Mobilization paradigm motivates scholars to develop new approaches to the study of social movements. As Mayer Zald points out in a recent article, the Resource Mobilization paradigm came of age before the "cultural turn" in the study of social movements. He writes that the RM model "emerged in a period when a behavior structuralist orientation [. . .] had detached itself from the study of ideas and philosophy and their embodiment in institutions and general epistemes" (Zald 2). By the 1970's, however, scholars began to argue that the role of identity formation and participation was

also an important course of study. They argued that movements such as the second wave of feminism, the resurgence of Native Pride movements, and environmental movements sought to transform perceptions of identity by challenging cultural codes instead of or in addition to public policy.

Nevertheless, in many ways, the Resource Mobilization paradigm is a useful tool for rhetoricians who seek to understand how the vegetarian movement works for social change. By looking at the shifting ways that the ethical vegetarian movement frames its agenda rhetorically according to its audience, we gain insight into both the movement and the dominant cultural norm that it is trying to adjust. This is reflected to some degree in the new food pyramid that was released by the USDA in April 2005. While the American Dairy Council and Beef Council have been powerful influences on the food pyramid, groups like PCRM (Physician's Council for Responsible Medicine) and the Vegetarian Resource Group are also planning to testify before the USDA, advocating that the Dairy Group be more accurately named as the Calcium group, just as the Meat Group gave way to the Protein Group in the 1992 revision. Since Dean Foods, one of the largest dairy distributors in the country, recently acquired both Horizon Organics (an organic dairy producer) and WhiteWave (the largest national soymilk producer), the influence of the U.S. Dairy Council may give way to these emerging interests. However, these large scale changes are only part of the story--one that does not account for the types of ideological transformations that take place within cultures of consumption.

Because Resource Mobilization scholarship was ill-equipped to, or uninterested in, exploring the connection between identity and movement participation or theorizing

the role of dominant culture in shaping identity, social movement scholars worked to develop a theory that could. Shifting the emphasis from how movements functioned to why they formed, European scholars developed the New Social Movement paradigm, which emerged as an influential contrast to the Resource Mobilization model. These theorists' emphasize identity formation in respect to social movement involvement. For the ethical vegetarian movement, establishing and complicating vegetarian identities is essential. New Social Movement scholarship, as a sociological approach, helps scholars understand how such an identity comes into being.

New Social Movements

> *Consumption is the fulfillment of oppression, the annihilation of will, of separate identity.*
>
> –Carol Adams *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

> *When I say that I'm a vegan, I'm describing a lot more than people think. The diet itself is only a small part of it. Veganism is a lifestyle, a state of mind, a stage of awareness, and an openness of heart, mind, and soul. It's something that I believe defines the kind of person I am.*
>
> –Taken from a 2003 submission essay for the Vegetarian Resource Group's college scholarship for graduating high school seniors who have promoted vegetarianism in their schools or communities.

To a vegetarian, the now shineless cover of the 1952 cookbook *Dishes Men Like* is striking. The cover is divided into fifteen blocks, each showing a picture of dishes such as oyster bar stew, steak stroganoff, pork and bean bake, deviled chicken, and London loaf. Every dish on the cover, including the Caesar salad, is made of meat. The cookbook itself includes helpful sections such as the "good 'go-together'" section in which side dishes are paired with main dishes under such categories as "When the main dish is

MEAT," "When the main dish is CHICKEN," "When the main dish is FISH," and "When the main dish is CHEESE OR EGGS." It also has a section on "How to Carve" because "good meat looks better, tastes better when correctly carved" (56) and because "it goes without saying that most women choose dishes men like. And men have quite definite likes and dislikes about food" (2). What is most interesting about this cookbook, especially in relationship to vegetarianism as a movement, are the implicit cultural and social norms that underlie the gendering of meat. While this cookbook may not be traditionally understood as a movement artifact, it does highlight the connection between social identity—in this case, gender—and rhetorics of consumption.

This type of scholarship, though valuable for understanding movement formation and persistence, is outside of the realm of interest in Resource Mobilization models. While Resource Mobilization scholars concentrate on explicating detailed accounts of "how" individual organizations gather resources in order to evoke change, they do not account for "why" organizations form and how identity concerns and cultural norms affect movement involvement. In the 1980s and 1990s, critiques of the Resource Mobilization paradigm became more prevalent in social movement literature (Garner 1997, Cohen 1985, Melucci 1995; 1996, Pichardo 2000, Mayer 1991, Buechler 1995), especially in Europe where the New Social Movement paradigm was emerging. These New Social Movement theorists, namely Alberto Melucci (Italy), Habermas (Germany), Touraine (France), and Castell (Spain), see contemporary social movements as exchanging an overtly civic agenda in favor of one that seeks transformation within the arenas of culture. They emphasize identity as a crucial source of inquiry. Identity politics

movements that heralded "the personal as political" gained influence in the US as well; however, the New Social Movement scholarship that emerged in response to evolving European movements offers a complicated, yet thorough, look at the relationship between collective identity and social movement involvement.

New Social Movement scholars attempt to understand how communities and collective identities are created during movement mobilization. Unlike Resource Mobilization theorists, these scholars explain movement constituency as fluid and voluntary. Roberta Garner explains the difference between the two perspectives. She writes,

> Rather than seeing movements as appealing to and recruiting from support bases defined by certain preexisting and relatively stable demographic characteristics, observers now see movements as engaged in discourses and practices that create or constitute such support bases. (39)

As structurally determined constituencies faded in Europe, they were being replaced by identity-based solidarities seeking cultural control. However, since cultural affiliation and identity are not static realities, but rather constantly shifting to accommodate changing perspectives of self and context, constituencies are becoming understood as not only non-structurally determined, but also as less stable than traditional constituencies.

Instead of understanding constituencies as fairly reliable and unchanging, like previous social movement theory did, New Social Movement theorists understood them as flexible and fluid. Steven Buechler explains this new way of looking at constituency as "a variety of submerged, latent, and temporary networks . . . rather than assuming that centralized organizational forms are prerequisites for successful mobilization" (442). This changing perception of who becomes part of a social movement and why is inherently

linked to the shift in purpose. Instead of seeking civic transformation, participants fought to reclaim their identity as distinct from dominant cultural norms, which they understood as outside of their control. Because the struggle for an independent identity which differs from the dominant norm is a key characteristic of the ethical vegetarian movement, this is an especially important area of inquiry.

Since identity is no longer thought of as an a priori condition, but rather as a self-determined and fluid perception, scholars need to investigate just how a collective vegetarian identity is constructed and maintained. Understanding a vegetarian identity, however, is more complicated than understanding more unified and homogenous movements. As indicated in chapter one, definitions and perceptions of identity are often complex and fragmented as is the terminology that explains them, both within the movement and for those who witness it. While many people who eat fish consider themselves vegetarian, the movement does not. When movement participants say that they are "strict vegetarian," the meaning is often unclear because the meaning of the term is not universally agreed upon within the movement, nor is it understood by those outside of the movement. Because of these variations in the meaning of terminology and perception, understanding a collective vegetarian identity really means understanding the relationship among specific vegetarian identities which intersect, overlap, and diverge from one another. A feminist vegetarian identity, as articulated and advocated by scholars[9] and movement organizations (Feminists for Animal Rights-F.A.R.) looks and

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[9] Carol Adams *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990); Carol Adams *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals* (1994); Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan, eds. *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (1995); Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan, eds. *Beyond Animal Rights: A Feminist Caring Ethic for the Treatment of Animals* (1996); Carol Adams *The Pornography of Meat* (2003)

sounds much different from a Jewish Vegetarian identity as argued by Jewish Scholars and organizations[10] (Jews for Animal Rights-J.A.R.). Similar distinctions surface among environmentalists, Animal Rights activists and organizations, Christians, Jains, and other groups who combine a vegetarian identity with multiple other overlapping religious or ethical beliefs. Because establishing a vegetarian identity within and across these divisions is such an integral part of organizing a vegetarian movement, scholars need to understand how such an identity is formed.

This understanding of identity as chosen instead of as pre-determined characterizes New Social Movements and separates it from previous scholarship. Rooted in what Steven Buechler calls "continental European traditions of social theory and political philosophy," New Social Movement theories arose in response to inadequacies of classical Marxism for analyzing collective action that did not emerge solely out of class solidarity ("New Social Movement" 441). For New Social Movement theorists, class affiliation alone as an a priori, structurally-determined solidarity was an incomplete way of understanding identity and its role in social movement involvement in an increasingly "post-modern" world.[11] Whether it is called "post-material," "post-industrial" (Melucci, Touraine), "postmodern" (Garner), "post-Marxist" (Cohen),

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[10] Louis Berman *Vegetarianism and the Jewish Tradition* (1982); Richard Schwartz *Judaism and Vegetarianism* (1982); Roberta Kalechofsky *Vegetarian Judaism* (1998); Charles Patterson *Eternal Triblinka* (2002)

[11] Despite growing acknowledgement that working class-based movements and their materialist emphasis can no longer comprise the sole source of collective identity, many theorists still recognize class as an aspect of emerging movements, in one way or another. Steven Buechler uses the Weberian term "economic relevance" to explain that "if these movements can no longer be reduced to class, neither can they be understood apart from class" (Buechler 453). For Touraine, this means that class distinctions morph away from traditional notions of proletariat and bourgeoisie toward class conflict between the client/consumer and the managerial/technocrat classes. According to Melucci, action systems evolve in response to media messages and cultural norms that are created to serve class inequality. For him, culture and class live in a

"advanced capitalism" (Steinmetz, Buechler, Jameson), or "late capitalism" (Mandel), theorists claim that this shift dictates new language and approaches to social movements. For Roberta Garner this postmodern condition is distinguished by "a single cluster of interrelated new developments" including Post-Fordism in the economy and "the erosion or recomposition of the nation-state with sub- and supenational processes becoming more important, as nation-states lose some of their control over the national economy" (Garner 45). Relying less on structural solidarities and more on cultural hegemony and globalized discourse, this intellectual trend is one of the defining characteristics of New Social Movement scholarship.

The rise of cultural movements and related insights into agency among movement adherents are directly related to a shift in the way scholars understand the context in which these movements form. According to scholars, the context for modern social movements, ones that emerged or solidified in the last third of the 20th Century, is the climate of postmodernity. Alain Touraine interprets this reality as revolving around a devaluation and de-emphasis of workers' movements and their concerns with material production in industrial society. Although he believes that this materialist struggle served as the central conflict that characterized social movements historically, he claims that we have moved into a post-industrial society and that materialist concerns are unable to account primarily for current conflicts. According to him, modern conflicts are driven by

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dialectical relationship with one another. In this respect, he understands these "new" forms of solidarity, such as those based on more complicated understandings of identity, as joining old ones grounded solidly in traditional class conflict. This evolution in class analysis suggests that class solidarity is still influential in that it is *embedded within* more complicated perceptions of identity and agenda instead of the sole determinant.

a new social type and "characterized by new loci of power, forms of domination, modes of investment, and a 'reflexive' cultural model" where power and domination "are located at the level of cultural production itself" (in Cohen 701-2). This shift from civic action to civil action on the part of movement participants opens new spaces up to critical inquiry.

Since New Social Movement scholars see the battleground for social movement activity as cultural by nature, movements could no longer be characterized solely by public displays of collective action; rather, they are understood as interwoven with everyday life. These cultural movements existed as "a network of small groups submerged in everyday life which requires personal involvement in experiencing and practicing cultural innovation" (Melucci "Symbolic Challenge" 800). Instead of calling for political reforms, participants struggle for authority over symbolic codes, identity claims, and representation. These New Social Movements rely on individual and collective sources of identity--such as ethnicity, gender, and sexuality--and perceptions of these categories as determinants for collective activity and movement formation. Because of this, New Social Movement scholars work to theorize culture, both as a product of those in power and as a source of resistance for those without.

In order to do so effectively, scholars study how culture is disseminated, absorbed, modified and reclaimed both collectively and personally. The fundamental task of those working with New Social Movements therefore is to theorize how collective identities are established, reified, and challenged by hegemonic forces and movements respectively. The move away from clearly state-centric collective action and toward civil

action opens the door for social movement theorists to explore the role that individual and daily experience plays in the formation of collective identity. In the study of vegetarianism as a movement, the work of Alberto Melucci, who emphasizes how hegemonic cultural codes act as cultural inhibitors, is particularly useful. He studies the ways that these codes are disseminated, the effect they have on movements and on movement participation, and the strategies that movements use in order to resist and reconstruct cultural norms.

For the vegetarian movement, this analysis could help movement theorists to understand the ways that the cowboy and the cattle rancher function as American icons and how they contribute to cultures of consumption in the US, the largest consumer of beef in the world. A study of meat-eating as a cultural norm also justifies inquiry into the dual role of the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) as both consumer advocate and beef industry promoter, especially when these roles conflict with one another as they did in the recent Mad Cow scare in the U.S. (*All Things Considered* NPR, January 26, 2004). If we argue that meat-eating is a cultural norm, then the vegetarian movement is partly a struggle to redefine a vegetarian collective identity by challenging these cultures of consumption. I will go into further detail about how this happens in the vegetarian movement in chapter four.

In the case of vegetarianism, the role of the individual in sponsoring social change is especially important. Vegetarians embody the movement, literally, and this is most clearly seen when they engage in the dialectic of personal interaction—an exchange between individuals that sponsors reflection from both. This investigation into the role of

the individual is what New Social Movement scholarship prepares the way for, but leaves mostly unexplored. Since vegetarians usually understand their decision to become vegetarian as a personal one and because a vegetarian community is often contingent on such social and cultural factors as geography, ethnic identity, class, gender, and perceptions of identity (both internal and external), movement advocacy often takes the form of individual action. Most vegetarians who belong to the movement become such instead of being born into the condition of vegetarianism, even more so than such structurally or biologically-determined constituencies, such as sex, ethnicity, and class movements. Since movement participants *choose* to embody the movement by becoming vegetarians, rhetoricians and social movement scholars need to study how the vegetarian movement attempts to establish personal identity and the ways that interpersonal interaction affects choices and identity in everyday life.

By studying conversion narratives and the constructions of identity that permeate interactions between vegetarians and non-vegetarians as well other vegetarians, rhetoricians can employ New Social Movement scholarship to personal exchanges in ways that New Social Movement scholarship has ignored. While the New Social Movement paradigm emphasizes daily lived experiences as movement experiences, opening the door for the study of movement activity outside of the political and overtly public arenas, it still focuses on collective action. Although this work is helpful in understanding how a vegan potluck advocates and advances the movement, New Social Movement scholarship tends to ignore acts between individuals.

The paradigm is less helpful for understanding the impact of living as a vegetarian whereby simply acknowledging oneself as a vegetarian becomes movement activism, intentionally or otherwise. This is especially true if the vegetarian "comes out" in a place where vegetarianism is rare, as indicated by the example of the waitress in Texas who understood "vegetarian" as a beef-free diet or by the prevalence of the question "But you eat fish, right?" An inquiry based in rhetoric that makes use of the scholarship being done by New Social Movement theorists advances our understanding of how vegetarian identities are formed and maintained individually.

Such an approach could help scholars understand how vegetarians view moments of confrontation and confusion like the ones mentioned above. It could give us the language to articulate these moments of misunderstanding as chances for committed members to engage in a conversation about an "ethic of eating" that, in turn, provides an opportunity for vegetarians to educate people outside of the community on the aims and ideology of the movement. A rhetorically grounded approach that borrows from New Social Movement theory could also explain what New Social Movement theory alone can not—unintentional rhetoric. Since individual vegetarians *embody*the movement, their existence alone also acts as a confrontation to the cultural ritual of meat-eating, even if they do not consciously make use of specific encounters as chances to advance the movement. It is these types of encounters that New Social Movement theories have yet to explore.

Although New Social Movement theorists who advocate this critical turn toward the study of individuals and their daily lived experiences encourage new ways of looking

at movement activity that the Resource Mobilization model ignored, the turn away from organizations is also restrictive. The identity of many movements, like the vegetarian movement, is increasingly bound to and determined by organizations. Simultaneously, more and more organizations are vying for economic influence at a time when the capitalist model of production is undeniably dominant. As a result, these organizations prioritize certain movement ideology and goals, such as increasing the number of vegetarians, while losing sight of other key concerns, such as the relationship between the capitalist model and factory farming. In this respect, these organizations could potentially endanger the movement by separating movement goals from the ideology that informs them.

If Bruce Friedrich's speech to animal rights activists, "Effective Advocacy: Stealing from the Corporate Playbook," is any indication of the state of the animal rights movement or the vegetarian movement, this critique is a necessary one. Because movement goals and strategies are no longer overtly tied to movement ideology, I question the degree to which the Animal Rights movement is really, as Friedrich suggests, "Stealing from the Corporate Playbook." I argue that PeTA may actually be contributing to the very system it first set out to dismantle. Ultimately, it may not matter that the distribution and sale of products like soymilk reached $301 million in 2003 or that the term "vegan" is quickly becoming part of the cultural vernacular of the nation if these statistics do not reflect transformations in American cultures of consumption. To what degree is PeTA able to promote this cultural revolution if it now owns stock in McDonalds, Albertson's, and Outback Steakhouse, companies that promote the large-

scale distribution and consumption of meat?[12] Similarly, the Vegetarian Resource Group is actively working to promote Sysco's new line of soymilk, Moonrose[tm], because of Sysco's potential for mass distribution.

However, is such corporatization more beneficial to the vegetarian movement because the increased availability of soy milk is likely to mean a decrease in the consumption of cow's milk and ultimately lead to a more compassionate approach to eating, or is it more beneficial to Sysco because they have found a way to expand into new markets? Can it be beneficial to both? As the ethical vegetarian movement becomes corporatized, it must choose between rearranging certain cultural and structural hegemonies, such as the rise of the mega-corporation, and other dominant cultural codes, such as the ritual of meat-eating. Because the ethical vegetarian movement is becoming more corporatized, it is having an increasingly difficult time honoring and working toward several of its most important goals.

Although vegetarian identities in the modern movement are characterized by the interplay among ethical, environmental, and health concerns, all of these coalesce around our nation's increased dependence on factory farming as the dominant means of livestock rearing and rendering. From *Animal Liberation* to *Fast Food Nation*, this overtly industrial practice and the materialist effects of this practice on humans, animals, and the environment drive the vegetarian movement. However, New Social Movement theorists have long argued that the postmodern condition, with its de-emphasis on materialist

[12] In 1993, PeTA purchased stock in each of these companies and works with the board of directors to establish more humane practices for the care and slaughter of food animals and to encourage these companies to carry more vegan and vegetarian products.

concerns, has been the bedrock for building identity in contemporary cultural movements. Unlike other “cultural” movements, the vegetarian movement, and the identity of those who align themselves with it, is grounded in and motivated by materialist concerns as well as symbolic representation. Because these material concerns are directly related to the capitalist model of production, the efficacy of organizations--as advocates of the movement ideology--decreases as the movement adopts this model.

As these concerns illustrate, neither the Resource Mobilization paradigm nor the New Social Movement paradigm can provide a comprehensive understanding of the ethical vegetarian movement. Neither model defines a movement by its rhetorical qualities as they are manifest at the individual and organizational levels, the most important of which is the concept of a collective vegetarian identity and how this identity is represented rhetorically. By defining a movement by its rhetorical footprint—its persuasive legacy and how this legacy is manifested—scholars can integrate these otherwise competing paradigms within a single framework and garner the insights that each has to offer. To date, the closest example of this type of scholarship is Frame Articulation theory. Frame theorists attempt to demystify symbolic representation by combining Resource Mobilization strategies for explaining “how” movements form and function with New Social Movement scholarship on “why.” As the dominant descendant of Herbert Blumer’s work with symbolic interaction, frame theory is useful for understanding the rhetorical nature of social movements.

Frame Theory

I support PeTA (People Eating Tasty Animals)
-Bumpersticker

Fighting the ideology that sustains the vast apparatus of oppression is indeed vital; but shutting down the apparatus itself is what counts.
--*Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer (revised ed. 1995)

According to the Vegetarian Resource Group's 2003 Harris Interactive poll, only 2.8% of those polled identify themselves as vegetarians who *never* eat meat, poultry, fish/seafood with over half of this group also abstaining from dairy, eggs and honey. [13] An active organization in the vegetarian movement since 1982, the Vegetarian Resource Group claims that "most people who fit the definition of vegetarian (never eat meat, fish, or fowl) are "very committed to issues" and "tend to become vegan" (www.vrg.org). If we understand "very committed to issues" as an indication that these vegetarians are so for ethical reasons, for them meat-eating is more than simply distasteful; it is deadening. In *Living Among Meat-Eaters*, Carol Adams argues that this epiphany constitutes a "gestalt shift" whereby the meat-eater becomes enlightened and because of this breaks

[13] Research Methodology is as follows: "Harris Interactive survey methodology: Harris Interactive Inc. surveyed 1,031 adults 18 and older via telephone from February 6-9, 2003. In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points of what they would be if the entire adult population responded to each question with complete accuracy. The margin of error applies to the question asked of all respondents. This margin will vary within each category, such as gender, of respondents to the question" (www.vrg.org).

free of the myth of meat. She furthers Mary Midgley's claim that, "The symbolism of meat-eating is never neutral. To himself [sic], the meat-eater seems to be eating life. To the vegetarian, he seems to be eating death" (qtd. in "Living"). If the dominant perception of meat-eating is what Midgley suggests and what the vegetarian perspective is intrinsically at odds with, a dialectical confrontation—or chance for dialogue and reflection—lies at the heart of every interaction between the two. It follows that vegetarians themselves *embody* a challenge to meat-eating as cultural ritual that is embedded within traditional and homogenized representations of American culture.

Therefore, a vegetarian identity—both as a personal identity and as a collective identity—is inherently confrontational. According to vegetarian narratives, this is most apparent in social situations such as holidays that revolve around food. For vegetarians, Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July are often characterized by exchanges between a lone vegetarian and meat-eaters. What underlies these exchanges that appear to be about diet is really a confrontation of identity, ideology, and the rhetorics of consumption that represent them. This is the ideological basis of the ethical vegetarian movement.

Frame theorists attempt to understand these dynamics and the ways that they influence collective identity and movement participation. They explore why individuals adopt non-dominant ideologies, how dominant ideologies affect people's perception of themselves and of alternative ideologies, and how counter-movements attempt to suppress emerging challenges to these dominant cultural narratives. This research illuminates how movement participants frame their adversaries, as well as their allies, audiences, and themselves. Most importantly for rhetoricians, frame theorists analyze

how language, discourse, and embodied discourse influence and connote identity. Because of this, frame theory is a useful resource for rhetoricians studying social movements.

Like current Resource Mobilization theory and New Social Movement theory, frame theory shares some basic assumptions about social movement activity. These assumptions include 1) the belief that a post-industrial climate, characterized by declining materialist emphasis and an increase in non a-priori forms of solidarity, dictates the formation and implementation of social movements; 2) the notion that constituencies are created during mobilization instead of tapped from pre-existing structures; 3) an understanding of conflictual collective action as both normal and rational; and 4) the awareness that collective action can be studied as large scale mobilization or in the less visible and less organized activities of participants' daily lives. Despite these shared assumptions, and because of what Margit Mayer sees as political and social differences in the historical realities of Europe and the US, Resource Mobilization and New Social Movement scholars have historically resisted incorporating each others' insights.[14] In the past decade, however, frame theory, which attempts to understand both how and why movements form by exploring how meaning is created, has made use of both paradigms.

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[14] In "Social Movement Research and Social Movement Practice: The U.S. Pattern"(1991) Mayer claims that America's longstanding tradition of civil disobedience illustrates a historical relationship between the civic and cultural domains that did not exist in Europe, where sharp distinctions between civic and cultural agendas encouraged the formation of political parties as opposed to cultural movements. According to Mayer, the differences between the political establishments of Europe and those in the US have historically dictated differences in the types of social movements that form as well as the way that scholars theorize them. This may explain why American scholars have repeatedly challenged the novelty of the New Social Movements.

Frame theory was first modified for the study of social movements by American sociologists Robert Benford and David Snow in the late 1980s, drastically influencing the ways that scholars approached the study of social movements. Adapting Erving Goffman's 1974 text *Frame Analysis* and working through Herbert Blumer's social interactionist paradigm, frame theorists developed a complicated schema for interpreting the relationship amongst ideology, identity, and collective action. Benford and Snow define a frame as "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environments" ("Master Frames 137).[15] True to their interactionist roots, Frame theorists employ frame analysis to study "the ways in which movements have used symbols, languages, discourse, identity, and other dimensions of culture to recruit, retain, mobilize, and motivate members" (Williams 93). Specifically, theorists analyze the collective action directed at civil transformation by employing discourse analysis in order to "[bring] meaning back in" (Williams) to the non-ideologically centered Resource Mobilization model.

Because frame theorists attempt to illuminate and evaluate collective action by theorizing the role of interpretation and meaning-making, they infuse traditional inquiry about movement formation and transformation with cultural and ideological influences that were initially ignored or dismissed by Resource Mobilization theorists. In order to do this, frame theorists borrow heavily from the identity scholarship of the New Social

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[15] Goffman's "schemata of Interpretation" is the basis of Frame theory. Snow and Benford use Goffman's work to explain how individuals and organizations create meaning, "organize experience and guide action" ("Framing Processes 614). While Goffman emphasizes how meaning is made, Snow and Benford, in their application of his work to social movement literature, develop frame theory as a way of not only understanding how meaning is made, but also how frames then influence and inspire action.

Movement theorists. By synthesizing these approaches—emphasizing both how movements form and why--frame theories attempt to address the complexities of identity formation and the dynamic nature of ideology. In many ways, this approach highlights the rhetorical nature of social movement theory by illustrating the complex interplay among and relevance of such traditional rhetorically conceived categories as discourse, audience, situatedness (context), agency, persuasion and persuasive strategies. However, because frame theory emphasizes the social nature of meaning production, frame theorists tend to overlook the importance of individual daily lived experiences that fall outside of traditional boundaries of collective action.

As it evolves, frame theory moved away from its cognitivist roots, replacing the notion of frames as static and organic with an understanding of identity as dynamic, temporal, situated, and socially constructed; however, frame theory still focused on collectivities instead of the individual. Throughout their work, Benford and Snow argue that meaning and identity are best understood through dynamic and situated frames that serve to differentiate actors, methodology, and movement goals from one another. Because frames emerge as negotiated alignments between individuals who represent a collective identity, they are both inherently social and deeply influenced by discourse and dialogue. For frame theorists, collective action frames dictate the ways in which movement representatives act as such.

According to Benford and Snow, collective action frames can be understood and differentiated by their core framing tasks, which build consensus and mobilize action, and by the discursive processes that guide these tasks. All collective action frames have three

core framing tasks: Diagnostic tasks (which attempt to identify a problem and attribute blame); Prognostic tasks (which attempt to develop and employ strategies in order to accomplish a proposed solution to the problem); and Motivational tasks (which serve as a call-to-arms by using "vocabularies of motive" to evoke agency). General frames that reoccur in more than one movement and that have easily recognizable core tasks and discursive processes are known as master frames. These frames, such as the injustice frame, the rights frame, and the choice frame, guide specific movements but do not define them. While the gay rights movement and the animal rights movement might both make use of the rights frame, each movement is differentiated by specific frames that result from the unique interplay between specific goals and tactics.

For example, Environmental Liberation Front (ELF), a radical environmental group, assumes a frame of environmental terrorism to impact decision-makers when more conventional and traditional means of democratic influence fail. The group's information packet provides outsiders with an explanation of their aims, methods, and targets:

> Using real direct action in the form of economic sabotage, the ELF is targeting what the greedy entities care about, their pocketbooks. By inflicting as much economic damage as possible, the ELF can allow a given entity to decide [if] it is in their best interests to stop destroying life for the sake of profit. (*Frequently Asked Questions* 2001)

Not unlike the decades-old vigilance of the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, ELF emerged as a response to what members considered environmentally-insensitive policy and progress. However, ELF's destructive approach--including how they constitute their adversaries, what techniques they use to effect change, and what goals they attempt to accomplish through their actions--distinguishes it from other like-minded, if not like-acting,

environmental organizations. For frame theorists, the framing tendencies of ELF can be understood by analyzing the relationship between these key movement tasks—diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational—and how, taken together, they explain both how and why the eco-terrorist movement functions.

Frame analysis attempts to theorize how movements, in this case the environmental liberation movement, construct meaning through the frames that shape individual and collective notions of reality. By understanding the frames through which movement actors construct their position, frame theorists argue that movement scholars can better understand how identity is constructed for individuals and communities both in and outside of movement boundaries. Making use of the identity work of the New Social Movement theorists in conjunction with frame analysis, theorists developed an approach to identity in which identity fields indicate individual and collective perceptions of socially constructed identity.

This approach to identity theory is most clearly articulated in Hunt, Bedford, and Snow's 1994 chapter "Identity Fields: Framing Processes and the Social Construction of Movement Identities" in *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*. In this chapter, Hunt et al. argue that identity is inherently linked to the study of collective action frames because it is the product of the "dialectical interplay between interpretive processes and cognitive structures," the two components of collective action frames (192). They argue that frames encourage individuals to attribute characteristics to different sets of actors, illuminating individual and collective perceptions of a group's moral grounding, methodology, and relationship with the world around it. In this way,

identity fields distinguish between three generic sets of actors: Protagonists (advocates of the movement cause), Antagonists (opponents of the movement's cause), and Audience (neutral, uncommitted observers who are most susceptible to influence.)

Although these are not clearly delineated fields, identity field theory and frame theory is useful for rhetoricians. This paradigm defines the boundaries between groups such as ELF and Greenpeace rhetorically by highlighting the situationally-specific and temporal nature of identity through discourse analysis. By doing so, frame theory articulates often tacit connections between the rhetorical theory employed by communication scholars and social movement scholarship within sociology. However, frame theorists do not employ the language that rhetoricians use to discuss persuasion and identification, even though the work that they are doing is similar to the work being done by rhetoricians—it is the study of persuasion. In addition, frame theorists are concerned primarily with collective action frames as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (Benford and Snow "Framing Processes" 614). This narrow definition of collective action ignores the potential agency and effectiveness of individuals that *embody* the movement and as such inherently challenge dominant rhetorics of consumption consciously or otherwise whenever they interact with individuals outside of the movement.

Like the other dominant paradigms, framing does not yield a complete picture of how and why social movements function because it does not explore how the dialectic of personal interaction, in addition to more public interaction, works to affect change on an

individual level. This personal interaction is especially important for a vegetarian movement because the majority of participants cite these encounters as the source of their initial mobilization. As a rhetorician, I am interested in how rhetorics of consumption relate to personal identity and, ultimately, movement adherence. By expanding the definition of collective action to include the dialectic of personal interaction—the interplay among individuals in less public forums that allows for mutual reflection—and by complicating understandings of Veg identities, I hope to expand scholarship into the ways that movements mobilize and maintain their constituency.

What Rhetoric Has To Offer

Rhetoric, defined here as the practice and implications of communication, is primarily a study of how persuasion happens. Rhetoricians—those who study persuasion—are well equipped to study social movements, since the aim of a social movement is persuasion. The rhetorical tradition of social movement scholarship begins with the work of Leland Griffin. His pivotal work appeared in the late-1950s just as the study of social movements in general was undergoing the metamorphosis from the study of irrational acts to rational ones, making the study of movement rhetoric more of a priority. In his 1957 article "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements" (*Quarterly Journal of Speech*), he argues that "as students of rhetoric, our concern is obviously with those efforts which attempt to effectuate change, not through the forces of wealth or arms, but through the force of persuasion" ("Historical Movements" 6). As a rhetorician and a communications scholar, he employs a Burkean approach to the study of social

movements. He argues for a more complex understanding of the relationship between methodology and context where the notion of a "great orator" is replaced by a "multiplicity of speakers, speeches, audiences, and occasions" (5).

This emerging rhetorical approach to the study of social movements offered early insight into discourse analysis as well as other forms of persuasion. This tradition peaked in the 1970s with the work of Robert Cathcart, Malcolm Sillars, and Herbert Simons, but it has been carried forward by contemporary rhetoricians like Gerard Hauser, Susan Whalen, Michael Deluca, Michael Billig, and Sharon Stevens. This work is characterized by a study of discursive practices and their impact on identity formation. Though limited by its frequency and consistency, rhetorical scholarship has made significant contributions to the study of social movements, primarily through an examination of collective action and identity.

Robert Cathcart is among the most pivotal hey-day scholars who ground the study of social movements in rhetoric. Heavily influenced by Griffin's work, Robert Cathcart explicitly argues that the study of social movements is the study of movement rhetoric. Long before frame theory emerged as a dominant paradigm in the study of social movements, Cathcart employed Blumer's symbolic interactionist paradigm to explore how movements and movement participants engage in a dialectical relationship with the Establishment and challenge the moral codes of the majority. For him, social movements are driven inherently by "a dialectical tension growing out of a moral conflict" through which groups *demand* systematic change ("New Approaches" 87). According to Cathcart, this dialectic is a "*necessary ingredient* which produces the rhetorical form that we have

come to recognize as a political or social movement" and is manifest primarily through confrontation ("New Approaches" 88).

To date, rhetorical contributions to the study of social movements have been quite similar to sociological models in one key respect—rhetoricians who study social movements tend to focus on collective actions that take place in the public sphere. In chapter one, I cited Malcolm Sillar's definition of a social movement as a rhetorical entity. According to his definition, a social movement is comprised of

> *collective actions which are perceived by a critic. They are defined by that critic in terms of the most useful rhetorical events, conflicts, or strategies which will best explain the critic's view of the movement.* The critic may accept the limits of the movement provided by someone else or may "create" the movement. (122)

This definition, however, relies on the visibility of movement action in order to determine the distinctive characteristics of a movement. Similarly, Robert Cathcart defines a movement as "primarily a symbolic or rhetorical act [. . .]which can be identified by its *confrontational form*" ("Confrontation" 233-5). He too, however, relies on the visibility of these confrontational acts, claiming that movements are a "special type" of rhetorical transaction that is "distinguishable by the particular reciprocal rhetorical acts set off between the movement on one hand and the established system or controlling agency on the other ("Confrontation" 234). Because this "dialectical enjoinment," as he calls it, is illustrated through visible acts of rhetorical confrontation, Cathcart concentrated on social movement activity that took place within the public sphere.

Contemporary communications scholars reinforce the importance of studying the public sphere as the primary site of social movement activity. In *Vernacular Voices*,

Gerard Hauser articulates his theory on the public sphere. Hauser argues that the public sphere is actually a discursive space comprised of a "plurality of publics" which exist in a network which he calls a "reticulate public sphere" (*Vernacular* 12). He includes within this reticulate sphere "counterpublics" as well as publics. According to Hauser, the "public sphere" as it is traditionally understood

> excludes ideas and speakers through impermeable boundaries, privileges public relations over deliberation, enforces the technical jargon of elites over contextualized language specific to issues and their consequences, limits believable appearance before an audience of strangers on the basis of class and identity, presupposes conformity of values and ends, and imposes a preordained orientation. (*Prisoners* 36)

In contrast, a counterpublic is "by definition, a site of resistance" whose rhetorical identity is an arena for entertaining an alternative reality to the existing order and "contains valuable evidence of the ongoing struggle over society's self-production (36). In essence, counterpublics are social movements.

Hauser's perception of the public sphere is a response to Jurgen Habermas's traditionally accepted perception of the public sphere as a bourgeois public sphere in which "private people come together as a public" (Habermas 27). For Habermas, the public sphere is less problematized. He sees the public sphere as "a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society," one which does not silence marginalized voices that seek to reinvent this sphere (Kellner). In his article "Habermas, the Public Sphere, and Democracy: A Critical Intervention," Douglas Kellner distills Habermas's theory of the bourgeois public sphere. Of Habermas's conception of the public sphere, he writes,

> [the bourgeois public sphere is] a space of institutions and practices between the private interests of everyday life in civil society and the realm of state power. The public sphere thus mediates between the domains of the family and the workplace—where private interests prevail—and the state which often exerts arbitrary forms of power and domination[. . .The public sphere] mediate[s] between the private concerns of individuals in their familial, economic, and social life contrasted to the demands and concerns of social and public life. This involved mediation of the contradiction between bourgeois and citoyen, to use terms developed by Hegel and the early Marx, overcoming private interests and opinions to discover common interests and to reach societal consensus. The public sphere consisted of organs of information and political debate such as newspapers and journals, as well as institutions of political discussion such as parliaments, political clubs, literary salons, public assemblies, pubs and coffee houses, meeting halls, and other public spaces where socio-political discussion took place. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form. (Kellner)

Whether scholars subscribe to Habermas's notion of the public sphere or Hauser's challenge to it, it is this contested arena that is the site of analysis for those who study social movements—rhetoricians and sociologists alike.

Although examining these public displays of movement rhetoric is useful in many ways, the personal interaction between individuals is also an important aspect of movement activity through which movement membership is initiated and maintained. It is this area that defining a movement rhetorically allows us to investigate thereby broadening our scope of analysis. In order to do so, however, I suggest we return to some of the early work being done by rhetoricians and use this work as a spring board for future scholarship. In his work with social movements, Robert Cathcart emphasizes the dialectic between movement and structure as a necessary and essential attribute of a social movement. He emphasizes confrontation as a dialectic between a movement and

the social system brought on by competing ethical perspectives; however, he does not explore the dialectic of personal interaction in the same way. He critiques scholarship within the social sciences as limited because it looks at "collective behavior *in contrast to individual behavior* rather than contrasting certain collective behaviors with larger societal behaviors," which he claims is the precise territory of the rhetorician.

In contrast, I argue that rhetoricians have the ability to move in both of these directions simultaneously. We have more potential to illuminate the way that some social movements form when we use Cathcart's notion of the dialect to examine the dynamics of personal interaction and the ways that these encounters challenge and confront dominant social ethics. This is especially true for movements like the vegetarian movement where participants commonly attribute their movement adherence to personal encounters with ordinary individuals, but who claim a collective identity that differs from the norm. By embodyingthe aims of the movement, these individuals not only educate and inspire, but also live an alternative to dominant cultural codes. And as such, they embody confrontations.

Griffin's groundbreaking work on the rhetorical nature of social movements is also useful as scholars attempt to craft a comprehensive contemporary model of analysis. In his article "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," Griffin not only articulates the inherently rhetorical nature of social movements, he also suggests a course of study for rhetoricians who attempt to investigate them. Although he does not directly suggest that the dialectic of personal interaction is a fruitful area of inquiry, he does claim that the effectiveness of a movement can be judged by the effectiveness of its discourse, both

collective and individual, in relation to the aims that such discourse is designed to enact. Although Griffin's work has historically been used to study more public exchanges between speakers and audiences, his claim about the relationship between the effectiveness of a movement's discourse and its ability to enact social change justifies the validity of personal interaction as collective interaction on the grounds that such encounters mobilize *individuals* to act in accordance with the aims of the movement.

Although vegetarianism has often been discussed as a facet of more largely recognized social movements, such as animal rights initiatives and environmental activism, it has rarely and only recently been spoken of as having membership and influence of its own (Maurer 2002, Adams 1990; 2001, Hamilton 2000). Much of this oversight is related to the fact that the ethical vegetarian movement recruits and retains its members through a type of personal interaction between *individuals* that often falls outside of the traditional understanding of collective action that takes place in public spheres.

In the case of vegetarianism, as witnessed by Harvey and Joyce's interaction in chapter one, individual vegetarians embody the aims of the movement simply by making the decision to become and remain meat-free. By embodying the movement, literally, a vegetarian is more than a member of a movement; she is the message. This is especially true with strict vegetarians, or vegans. As one movement participant claims in her response to a questionnaire about her diet and lifestyle,

> I feel like I am a sales person for veganism, and I have to appeal to my customers to get them to see why veganism is such a need for people, the earth and the animals[. . .]I like to think of myself as a walking billboard for veganism [. . .an] advertisement for the vegan lifestyle.

Because the message is indistinguishable from the person who embodies it, the dialectical interaction between vegetarian and non-vegetarian which often occurs on a one-on-one basis is an important type of rhetorical confrontation that is usually overlooked in movement scholarship which emphasizes collective action.

Conclusion

In response to a universal desire among scholars to further understand contemporary social movements--how they form, how they function, how they change, what they want, who is involved, and in what ways--a new conversation is emerging. The dominant sociological paradigms that study contemporary social movements—Resource Mobilization, New Social Movements, Frame Theory—have recently engaged in dialogue instead of critique in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural turn and the role of identity (Zald 2000, Garner 1997, Williams 2004). However, as Margit Mayer articulates, this scholarship is still quite young and experimental. She writes,

> [this integrative scholarship] emphasiz[es] *cultural* and *symbolic* dimensions and the construction of meaning, thereby making it possible to also capture those current social movements or aspects of movements, which are not about participation in the American mainstream, either economically or politically, but rather challenge the validity and hegemony of the dominant power structures and cultural systems. [However] this type of analysis has not (yet) developed into an approach, but various descriptive attempts are made to capture such phenomena. (49)

I argue that an investigation of this sort—one that explores how culture is disseminated, digested, regurgitated, and challenged—is an inherently rhetorical study that defines individual movements by their rhetorical footprints.

As rhetoricians, we need to reclaim the study of social movements as an inherently rhetorical investigation. In recent years, rhetoricians have only sporadically contributed to broader scholarly conversations about social movements by those who study these movements, despite the clear relevance of social movement analysis to rhetoric and vice versa. Since the most tangible conversation between rhetoricians and social movement scholars took place in the 1970's in response to emerging conceptions of social movements as rational and goal-driven entities, rhetoricians have been isolated, or isolated themselves, from the study of social movements. Even the recently published communications anthology *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest* (Strata Publishing 2001) is comprised of mostly theoretical articles that were originally published between 1970 and 1980, although it does include more contemporary examples that apply rhetorical approaches to the study of specific movements. These examples, however, do not draw significantly from the sociological paradigms. While communication scholars have embraced and contributed to emerging paradigms that explored identity and that argue for cultural movements as well as political ones (Megee 1980; Billing 1995; Hauser and Whalen 1997; Deluca 1999; Palczewski 2001; Stevens 2003), shifts in terminology and disciplinary interests have limited the dialogue among the various schools of inquiry into social movements.

However, these recent articles suggest that rhetoricians are once again gravitating toward the study of social movements and that these boundaries are dissolving. To understand a social movement means to understand both how and why it functions. It means understanding symbolism and meaning, identity and ideology. In recent years, competing paradigms have entered into a dialogue with one another in order to come to a more complex understanding of how movements are evolving, including the emergence of cultural movements and the nature of identity. Gerald Hauser and Susan Whalen's "New Rhetoric and New Social Movements" (1997) and Michael Billig's "Rhetorical Psychology, Ideological Thinking, and Imagining Nationhood" (1995) illustrate the ways in which rhetoricians are currently contributing to this conversation. However, this conversation is focused primarily on how identity impacts collective action. Although scholars explore individual agency in the formation of alternative cultural identities, they do not explore the dialectic of personal interaction as an important movement feature.

In the vegetarian movement, especially, this dialectic often acts as the seed which first exposes participants to and mobilizes them to adopt a vegetarian identity. Personal interaction is a form of collective action which is often overlooked because it blurs the line between movement participant and movement representative. While vegetarians of all ilks embody the movement unconsciously, others claim membership—identify as vegetarian—when they are not considered such by the movement itself. Because the vegetarian movement, as advocated by movement organizations, often does not represent the message of the movement—advocating Flexitarianism or ovo-lacto vegetarianism while guided by the principles of veganism—individuals themselves embody the message

of the movement. In the next chapter, I explore the ways that these *individuals* affect movement participation through a dialectic of personal interaction, especially the ways in which their daily commitment to vegetarianism acts as a confrontation to the dominant cultural ritual of meat-eating and to the who subscribe to it. I argue for an expanded definition of collective action that includes embodied action and unintentional rhetoric that makes the vegetarian movement ripe for digestion.

Chapter 3 Sharing our Recipes: Transformative Encounters Beyond the Public Sphere

It bothers me to say this, because I don't like that it makes me look like an easily influenced female type, but I became a vegetarian because my boyfriend was one. Well, not only because he was one. I became a vegetarian ***through*** *him, is a better way to say it….My boyfriend was very influential in my decision. I wonder that if he hadn't come along, would I ever bother myself to think about this? It's scary to think that I might never have. Just one or two conversations with him led me to think about it.*

--Maryland

I realized that for things to change, it was going to take a change in perspectives by individuals, not some magical transformation of society as a whole at the drop of a hat.

--New Mexico

As the previous chapter illustrates, the study of social movements is mostly a study of collective action and collective identity. Much of the scholarship that explores how social movements form and function focuses primarily on what happens in public spaces between agents who consciously seek to increase active membership in their cause in order to evoke political and/or cultural transformation. For sociologists, this has meant vacillating between paradigms that study how movement organizations acquire resources and craft arguments in order to affect change and why individuals choose to participate in

these movements in the first place. In order to explore these facets of movement activity, sociologists rely on several theoretical models that investigate collective behavior, its motives, and its consequences.

However, the testimonials of ethical vegetarians that begin this chapter suggest that significant transformative potential also exists when individuals or small groups engage one another in less-public situations. Let us return, for a moment, to the dynamic interaction between Joyce and Harvey at the beginning of chapter one. Joyce's attempt to justify her decision to eat meat in response to Harvey's admission to his vegetarianism suggests that these moments have persuasive value, whether this potential is consciously employed or not. For instance, take another common exchange like this one from a woman in Indiana:

> I was at a stoplight one day and glanced over and there through the slats in the trailer beside me were two big brown eyes staring right at me. I felt so helpless and so sad, knowing his destiny and not being able to do anything to save him. I will never forget that little calf and how he made me re-think my diet.

In movement literature, organizational gatherings, and encounters between individuals, vegetarians often cite the impetus for their transition to a vegetarian lifestyle as resulting from one-on-one encounters with others, both humans and animals, spoken and non-verbal. They also cite information they discover on the internet and in books. Although vegetarians cite these encounters repeatedly as their primary or initial source of reflection and transformation, these moments are not traditionally considered movement *activity* since they fall outside of the parameters of collective action. However, the importance of such encounters is illustrated when vegetarians share their transformation stories, or

conversion narratives, with others. These narratives are critical sites of analysis because they illustrate and reinforce the importance of personal encounters as sites of persuasion.

In this chapter, I work with personal testimony from movement participants, movement leaders, and canonical movement texts. I argue that the participant testimonies are vital to our understanding of the movement because they recount the day-to-day life experiences of those "in the trenches," whereas the study of movement leaders alone does not. Since much of the work being done in and for the ethical vegetarian movement takes place on a one-to-one level, the narratives of these individuals are crucial to the study of the movement.

These narratives illuminate personal encounters in non- and less-public spaces as movement activity in the ethical vegetarian movement. In my analysis of them, I unpack what happens during these encounters and why they are so often perceived as antagonistic by those who participate in them, even when these encounters are primarily unspoken. In order to do so, I analyze conversion narratives and perceptions of ethical and spiritual transformation as articulated by self-identifying ethical vegetarians. I gathered many such narratives through a nationwide survey of vegetarians conducted over four months in 2004. In addition, I examine narratives that appear in movement literature including cookbooks, magazines, newsletters, and books. I also examine the ways in which personal narratives serve as "conversion narratives" when they are shared with non-vegetarians, and community building and mobilizing apparatuses when they are shared with other vegetarians. As part of this examination, I argue that these encounters

involve clashing cultures of consumption and unearth tacit and conflicting belief systems that are often exposed in relation to food.

Research Methods

I solicited conversion narratives and asked respondents to participate in a written survey in July and August 2004. I solicited these narratives primarily through personal email and electronic listserv/newsletters including those run by PeTA, Vegetarian Resource Group, and Vegan Outreach. I also solicited participants at the Los Angeles location of PeTA's "Helping Animals 2004" conference in July of that same year. A copy of both the initial solicitation and the survey questionnaire are attached (see Appendix I and Appendix II). I asked individuals to respond to the survey which I designed to capture the experiences and perceptions of self-identified participants in the Ethical Vegetarian Movement, in order to discover, and later analyze, the rhetorical characteristics of the movement and ways in which dominant and non-dominant cultures of consumption clash within and surrounding self-proclaimed vegetarians. Surveys were solicited, distributed, and returned within a four month period in 2004. Respondents included hundreds of vegetarians from across the US, both recent converts and longtime practitioners. Participants vary in age from 18-70. Participants live in varying degrees of urban and rural environments and cultures, range in sexual preference, and affiliate with a variety of religions, including Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Spiritual, Agnostic, Pagan, and Atheist. With the exception of a few respondents who identity as Latino/Latina, all of

the respondents were Caucasian.[16] Most of the respondents have at least some higher education, as suggested by their self-declared employment titles. Many of the respondents were students, professors, or education workers in one way or another. Very few respondents listed traditionally blue collar professions as their primary work. The majority of respondents were women.

The demographics represented in this survey suggest that like other cultural and identity movements that have blossomed over the past thirty years, such as the new left movements, the vegetarian movement is primarily a middle-class movement aimed at cultural transformation rather than political transformation. However, this fact alone is an important area of analysis considering the links among diet, culture, class, health, and lifestyle. I will discuss the ways in which the class dynamics of the vegetarian movement are evolving and why in more detail in chapter five. In this chapter, I concentrate primarily on dialectics of personal interaction as they are represented in “conversion narratives” and argue that these incidences are a form of movement activity.

Personal Interaction as Movement Activity

Scholarship on how social change is manifest tends to focus primarily on collective action in public spaces, and rightly so to some extent. Visibility is crucial if a movement hopes to displace cultural norms and civic traditions with alternative ones and the power to do so comes from a movement’s ability to create a strong and large

[16] According to a 2003 survey sponsored by the Vegetarian Resource Group, vegetarians are a more racially/culturally diverse group than my sampling suggests. However, participant demographics as they appear at collective actions and as organization employees suggest an overwhelming Caucasian majority in the movement.

collectivity. Scholarship on what constitutes the "public sphere" runs deep. Traditional notions of the public, as theorized by John Dewey and Jurgen Habermas, have been extended and reconfigured to include disempowered rhetorical communities, marginal voices, and alternative routes to power (see Hauser, Goodnight, and Eberly). However, as indicated in chapter two, the emphasis has remained on the role of collective experience and identity.

Definitions of social movements illustrate this emphasis. Garner defines movements as "*collectivities* engaged in non-institutionalized discourses and practices aimed at changing the existing condition of society" ("Fifty Years" 1). Sillers defines movements as "*collective actions* which are perceived by a critic. They are defined by that critic in terms of the most useful rhetorical events, conflicts, or strategies which will best explain the critic's view of the movement" (122). Melucci describes movement activity as "a form of *collective action* based on solidarity, carrying a conflict, and breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs" ("Symbolic Challenge" 795). While these definitions *imply* that collective action takes place in public settings, other definitions are more overt in situating movement activity in the public sphere. Cathcart defines a movement as visible acts of confrontation which are characterized as a "dialectical enjoinment" "between the movement on one hand and the established system or controlling agency on the other" ("Confrontation" 234). What all of the definitions lack is direct reference to the role of the individual who may be acting on behalf of the movement, consciously or otherwise, in their everyday interactions and how their encounters with others, help to recruit and mobilize movement participants.

One of the primary reasons why these interpersonal encounters are so powerful is because vegetarians not only convey the aims of the movement—they also *embody* them. This is best articulated by Charles Stahler, co-founder of the Vegetarian Resource Group. He writes,

> Vegetarianism is one of the few movements where you confront your ethics three times a day. In most movements or religions, it's about telling others what to do. If you are vegetarian, you have to constantly practice your beliefs in all situations. Even for religion, in most cases, people don't have to know what you believe, but in vegetarianism, it usually becomes obvious and there will be decisions to be made on an ongoing basis. (Stahler interview 2004)

Like Stahler suggests, just *being* a vegetarian is a form of movement activity, intentionally or otherwise. Participants do not simply convey the message of the movement, they *embody* it on a day to day basis in interactions that they have with others and in the decisions they make outside of the public gaze, such as the decision to order a pizza for delivery from a restaurant that offers soy cheese or the choice to pick up "veggie" dogs at the supermarket instead of meat-based ones. This embodiment is illustrated in the ways that vegetarians talk about their lifestyle. In response to questions about how vegetarianism influences other aspects of their lives, many of the ethical vegetarians why responded to my survey said things like "I live my message" and "I want to be a good vegan ambassador wherever I go," or they talk about their vegetarianism as "an extension of who I am" or "a reflection of the person that I am." As these examples show, vegetarians are often aware of the union between what they eat and who they are, even if those who perceive them are less conscious of this phenomenon.

For this reason, the conversion narratives that vegetarians share with one another, with friends and colleagues, and with strangers act as a way of defining and reflecting on this relationship and the thought processes that contribute to it. When they are shared with other vegetarians, these narratives foster community and help individuals develop and articulate both personal and collective identity. When shared with non-vegetarians, these narratives have the potential to act quite differently. They become vehicles of persuasion, often introducing non-vegetarians to philosophies of consumption that differ from the cultural norms. When these "stories" are shared in less-public spaces between individuals, they often also inspire dialogue in which vegetarian and non-vegetarian explore the similarities, differences, and insights that each brings to the conversation. In its most effective form, this dialectic of personal interaction encourages reflection and, as part of this reflection, a re-examination of cultural norms and hegemonic practices of consumption. Often, however, these encounters are understood as frustrating and antagonistic by those who participate, reifying cultural norms and alienating those who differ from these norms. The following is an analysis of the ways narratives influence movement activity and why they are significant for understanding the ethical vegetarian movement.

Narratives as Social Movement Activity

Although the use of narratives as a form of movement activity is not unheard of, scholarship in this area has focused on "movement narratives" and the narratives of movement leaders instead of examining how the "conversion narratives" of average

movement participants function as a means of persuasion. Much of the scholarship on the influential potential of narratives in social movements examines how narratives are used to establish and reinforce individual and collective identity, how they frame movement activity, how they establish and create support for movement leaders, and how they contribute to the formation of an organized movement (see Sommers 1994, Hinchman and Hinchman 1997, Polletta 1998, Ganz 2001, Davis 2002). These studies focus primarily on storytelling in public arenas which transforms individual stories into a shared story for emerging movements.

Francesca Polletta's work with "sit-in" narratives exemplifies this trend. In her article "It Was Like a Fever…Narrative and Identity in Social Protest," Polletta points out how themes of spontaneity in student "sit-in" narratives during the 1960s were used to promote the "student activist" as a form of collective identity in order to make high-risk activism attractive. She uses this example to argue for more scholarship on the mobilizing potential of narratives that occur outside of or before a movement coalesces. She argues that these narratives are crucial because they tell "the story of our becoming-as an individual, as a nation, as a people…[they have the] capacity to make sense of unfamiliar events, to engage as they explain, and to sustain identity during periods of rapid change" (141). However, in her article, she is talking about the making of a movement narrative, in this case the "sit-in" narrative that became a defining rhetorical strategy for the anti-war movement of the 1960's. I argue that the study of narratives is also crucial, perhaps even more so, for those narratives that are shared in non-public spaces in one-on-one encounters, especially if these narratives are "conversionary" in nature.

Movement narratives, even though they are often used as a means of persuasion, are more about establishing a collective identity by educating movement constituencies on shared histories, shared agendas, and shared encounters as well as providing this community with stories of hope and success. Often, movement narratives are adopted from similar movements that have already gained notoriety and which have achieved some sort of social transformation. In "The Power of Story in Social Movements," a conference presentation given at the Annual Meeting of American Sociological Association in 2001, Marshall Ganz illustrates the ways movements create and adapt stories from other movements. His paper examines how the Farm Workers Movement adopted and adapted stories from other contemporary movements, specifically the Civil Rights Movement and the Filipino-originated grape strike, during the early stages of organization in order to recruit participants and mobilize them to act. He claims that National Farm Workers Association leaders, including Cesar Chavez, attempted to mobilize their constituency to strike in solidarity with the Filipino/AFL-CIO union strike by organizing an information meeting which provided them an opportunity to "invoke their shared religious and cultural narratives-or moral traditions" (5). Movement leaders, however, saw the strike as the initial action in what they hoped would become a movement. To this end, Chavez made use of "the new story of the civil rights movement unfolding across the country, introducing it at the strike vote by insisting on a commitment to nonviolence, a novelty in the farm worker world" (5). So, as Ganz suggests, the Farm Workers movement made use of "strike" narratives that other

movements were finding success with in order to convince farm workers that their efforts, if they chose to participate, could yield real-world results.

In both the “sit-in” narrative and the “strike” narratives, each is being used as a way to mobilize individuals to act as a collective in the public sphere. As these narratives are shared again and again in public settings, they become part of the identity of the movement and the collective identity of those who participate. They are told and retold in public spaces in order to get the message of the movement out to as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

An example of this kind of narrative from the vegetarian movement is the “story of the cow.” This story is often a means of transforming normalized conceptions of cows as food into perceptions of cows as animals capable of feeling pain, fear, and affection. The most common adaptation of the story of the cow is the story of the “downed animal” left for dead. Pamphlets, newsletters, weblinks, posters, and other forms of movement literature often display a photo of a visibly and seriously injured animal, unable to stand, often bloody, accompanied by a story that details the animal’s near death experience. In Farm Sanctuary literature, the most commonly recited story is the one that brought the organization into being, the story of Hilda the Sheep. According to Gene and Lorri Bauston, co-founders of the sanctuary, they stumbled across Hilda in 1986 on the “deadpile” in a stockyard. To Gene and Lorri, who rescued her, Hilda stood as a symbol of the hidden injustices of factory farming and as testimony to their ability to make a difference. Since then, the Farm Sanctuary has become one of the most vocal anti-factory

farming organizations, with the active support of over 100,000 members, and shelters (and adoption networks) nationwide (www.farmsanctuary.com).

While Hilda's story offers hope and promotes compassion by showing individuals their own power for direct action and the need for such action, PeTA's most common "downed animal" story seeks to inspire such action out of anger. PeTA's "The Story that Will Change Your Life" begins with a photo of a downed cow staring helplessly into the camera. The narrative that follows details her story.

> The truck carrying this cow was unloaded at Walton Stockyards in Kentucky on a September morning. After the other animals were removed from the truck, she was left behind, unable to move. The stockyard workers beat and kicked her in the face, ribs and back. They used the customary electric prods in her ear to try to get her out of the truck, but still she did not move. The workers then tied a rope around her neck, tied the other end to a post in the ground, and drove the truck away. The cow was dragged along the floor of the truck and fell to the ground, landing with both hind legs and her pelvis broken. She remained in this state until 7:30 that evening.
>
> The cow lay in the hot sun crying out for the first three hours. Periodically, when she urinated or defecated, she used her front legs to drag herself along the gravel roadway to a clean spot. She also tried to crawl to a shaded area but could not move far enough. Altogether she managed to crawl a painful 13-14 yards. The stockyard employees would not allow her any drinking water; the only drinking water she received was given to her by Jessie Pierce, a local animal rights activist, who had been contacted by a woman who witnessed the incident. (http://www.goveg.com/feat/downedcow.html)

The story continues until 7:30 pm when a local butcher arrived and shot her in the head, later purchasing the corpse for $307.50. In this account, the two most important participants are the cow and Jessie Pierce, the local animal rights activist. While one acts as a symbol of the inhumanity of the meat production and those associated with it, the other acts as good Samaritan and movement advocate. The third character in the drama of

the downed cow is the butcher, who exhibits both a callous ability to kill and greed for his due, the flesh of the animal he killed. This story first appeared in PeTA literature in 1986 in the *PETA NEWS*, the precursor to the *Vegetarian Times*. It has since been reprinted in full-color leaflet form, on Goveg.com, and other PeTA materials.

Other examples of the story of the cow use humor as a means of persuasion. Dana Lyons's song "Cows with Guns," later adapted into cartoon form for the book of the same name, and the animated web-based video the "Meatrix" are among the most popular. In "Cows with Guns," Lyons tells the tale of Cow-Tse-Tongue, a revolutionary "veal" who studies Che Guevara and who leads a nearly ill-fated revolt on the way to the slaughterhouse, only to be rescued in the last possible moment when "the order was given to turn cows to whoppers/ enforced by the might of ten thousand coppers/ but on the horizon/ surrounding the shoppers/ came the deafening roar of chickens in choppers." As their battle call "we will fight for bovine freedom and hold our large heads high. We will run free with the buffalo or die," suggests, these cows share many basic desires and needs with humans. This rhetorical strategy, known as "anthropomorphism," is among the most common in vegetarian literature.

The dissolution of the boundary between animal and human—food and animal—through humor is again used as a tool for persuasion in the "Meatrix" (www.themeatrix.com). In this animated short, Leo, a pig who lives his life on a small family farm, is approached by Moopheus, a black trenchcoat-clad cow in dark glasses who offers Leo the chance to see the truth by taking the "red pill" or staying ignorant, by taking the "blue pill", not unlike their counterparts in *The Matrix*. According to Moopheus, the Meatrix is

"the story we tell ourselves about where our meat and animal products come from." Leo, who opts for the red pill, is then transplanted into a factory farm hog containment facility and educated on the "truth behind our food." After seeing "the truth," Leo joins the resistance as familiar music and special effects evoke the storyline of the original film and the righteousness of its "resistance." After the animated short, viewers are offered numerous links with more information about the harmful effects of factory farming, including animal cruelty, antibiotic resistant germs, massive pollution, and destroyed communities.

As "The Meatrix" illustrates, the story of the cow has become so commonplace that it has crossed over into mainstream culture. This is also evidenced by Michael Pollan's award winning 2002 New York Times magazine article "This Steer's Life: The Highly Unnatural Journey of No. 534, from Calf to Steak." In his article, Pollan takes his readers with him as he shadows #534 and tells his biography, or his story, as he grows closer to slaughter. He writes,

> I traveled to Poky early in January with the slightly improbable notion of visiting one particular resident: a young black steer that I'd met in the fall on a ranch in Vale, S.D. The steer, in fact, belonged to me. I'd purchased him as an 8-month-old calf from the Blair brothers, Ed and Rich, for $598. I was paying Poky Feeders $1.60 a day for his room, board and meds and hoped to sell him at a profit after he was fattened. (section 6)

But he also admits further motive to his readers. He tells them that his interest in #534

> was not strictly financial, however, or even gustatory, though I plan to retrieve some steaks from the Kansas packing plant where No. 534, as he is known, has an appointment with the stunner in June. No, my primary interest in this animal was educational. I wanted to find out how a modern, industrial steak is produced in America these days, from insemination to slaughter. (Section 6)

From the start, by telling his readers that he planned to collect steaks that were once part of #534, Pollan connects with his audience as a meat-eater. However, he also acknowledges his concerns about meat-eating, which prompted his purchase of and interest in #534. His article includes phrases that show he is conscious of the arguments against meat-eating. He writes, “Eating meat, something I have always enjoyed doing, has become problematic in recent years,” followed by succinct articulations of the arguments against meat-eating from a health standpoint, an environmental standpoint, and an animal rights standpoint (section 6).

His most striking admission, however, is that he knows that eating meat is ethically suspicious particularly because of the process of factory farming, an opinion he shares with many vegetarians. He writes,

> Meat-eating has always been a messy business, shadowed by the shame of killing and, since Upton Sinclair's writing of "The Jungle," by questions about what we're really eating when we eat meat. Forgetting, or willed ignorance, is the preferred strategy of many beef eaters, a strategy abetted by the industry. (What grocery-store item is more silent about its origins than a shrink-wrapped steak?) Yet I recently began to feel that ignorance was no longer tenable. If I was going to continue to eat red meat, then I owed it to myself, as well as to the animals, to take more responsibility for the invisible but crucial transaction between ourselves and the animals we eat. I'd try to own it, in other words. (section 6)

Pollan’s riveting account is particularly valuable in the study of how persuasion happens in the vegetarian movement because it is both an example of a movement narrative *and* an example of an individual narrative in which a man comes face to face with the animal that is to become his dinner. Although, in the end, Pollan opts to continue eating meat, of the organic small farm version only, encounters of this sort permeate the “conversion narratives” of vegetarians.

Conversion Narratives and the Ways we Share Them

Conversion narratives, as I define them, convey how and why an individual came to adopt a particular ideology or belief, or, in this case, the "how and why I became a vegetarian" story. I purposely use the term "conversion narrative," as opposed to "transformation narrative" or stories of change, for two reasons. First, these stories (especially vegetarian narratives) have a "coming-to-awareness" or "seeing-the-light" quality that resembles religious conversion. I will speak more to this in chapter four. The second reason that I prefer the term "conversion narrative" to "transformation narrative" is because these stories are often used as a means of converting others in addition to sharing one's own narrative of conversion. In this respect these narratives are doubly conversionary—a story of one's own conversion which is evoked as a method of converting others.

As a strict vegetarian who has participated in the lifestyle as well as the diet for over twelve years, I have been witness to many narratives. I have also shared my own. As a researcher and theorist, I have collected and examined narratives that appear in movement journals and magazines, books, and newsletters, in addition to those that I solicited via the internet and in person. Many of these narratives share similar qualities and tell parallel accounts of how and why individuals become vegetarians. Examining these narratives illuminates how participants come to be such in the ethical vegetarian movement.

Admittance as a Narrative

The simplest form of a "conversion narrative" that vegetarians tell is their admission that they are, or have become, a vegetarian. This admission is a conversion narrative of sorts simply because it needs to be articulated in the first place. The consumption of meat is a social norm, and as such, it is assumed that individuals who identify culturally as Americans subscribe to it. Eric Schlosser speaks to the connection between American culture and the foods that represent it in *Fast Food Nation*. In his book, Schlosser details the relationship between what we consume as a nation and who we have become. He cites the iconic symbol of the cowboy/rancher as distinctly American. He recounts the evolution of the fast food industry in much the same way, including an analysis of the consequences of exporting this "American" food culture to nations around the world. Since meat-eating is the cultural norm, evidenced by the examples that Schlosser provides, vegetarianism is a lifestyle, or culture of consumption, that must be consciously adopted. It is understood as something that someone *becomes*, not a "natural" state of being.

This is evidenced in the accounts of vegetarians who admit that they are vegetarians in places and situations where the ritual of meat-eating is particularly ingrained, such as the South. In her narrative, one woman recounts that "when [she goes] out to the more rural areas of North Carolina, people haven't heard about vegetarianism and think it's wrong and alien—they see eating meat as (I quote) 'a god-given right.'" Another woman shares a similar experience about her visit to Texas. She writes, "Resistance is felt when I travel to places like West Texas, where I have family, and

where the vegetarian options are nil." In places like rural North Carolina or equally rural West Texas, it is not surprising that simply claiming to be a vegetarian is a form of movement activity, even if it is not intentionally so; however, these types of reactions are not isolated to such places. Vegetarians experience confusion, resistance, and antagonism much closer to home. In fact, they experience it *in* their homes from their families, at work from co-workers, in restaurants with friends, in grocery stores from strangers, and in other situations where their eating habits or dietary ethics are exposed.

Ad Hominem Attacks and Other Forms of Antagonism

Conversion narratives, as I have defined them, and the reflections of vegetarians that I gathered through my survey indicate what types of responses vegetarians encounter and how these responses shape interpersonal dynamics. The most common type of response that is chronicled in the narratives of vegetarians is irreverent and antagonistic in nature. I use the term "common" in two ways here: first, it is cited in a wide range of narratives; second, this antagonism is experienced by vegetarians over and over again, each time they "expose" themselves and their dietary ethics to those who do not already know them. These responses often occur when vegetarians share their narratives with others, when they "out" themselves as vegetarians, or when they are "outted" by others, such as friends, family members, and co-workers.

Responses range from inquisitive questioning to teasing gestures and even outright aggression. Many vegetarians express frustration that "People treat my diet like a big joke. They treat me as though I am weird and extreme and crazy" or "People are

confused and a little amused to find out that I am a vegan. I always have to explain what one is…I do feel sometimes like I should be in the circus sideshow when I am introduced to people as 'she doesn't eat meat.'" These responses are not necessarily spoken exchanges, but they are all undoubtedly targeted toward the vegetarian as an individual. One woman writes,

> I realize that my choice is going to make some people uncomfortable, and their natural reaction to that discomfort is to turn it on me [. . .] Sometimes the responses are more subtle—unspoken, really. Like coworkers seem to think I am "odd" or "weird" for not eating meat, but only convey these thoughts through body language, facial expressions, etc.

These occurrences are so common that vegetarians tire of the experience and devise rhetorical strategies that redirect the conversation away from their dietary ethics. One woman admits that "I sometimes tell people that I went vegan for my health, which has improved greatly since I became vegan, but usually that's just to avoid a long discussion which generally involves them telling me how much they love meat, and don't I miss meat? Ugh, I've had that one a thousand times." Although the antagonism that vegetarians experience is primarily a result of clashing cultures of consumption, it is often personal in nature, illustrating that the choice to be vegetarian has both personal and social implications.

The more extreme degree of vegetarianism that one adopts, the farther s/he moves away from traditional American dietary norms and, as a consequence, the more antagonism s/he encounters. One survey participant recounts her experience when she writes about reactions she encountered when she transitioned from eating no red meat to no meat at all. She writes,

> I couldn't be the "I only eat chicken and turkey" person any longer. Wow. What a backlash I experienced from that…My family (parents, etc.) thought I was insane—where would I get my protein? It can't be healthy, right? The standard remarks from uneducated people. I could handle my family—that wasn't a problem. Co-workers were another story….Whenever we would have a celebration at work (a holiday, retirement, etc.) I would merely ask for one of the choices to contain no animal products. Well, you would have thought I asked for them to amputate an appendage! The criticism, the ridicule, and outright disrespect I received from (what I considered to be) my backward thinking co-workers was unbelievable.

What is most interesting about this example is that it highlights the same phenomenon that was captured in the conversation between Harvey and Joyce. Vegetarians face antagonistic responses even when they are not attempting to convert others or proselytize their dietary ethics. In this account, the woman asked that her co-workers consider her diet when they plan social functions that involve food. She did not ask them to alter their diet in any way, yet she encountered aggressive behavior on their part. Her vegetarianism alone becomes the catalyst for confrontation, even when she represents it as a personal decision.

In their narratives, vegetarians often cite these seemingly unprovoked personal and ad hominem attacks whenever their lifestyle is made apparent, usually during dining experiences. In her book *Living Among Meat-eaters*, Carol Adams collects accounts from vegetarians that cite one of their greatest pet peeves as mealtime conversations that inevitably and repeatedly shift toward what they eat and why. The consequences of this conversation are varied. In Adams's book, most of the vegetarians she sites express frustration. One woman writes about her repeated encounters with "meat eaters who ask me why I am a vegetarian and, when I tell them, accuse me of preaching, proselytizing,

judging them" (qtd. in Adams 7). Another claims "I spend twice as much time defending my diet as eating it!" (qtd. in Adams 7).

These same frustrations surfaced in the vegetarians who responded to my survey. In her response, one woman describes a typical encounter which details what vegetarians see as a pattern of unprovoked antagonism.

> Sometimes I don't want to talk about being vegan, but the topic is pushed to the forefront by others. This typically happens when I'm at a restaurant with non-vegans who realize that they're eating meat in front of me. Once, I was at lunch with a coworker. I said nothing about her huge bacon sandwich. I eat with non-vegans all the time, so I hadn't expected her to order a veg dish just because she was with me. About five minutes into her sandwich, she realized what she was eating, and apologized to me. I brushed it off, but she continued to talk about why she eats meat for the next half hour. I try to avoid always getting involved in these conversations, lest it appear that veganism is the only thing I'm interested in.

In a similar account, another woman describes an encounter that took place during a meal with a several friends. She writes:

> Vegetarianism came up, and the nonveg friend became increasingly incensed as we talked about it. It's astounding how defensive some meat eaters get about the topic. There is great resistance there. The vehemence with which he put forth his truly pathetic arguments for meat eating (humans are "animals" and other animals eat meat, therefore it's okay to eat meat, we are part of the food chain, etc.) were ugly and clownish. None of us really cared that he ate meat—we didn't bring it up—but it was as though he had to justify himself and prove everyone else wrong.

Presumably, in these situations, everyone at the table already knew that a vegetarian was among them. However, in many cases, vegetarians are "outted" during dining experiences, either by the very nature of sharing a meal, placing an order, declining the turkey at Thanksgiving, or by friends and family whose motives for doing so vary.

The food choices that vegetarians make often initiate and become the center of conversation during meals because these choices differ from traditional American perceptions of diet. One woman writes that “when I eat natural peanut butter out of the jar or CLIF bars, they raise their eyebrows and I can hear them say, ‘what is she eating?’ ‘She’s one of those vegans.’ When people who have never eaten w/ me before sit down at chow with me, my diet always comes up.” This difference becomes strikingly apparent during instances of American traditions that involve cultural perceptions of food. Examples of these types of scenarios include holidays, such as Thanksgiving, where turkey becomes a metaphor for the relationship between those who eat it, as well as everyday ceremonies, such as birthdays. As one respondent to my survey laments, her childhood was fraught with challenge and exclusion that was based on her dietary choices. She writes, “When I was a kid, if I went to a friend’s house for dinner, there was usually a big discussion about me not eating the meal that had been prepared for me.” Still another woman recounts a similar experience. She writes “Once a mother didn’t let her daughter invite me to a birthday party because there would be no food for me there.” In these instances, it is the presence of a vegetarian as someone who has a diet motivated by more than habit and appetite that causes controversy. Since the person *embodies* the movement by the lifestyle s/he leads, vegetarians also serve as the site through which attacks on this lifestyle are manifested.

By *embodying* the movement, vegetarians are not simply representatives of the movement, they *are* the movement. As such, vegetarians bring an ethic of eating to the table with them every time they sit down for a meal. But they also advocate this ethic, by

embodying it, whenever their dietary choices become apparent, such as when they go grocery shopping. Because of this, the adversarial responses that they encounter are not restricted to the dinner table. Take the case of a Midwestern woman whose grocery-line encounter with a cattle rancher bordered on violent. She recounts,

> In a grocery store checkout lane I had bought hamburger helper (to use Boca crumbles with) and didn't get any meat. I live in a cattle town, so the confused cashier saw my shirt and stated, oh you're a veggie and you got hamburger helper. I stated that I use the Boca brand and it tastes great. The man behind me shouted at me loud enough for everyone to hear. "You damn Vegetarians! You come around here trying to ruin my life and my cattle business! What's wrong with you people, are you all stupid?! The cashier called for management. I said, "Hey, I don't like you either. I didn't realize how much little ole me holds your future. If you can't handle your business, perhaps you should find a new one." He was so angry I had to be escorted out to my car. I've also had my tires slit, my windows broken and other such vandalism.

When vegetarians experience these types of ad hominem attacks, they are directed towards a vegetarian's personal identity and belief system as well as the collective identity and belief system that s/he is considered part of. In this respect, there is an innate attempt to discredit this dietary ethic by discrediting the one who brings it, even if this is done in ways that seem only tangentially related to food.

Accounts from vegetarians suggest that they are scrutinized by meat-eaters who are searching for inconsistencies in their lifestyle so that they, the meat-eaters, can use these inconsistencies to dismiss the dietary ethics of vegetarians. For example, many vegetarians express sentiments like, "I also don't like the watchful eye that usually descends upon someone when they declare themselves vegan, people trying to expose them as hypocrites, etc." or "at parties or social gatherings, occasionally people would feel the need to "test" my behaviors for consistency: did I wear leather? Did I support

medical/animal research?" and "I have other people question me in a "nice" manner, but it is clear that they are trying to trap me into proving myself a hypocrite." As these examples suggest, those who are faced with the ethical component of consumption that vegetarianism illuminates often attempt to dismiss it by trying to discover flaws in those who do choose to struggle with this ethic instead of focusing on the implications of their own choices. But such efforts to deflect critical awareness by challenging the personal inconsistencies of those who do struggle with this awareness, further exacerbates the divide between these two communities.

Vegetarians see this antagonism as resulting from several sources. Many feel as if their family and friends consider their vegetarianism as an affront to them and their values. One woman writes, "The most difficult part of being a vegan is my loved ones, who feel I am doing this to them, either making their lives inconvenient or trying to sabotage our relationship." This is particularly apparent within family dynamics. Narrative after narrative detail frustrating encounters with parents, who understand their children's decision to become a vegetarian as a type of rebellion, and spouses (or partners) who see it as an inhibiting their relationship with their loved one. One woman discusses her mother's reaction to her vegetarian in such terms. She writes,

> Most of my friends and family have been respectful, but deep down I can tell that they're annoyed or mystified. My mother sometimes exclaims to people in conversion, "My daughter is a vegan." As if to say, "Poor me to have such a strange, disagreeable daughter[. . .]When I first started dating my boyfriend, a vegetarian, most people would say to me, "You're not going to become a vegetarian, *are* you?" As though it would be some burden on them if I did.

In this account, the vegetarian's mother reacted as if her daughter's decision to become vegetarian was an embarrassment, a failure to raise her within the confines of acceptable American cultural norms. In *Voices from the Garden: Stories of Becoming a Vegetarian*, a collection "conversion narratives" of important movement leaders as well as less influential vegetarians, numerous accounts acknowledge the support of or resistance from a spouse or partner as a major source of motivation or frustration accordingly.

Although they express concerns about being "good representatives" of the movement, vegetarians often counter antagonism with antagonism since these encounters feel like personal attacks rather than cultural ones. One woman describes her vegan partner's experiences on a U.S. naval ship. She writes

> The guys on the ship would sit across from him and say, "I'm going to eat this steak in front of you, is that OK?" expecting him to just shrug, or move to another table…He'd say (pardon the bluntness). "Well, I ate your mom in front of your dad and he didn't care." Without missing a beat!

Since the vegetarian movement seeks to recruit members, not encourage adversaries, movement leaders advocate less aggressive responses. At PeTA's "Helping Animals 101" conference in Los Angeles in 2004, which is a two day seminar designed to teach individuals how to become animal rights activists, organization leaders suggested interpreting these encounters as possibilities for establishing common ground and inspiring conversion. Similarly, in *Living Among Meat-eaters: The Vegetarian's Survival Handbook*, Carol Adams suggests thinking about antagonistic individuals as "blocked vegetarians" who share the same path, but have yet to emerge from the woods. Because vegetarians represent the movement in their actions, but often feel attacked as individuals

instead of as representatives of a movement, they struggle with their own rhetorical identity.

The antagonism that vegetarians experience when their lifestyle is made apparent is a result of their embodiment of movement ideology, whether this is intentional or otherwise. Because vegetarians actively participate in the most fundamental characteristic of the ethical vegetarian movement—the refusal to consume animals—they become synonymous with it. In this sense, the presence of a vegetarian inherently argues for an ethic of eating and demands that non-vegetarians recognize this ethic. So, the antagonism that vegetarians face, although it may appear unprovoked, could be understood as defensive behavior on the part of a meat-eater who is unwilling to acknowledge the ethical consequences of his/her own dietary choices. As one vegetarian puts it, “Just establishing yourself as vegetarian valuably resists the cultural notion that eating meat is essential and normal.” In this respect, vegetarians are inherently threatening, especially at mealtime, since their presence not only suggests an alternative to meat-eating as a necessity, but also because they stand as a testament to our individual ability, or responsibility, to adopt this alternative.

Vegetarians often understand their own rhetorical potential, even if they are frustrated that this is the case. One woman writes,

> The thing I find most frustrating is the lack of respect from non-vegs. I try to be very respectful and not push my views on people, but often times meat eaters/hunters will try and push their way of life on me[. . .]They must feel that my lifestyle shines a huge spotlight on the cruelty they don’t want to be accountable for.

Another woman writes,

> I often faced antagonism as people felt defensive about their eating choices when I simply mentioned my own. I have never sought to convert others to my way of life but preferred to lead (if that was the case) by example. I always attributed their responses to their own insecurities. Why else would they feel the need to defend their choices?

In these reflections, the vegetarians did not actively seek to convert non-vegetarians so much so as understand why their encounters with non-vegetarians often turn antagonistic.

However, many vegetarians use their awareness of their inherent rhetorical potential to promote transformation, as recommended by PeTA and by Carol Adams in her vegetarian survival guide. Vegetarians often express their frustration with having to represent a collective vegetarian identity as positive and the lifestyle as easy when they also feel the need to defend themselves, and their personal identity, from this same community. However, they don't want to risk disabling a moment of conversion. Although the act of exposing oneself as a vegetarian is an abbreviated and initial form of conversion narrative, it often opens the door for more thorough accounts and conversations between individuals. And these encounters are often cited in the conversion narratives of vegetarians as their initial impetus for change. Further examination into how and why these narratives are *shared* with others allows us to understand their significance more fully.

Conversion Narratives as Rhetorical Strategies

As the previous section illustrated, vegetarians often encounter antagonistic responses to their decision to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle. However, they also encounter questions about and genuine interest in their decision, often from those who have not

been previously exposed to the ethic of eating that guides that decision. These instances, instead of being antagonistic, often become potential movements of conversion. The majority of "conversion narratives" that I have encountered cite personal interaction with another as the initial impetus for their transformation. Vegetarians attribute their transformation to an initial conversation with a specific individual in a non-public or less-public situation.

One of the most common experiences that vegetarians cite as influential in their transformation to the lifestyle is that being in the presence of a vegetarian made conversion seem possible because these individuals were a living example of an alternative to the myth of meat as necessity. Numerous narratives document the rhetorical nature of being a vegetarian because vegetarians *embody*a non -dominant culture of consumption. One man writes about a vegetarian couple that he credits for his transformation. Of his own thought process, he writes "I felt very self-conscious and guilty when eating in their presence, though they never made any judgmental commitments or snide remarks." It is through the process of becoming vegetarian, then, that vegetarians understand and relate to meat-eaters who feel threatened by their presence. Because most vegetarians *become* vegetarians, they must go through the process of conversion, during which they move from the subject position as meat-eater toward the subject position of vegetarian.

This process becomes less threatening and less difficult when vegetarians share their own path toward conversion as well as their practical learned wisdom, including their knowledge about how animals become meat, the effects of this process, their

frustrations with living as an affront to cultural doctrine, and their methods for alleviating these frustrations. In their transformation narratives, vegetarians cite these particular encounters as the most influential factor in their willingness and ability to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle. One vegetarian captures this sentiment in his narrative. He writes of his experiences with vegetarian friends that they

> set an excellent, non-threatening example of what being a vegetarian or vegan is all about. All these people created this environment of thought and action that challenged my lazy ways of thought and action, and challenged me to think long and hard about my choices and their affects on the animals and environment that I always claimed to love and respect so deeply.

Another vegetarian writes a similar account of conversations he had with his girlfriend. He writes,

> My girlfriend was also a huge influence on me—an ardent feminist and individualist, she opened my eyes to a new way of thinking that I credit for leading me down my vegetarian path[…]My girlfriend was my primary influence, just in the general way in which she opened my mind and heart to a new paradigm of thought.

In these two accounts, it is both the vegetarians' day to day practices and her/his willingness to share those experiences with others and answer questions that contributes the transformation of those they interact with. This is echoed in narrative after narrative. The following excerpts illustrate this trend.

> When I was 33, a friend came to stay for two months. He immediately took me to the local natural food store and we bought ingredients for what would turn out to be the most wonderful vegan stews, which he cooked daily for my family. Through him, I took to the vegetarian life very easily.
>
> * * * *
> One other, very important, influence on me was a friend (who I met at the food co-op), who was a vegan because she didn't believe in harming animals. For various reasons having to do with finances, the dining hall,

> and living on campus, being a vegan was a true hardship for her. She did it anyway, because she had a very clear moral compass that told her what was right and wrong. And she had the strength to do what was right, even when doing the wrong thing would have been much easier. Her example inspired me a great deal.
>
> * * * *
> About a year ago, I started reading up on animal rights in more depth, mostly because one of my students, a vegan, got me thinking about these issues and my own choices…I've had vegetarian friends over the years who have got me thinking more about my dietary choices and their impact on the world. As I said above, one of my students was a vegan, and through conversations with him about veganism and the reasons for his veganism, I decided that I needed to think more carefully about my own choices.

In each of these examples, the conversations that pre-vegetarians have with those who have already adopted the lifestyle inspire reflection and critical inquiry.

Narrative after narrative reflects similar sentiments. One vegetarian credits her vegetarian boyfriend and a veterinarian in Tokyo for convincing her to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle. She writes "I now saw that this was a reasonable option by meeting others who'd made that choice." Another vegetarian claims he became a vegetarian because of his sister and his (now ex) girlfriend. Yet another vegetarian attributes her transition to a family member, specifically her brother's girlfriend of four years. And another to Morrisey, the lead singer of the Smiths, who shared his narrative through song and in the liner notes of The Smith's album, *Meat is Murder*. A college roommate, a co-worker, a man on an airplane, a teacher. The stories go on and on. What is most significant about these narratives and the narratives that inspired them is not that individual interaction is solely responsible for personal conversion. These interactions surely intersect with other experiences as a means of conversion. What is significant is that individuals cite personal

encounters with other individuals as the source for their initial shift in perspective which then led to their interest in and adaptation of a vegetarian lifestyle, which makes personal interaction between individuals worth investigating.

Vegetarians are aware of the transformative potential of their narratives and the conversations during which they are shared. So, when vegetarians share their conversation narrative, they often do so as a way of exposing the path that they took to become who they are, clarifying who that is, and expressing the underlying philosophies that nourish that identity. So, sharing "our" stories is also a means of continuing the legacy of personal transformation as it is brought about by personal interaction. Like so many others, my transformation narrative is both a product of and a means of continuing this legacy.

I became a vegetarian because of a chicken named Pandora and a girl named Carrie-Ann. I met Carrie-Ann in college. It was 1991 and I was a few months into my Freshman year at Salisbury State University, a small liberal arts institution on Maryland's Eastern Shore. After meeting at our freshman orientation, Carrie-Ann and I quickly became fast friends. We struggled together to understand our newfound freedom and responsibility and to take charge of our futures, all the while grappling with our emerging identities as we evolved awkwardly from adolescence into independence. Since Salisbury State had not yet adopted the food court paradigm, we dorm-dwellers spent much of our time in the dining hall, long since torn down, where we served up large portions of social networking while being served equally large portions of oily

Americana fare, fried foods, square desserts and soft ice cream. The dining hall in those days was all you could eat, so I did.

Although my dining posse included a number of characters, including a skateboarding painter from England named Kingsley, a heavy-metal loving, black-clad chain smoker named Joe, and a private school princess named Kate who bore a striking resemblance to Cindy Crawford, it was Carrie-Ann who ultimately impacted me the most because, besides my elementary school music teacher, she was the only vegetarian I knew.

As the semester wore on, and my interest in my Philosophy of Ethics and Morality class grew, I spend more and more time asking Carrie-Ann questions about her choice to become a vegetarian. At first, I admired her choice, but knew that I could never remove meat from my diet. It was too much a part of my daily routine, my upbringing, and my taste buds. Unlike vegetarians who never really liked the taste of flesh, I loved meat. I couldn't imagine never eating fried chicken again or Maryland steamed crabs. Even after I became a vegetarian, I had dreams about cheesesteaks for years. Eventually, however, the more time I spent with Carrie-Ann, the less meat became a part of my life. She lived as an example of the possibility of a meat-less existence and I began to understand my meat-eating as a choice instead of a given. I began to understand meat-eating as a lifestyle instead of life-giving.

For me, Carrie-Ann, a good friend and classmate, represented an alternative to my world view of nutrition and introduced me to an ethics of eating. Undoubtedly, I was also

influenced by other factors, like the work I was doing with non-violence, like witnessing chicken processing plant workers walk to the bank at lunch, still wearing knee-high boots encrusted in blood. But, the conversations I had with Carrie-Ann allowed me to reflect on these other experiences and visualize the possibility of a life without meat that did not seem to revolve around sacrifice. Instead, it revolved around commitment.

But the power of my narrative extends beyond my own transformation. In August 2004, as part of my research into how individuals become vegetarian and why, I spent time at PeTA headquarters in Norfolk, VA. PeTA's headquarters is a five story glass building that houses hundreds of employees who work on a variety of organizational projects, including educational materials, national grassroots organizing, activist campaigns, business relations, and undercover investigations. Located at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, overlooking the one of the country's largest naval installations and a headquarters for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration building, PeTA is a presence in the community. During my visit, I was given a tour of the building and the different departments within. Since food is such a large part of PeTA culture, I was shown the employee kitchen as part of my tour. When I entered the small room with my host, I was introduced to the two women who were grabbing a quick cup of mid-day coffee. I immediately recognized one of the women.

As we shook hands, I realized that I had met her before, although I could not remember where. After several minutes of fruitless guessing on both of our parts, she suddenly said, "Wait, did you work at ***** seafood house in Ocean City, Maryland about ten years ago?!" I had.

What followed was a testament to the power of narratives as movement activity. Without missing a beat, she said “Oh my God! You’re the reason I became a vegetarian! You changed the course of my life!” She went on to explain that she remembers a conversation I had with her one day while we were waiting for the dinner rush during which I shared my conversion narrative with her. The conversation that my narrative led to left her thinking about meat in ways that she never had before. Eventually, she became a vegetarian and developed an interest in animal welfare in general, which in turn, led her to apply for a job at PeTA. At the time of our encounter last August, she had been working at PeTA for five years and was currently heading up their campaign to end animal testing by cosmetic companies.

The most recent additions to my conversation narrative became apparent on the day that I defended this dissertation. At the beginning of my defense, one of the three professors on my dissertation committee announced that he enjoyed reading my work because it reflected his experiences so vividly. He then explained that he became a vegetarian after speaking with me about vegetarianism several years earlier and later reading books that I suggested at his request. Later that day, a student worker in department office asked if we could speak for a couple of minutes. She said that she knew that I was vegan and really admired my lifestyle. She also said that she and a couple of the other student workers were trying to become vegetarians and that I had been a role model to them. After we spoke for several minutes about what resources were available for budding vegetarians, what daily practices would make the transition easier, how her buying habits and perceptions of food might change, and what to say to her

family, she even admitted to reading some of my dissertation when I sent it to the office for copies. In this last instance, my influence extended beyond my conscious advocacy. For the student workers in the English department, my reputation as a strict vegetarian and my daily otherwise unrelated encounters with them served as an unintentional means of persuasion. By living as an example of vegetarianism/veganism in practice, I served as a tangible example of the possibility of such a lifestyle to those outside of it.

As all of these narratives, including my own, illustrate intimate encounters as an especially influential means of movement activity. The possibility for dialectical engagement that conversion narratives elicit leave both individuals with a clearer understanding of one another and the philosophical underpinnings that influence identity and consumption on many levels.

The Battle Within—Sponsoring Internal Dialogues

Narratives shed light on movement discourse and culture by illuminating identity-building and meaning-making when they are shared with others through dialogue. However they have similar potential when individuals come across them on their own. Narratives that appear in movement literature also inspire reflection in the absence of dialectical engagement. *Voices from the Garden: Stories of Becoming a Vegetarian*, a collection of nearly fifty conversion narratives from a wide variety of individuals, is one such example. The book is framed on the back cover as an "inspiring collection [which] is ideal for anyone thinking of vegetarianism or wanting to reinforce their move to vegetarianism." It is prefaced by two important figures in the vegetarian movement. The

first is Howard Lyman, an ex-cattle rancher and dairy farmer turned vegetarian and author of the influential book *Mad Cowboy: Plain Truth from the Cattle Rancher Who Won't Eat Meat*. In his forward, he writes, "Reading this book will arm you with the knowledge to change the world without destroying yourself in the process. This book is good for the environment, good for animals, and good for your health. Read it and live" (7). The second important preface is by Ingrid Newkirk, founder and president of PeTA. In her preface she tells her readers that, "This book is all about relating. How people began to relate and what it has done to them, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. I hope you enjoy it, pass it on, and write your own story and attach it to the end of the book" (10). Her excerpt illustrates how personal narratives act as community building exercises in the ethical vegetarian movement. She even encourages their readers to write their own story and share it with others.

Narratives also appear in magazines that have historically represented the movement and its members. The *Vegetarian Times*, which began publication in 1974 in the midst of the formation of an ethical vegetarian movement, also includes conversion narratives as a means of conversion and community building. From 1983 to 1989, the magazine concludes most issues with a page dedicated to "Why I Became a Vegetarian" stories. These stories, solicited from readers, address the many reasons that individuals choose to become vegetarian as well as the struggles they face, the emotions that they feel, and the ways they have learned to cope with *embodying* a lifestyle that conflicts hegemonic American cultures of consumption that revolve around meat-eating.

The most common and consistent ways in which conversion narratives are shared outside of face-to-face interaction, however, is through vegetarian cookbooks. Cookbooks teach us more than simply how to prepare a meal. Ethnic cookbooks often introduce us to unfamiliar ingredients, combinations, terminology and the similarly unfamiliar cultures they hail from. Anyone who has wandered through the otherworldly aisles of an Asian market in search of black vinegar, inari skins, or coconut powder has become witness to more than culinary difference. As with other minority communities in the US whose food is linked to their identity, such as Southerners, Tex-Mexers, Cajuns, and Soul Food diners, vegetarians share a connection with one another through their food choices. Unlike these other food genres, vegetarian cookbooks also serve as motivational and recruitment manuals. They present an argument to their readers, one that evokes the sacred triad of vegetarian lore. If we are what we eat, we should be ethical, environmentally conscious, and healthy. In order to promote vegetarianism while providing practical advice about how to eat ethically on a day to day basis, these movement texts play an important role in introducing potential participants to the movement, educating newcomers about survival skills, and keeping longtime members motivated and active within the community. This is most often done as part of or in relation to the conversion narratives that are shared there.

Since 1995, nearly one hundred vegan, or strict vegetarian (consuming no animal products) cookbooks have been published and become widely available in the US, most of these in the past five years, with only a few of them reprints from earlier editions (original printing between 1990-95). Almost all of these cookbooks include a conversion

narrative or testimonial of some sort as part of their introduction along with a section that explains the author's ethical impetus for his/her/or their vegetarian lifestyle. In *How it all Vegan* or "How it all Ve′-gan," a popular contemporary cookbook, Sarah Kramer and Tanya Barnard share their narratives as a way of connecting with the diverse audience that comprises a vegetarian community. In her narrative entitled "How Sarah Ve-gan," Sarah Kramer writes "My journey into the world of veganism has been a life-long adventure. I was born and raised a vegetarian[. . .]My mother believed in the old adage, 'You are what you eat'. But growing up in a prairie town wasn't always easy" (12) She also shares her relationship with meat. She writes,

> I dabbled in meat occasionally. I'd cram down a burger before my brain would tell my stomach that I was eating dead flesh. But after a few bites, I would have to stop. I think I've always felt that eating animals is wrong. (13)

Tanya's story, on the other hand, represents an entirely different history and community. In "How Tanya Ve-gan," she writes

> I grew up in a household where it was believed that 'meat is the fuel that keep bodies healthy and strong.' My father was an adamant meat-eater; he loved the stuff! [. . .]I remember going out for burgers with my family and being disgusted with the amount of vegetables piled on top of my all-beef patty. 'If I wanted a salad, I would have ordered one,' I said to my fellow diners. They all laughed. Meat—I used to love the stuff. (14)

Through their narratives Sarah and Tanya reflect on their experiences and the decisions to become vegetarian. By sharing these experiences, they claim an identity of their own making. They also provide support for vegetarians who, like them, often feel isolated and, in this respect, help to develop a stronger sense of community across difference. Francesca Polletta attributes this power to the sequential nature of narratives. She writes,

> ‘[B]y locating [events] in a sequence or unfolding process’[, . . .]Narratives not only make sense of the past and present, but since the story’s chronological end is also its end in the sense of moral, purpose or telos, they project a future. This is the basis for self-identity and action. (140)

In their narratives, as in the ones presented earlier in this chapter, Sarah and Tanya’s stories emphasize personal interaction with another individual as an impetus for change and motivation. In their narratives Sarah and Tanya write respectively, “There are so many events that have brought me to this point. One of them is my best friend, Tanya” and “I also had to convince my family and friends that my new lifestyle was a healthy one, and that I wouldn’t suffer for my choices. Luckily, I have Sarah” (14 and 15). Accounts of specific interactions with specific individuals within conversion narratives appear in narrative after narrative, including my own.

Animals as Rhetoricians

The narratives that I have examined so far look at personal interaction between individuals and texts as conversionary experiences. However, many vegetarians attribute their conversion to personal encounters of another type. Many vegetarians recount encounters that they had with animals which were pivotal in their decision to become vegetarian. Although I highlighted my interaction with Carrie-Ann earlier in my conversion narrative, my initial discomfort with eating animals was a direct result of my interaction with a chicken named Pandora.

Growing up in Suburban Baltimore, all I knew about chicken was that I preferred dark meat. Until, that is, I inherited Pandora. I was 12 years old and she was 6 weeks old, rust-colored, and the quintessential pin-up girl for those calendars with photos of baby animals that you buy at dollar stores nationwide. In the true nature of coincidence, the day that I brought Pandora home, we were having barbequed chicken for dinner. It was late spring and my father was tending to the grill as I sat playing with my first pet on the picnic table. When dinner was ready, my father set my food chicken down in front of me and my pet chicken. Pandora looked at my dinner, smelled it, and looked at me. I looked at her looking at my dinner. My father looked at me, looked at her, looked at my dinner, and looked back at me. We were all silent for a moment. We never knew if she knew what was for dinner that night, but we did, and it was making us uncomfortable.

What was happening in that moment of silence was more than the awkward realization that chicken, the food, came from chicken, the animal. We felt guilty. And that guilt resulted from the unspoken awareness that our actions felt in someway inappropriate or unethical.

This is a common account within conversion narratives. The moment of awareness, which, according to vegetarians, eventually leads them to become such, is often a product of an encounter between a human and an animal which forces the recognition that our food was once an animal. Take the following account of one woman's transformation. She writes,

> At a stoplight eating a BigMac, thinking of only my pleasure and not another's suffering[,] a cattle truck pulled up next to me in the left turning

> lane[. . .]Looking anyway, I saw noses out of all the available holes[. . .]The steer 2 feet from my face put his face in and put his eye to the hole. He had a laceration above his eye and was bleeding down his face. He just stared while I stared back at him…I never ate meat again.

Her mealtime encounter with the caged and bleeding cow unraveled the dominant perception that meat is somehow separate from animal, much like the example cited earlier in this chapter and my own experience with Pandora. Whether the eyes we look into are brown, black, or blue, large and oval or small and round, they have the power to alter our understanding of consumption.

This phenomenon has not been overlooked by the vegetarian movement. Many participants in my survey cite PeTA's video "Meet Your Meat" as a factor in their transformation toward vegetarianism. Narrated by Alec Baldwin, his voice characteristically serious, "Meet Your Meat" begins with Baldwin's declaration, "What you are about to see is beyond your worst nightmares." From there, "Meet your Meat" walks the viewer through the gruesome life and death of the animals that become food. It is carefully crafted to highlight the most disturbing aspects of this process, such as when viewers watch pigs writhe in fear, then pain, as workers slit their throats, covering the floor of the factory in dark waves of blood or when viewers witness a visibly distraught cow being castrated without any form of anesthesia.

These encounters with animals that become food act as a means of persuasion, even in the absence of other forms of movement rhetoric. These encounters are powerful enough to undo the semantic and cultural representations of meat as distinct from animals. In her book *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams examines how language obscures this relationship. She writes, "Through butchering, animals become absent

referents. Animals in name and body are made absent *as animals* for meat to exist" (40). She cites the terminology used by the meat industry which obscures the "being" of food animals. In the language of butchering, animals become "biomachines" and "food-processing units" while slaughterhouses become rendering plants and dissecting equipment become "protein harvesters" and "converting machines" (47). Adams also examines how the language Americans use to talk about their meat further distances it from the animals it is made of. She writes,

> Animals are made absent through language that renames dead bodies before consumers participate in eating them. Our culture further mystifies the term "meat" with gastronomic language, so we do not conjure dead, butchered animals, but cuisine[. . .]After death, cows become roast beef, steak, hamburger; pigs become pork, bacon, sausage. Since objects are possessions they cannot have possessions; thus, we say "leg of lamb" not a "lamb's leg."[. . .]Without its referent point of the slaughtered, bleeding, butchered animal, meat becomes a free-floating image." (40-8)

When a human interacts with a food animal as an animal, still whole and sentient, the dissidence between the reality of meat and the semantic and symbolic representation of it becomes evident. So much so that these encounters appear in the conversion narratives of ordinary vegetarians, movement leaders, and cartoon characters alike.

In the 1995 episode of *The Simpsons* entitled "Lisa, the Vegetarian," Lisa Simpson undergoes her own conversion toward vegetarianism. After interacting with a lamb at a petting zoo, Lisa finds herself envisioning her lamb chop returning to its rightful owner as she sits down to eat it. When she expresses her discomfort with eating the same species of animal that she felt such affection for only hours earlier, she is met with distain and dismissal by the rest of her family. When Lisa says, "I can't eat this. I can't eat a poor little lamb," Homer replies "Lisa, get a hold of yourself. This is lamb, not

a lamb." After her refusal to eat a lamb, Lisa is plagued with visions of meat separating from its animal and landing in its edible form on a plate as Marge suggests that she eat "chicken breast," "rump roast," or "hot dogs" instead. When she furthers her own inquisition by announcing that she cannot stand the thought of eating any animal again, the conversation is one that vegetarians have experienced often, but in less exaggerated forms. It goes,

> Homer: "Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait, wait, wait, Lisa, honey, are you saying you're *never* going to eat any animals again?! What about bacon?
>
> Lisa: No.
>
> Homer: Ham?
>
> Lisa: No.
>
> Homer: Pork Chops?
>
> Lisa: Dad! Those all come from the same animal!
>
> Homer: Ho, ho. Yeah, right, Lisa. A wonderful, magical animal.

Lisa's experience, both her initial "awakening" and the response to it is echoed in narrative after narrative of vegetarians across the U.S. The way in which an individual's choice to live as a vegetarian is received by others is indicative of the degree to which they are at odds with dominant cultures of consumption and, not surprisingly, with those that subscribe to them. However, encounters with animals other than food animals also carry persuasive potential.

Vegetarians also credit their relationship with non-food animals for helping them see "through the veil." One vegetarian cites her experiences nursing a kitten she named

Upton (presumably after Upton Sinclair) who suffered, and later died, from Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP). Shortly after Upton's death, his "owner" had an unforgettable experience as she prepared rum ginger chicken for dinner. Of her experience, she writes, "I had taken the chicken out of the package and was washing it in the sink. And I began to look at it, *really* look at it. It had a torso, legs, wings. It struck me again that it was this whole animal." Since she had recently spend so much time with Upton, nursing him until he suffered an irreversible and debilitating seizure, she had come to feel affection for animals in a way that she had not before. This connection sponsored her recognition that her dinner was once an animal as well and she, like so many other pet-owning vegetarians, could no longer reconcile her love for one animal with her desire to eat another.

In these moments of interaction between individuals, between human and animal, and between human and text, persuasion happens. The soon-to-be-vegetarian is moved to adopt the values and practices associated with vegetarianism because s/he is exposed to an alternative to the dominant cultural narrative of meat-eating.

Conclusion and Implications

In this chapter, I have examined how narratives function as a form of movement activity in the ethical vegetarian movement. These narratives include both movement narratives, stories that characterize the movement, as well as individual conversion narratives. As part of this inquiry, I have also argued that substantial movement activity takes place in less- or non-public settings between individuals and that this activity is

powerfully persuasive. This is the case because a dialectic of personal interaction allows individuals to share their narratives with other individuals in situations that then allow for reflective and continued conversation, a key component in the mobilization of potential movement adherents. These types of encounters are especially productive when they take place in less public or non-public spaces between small numbers of people. These more private, and consequently, more interactive settings are ideal spaces for sharing and reflecting on "conversion narratives." For vegetarians reaching out to other vegetarians, these narratives and encounters build community and establish individual and collective identity. For vegetarians who engage in conversations with non-vegetarians, or are pushed into conversations with non-vegetarians, these narratives serve a different purpose. They can clarify misperceptions, establish common ground, and ultimately, inspire conversion.

By examining the dialectic of personal interaction in addition to unintentional rhetoric and embodied rhetoric as movement activity, I shed light on areas of movement activity and types of persuasion that fall outside of traditional movement scholarship in sociology. I examine exchanges between individuals as sites of confrontation by updating and expanding Robert Cathcart's analysis of confrontation as a rhetorical form to include non- and less-public encounters. He writes that "movements are essentially rhetorical transactions of a *special type*, distinguishable by the peculiar reciprocal rhetorical acts set off between the movement on the one hand and the established system or controlling agency on the other" ("Confrontation" 234). What I have argued in this chapter is that in the ethical vegetarian movement this conflict often takes place *between individuals* who

act as representatives of either the established system or the movement. Such an analysis helps scholars to broaden their understanding of what constitutes a social movement activity. The sooner scholars examine these exchanges as movement activity and as rhetorical acts, the sooner we can make manifest an approach to the study of social movements that makes use of the wisdom of sociologists and rhetoricians alike. One way to begin this process is by examining how the rhetorical features of a movement intersect with one another to create a distinctive movement footprint.

In the following chapter, I examine how personal interaction, unintentional, and embodied rhetorics interact with other rhetorical features of the ethical vegetarian movement in order to differentiate it as such. I examine how the vegetarian movement challenges meat-eating as the dominant culture of consumption. I claim that these challenges revolve around the movement's ability to foster a vegetarian identity that is both personal and collective. In order to understand how happens and how such a relationship between personal and collective identity is maintained, I examine how a collective vegetarian identity has been established historically, how it varies within the movement, and how it impacts and is impacted by personal identity.

Chapter 4 Cultures of Consumption: The Relationship Between What We Eat and Who We Are.

> *What is at stake in contemporary movements[. . .]is the self-production of the human species at the individual and collective level.* –Alberto Melucci in *Nomads of the Present*

> *The impact of my choice to become vegetarian on other aspects of my life cannot be overestimated[. . .]I don't feel as helpless and hopeless anymore, or overcome with existential angst. I feel like no matter what else I do, going vegetarian and helping animals will have made my life worthwhile.* -Survey Response

Vegetarians are inherently rhetorical since their existence challenges meat-eating as a social norm and, consequently, challenges meat-eaters to examine their own proclivities in ethical terms. This suggests that, in many respects, we are what we eat, or, more precisely, personal identity is intertwined with the cultures of consumption that we subscribe to. In the following chapter, I examine what it means to *be* vegetarian in a culture that does not endorse it. In the tradition of the Resource Mobilization paradigm, I examine how the vegetarian movement organizations structure themselves, advocate their cause, and attempt to effect change. As part of this, I examine how these organizations work together to appeal to a broad and diverse audience in order to challenge dominant cultural norms and offer alternatives to these norms—vegetarian and vegan lifestyles. I also employ New Social Movement scholarship and frame theory in order to examine the complicated relationship between personal and collective identity, between identity of

our own making and that which is assigned to us, and between identity that movement leaders attempt to craft and the way in which it is internalized by members.

I begin by analyzing how the culture of meat is sustained in the US by the increasingly indistinguishable activities of the government and the business sector. I then illustrate the ways in which the vegetarian movement attempts to dismantle this cultural tradition by offering a viable alternative to it. After I discuss the relationship between cultural control and identity formation, I analyze how organizations attempt to create and maintain a vegetarian collective identity across difference and how this identity relates to the personal identity of those who subscribe to it. Ultimately, I argue that the primary aim of the movement is to convince individuals to internalize the ethical impetus behind the movement in such a way that their identity as a vegetarian includes a desire to convince others to adopt the lifestyle. In this respect, I argue, a conversion to vegetarianism, especially strict vegetarianism or veganism, is not unlike other forms of religious conversions, which is illustrated by the religious language that vegetarians use to describe their commitment to the lifestyle and the actions that illustrate this commitment.

Cultures of Consumption

Vegetarianism is a challenge to the dominant *culture* of consumption. As such, the movement acts like other movements which prioritize *cultural* transformation instead of or in addition to political reform. In addition, individuals who participate in the movement choose to do so. Unlike class-based movements that dominated the first half of the twentieth century, vegetarian collective and personal identity is not a priori, as class

was often understood to be, but rather something that participants *choose* to become and define for themselves. These important characteristics and distinctions align the ethical vegetarian movement with the New Social Movements that arose in Europe in the later half of the twentieth century and other cultural movements based on aspects of identity, such as ethnic affiliation and sexual orientation.

Like these movements, the ethical vegetarian movement can be understood as a result of a postmodern fragmentation of identity in a climate where power is defined in terms of cultural control. This socio-political climate is characterized by the breakdown between the personal and the political, by conflicts of identity and cultural production as superseding materialist ones, by new understandings of identity as fluid and self- selected, and by an influx in globalized information technologies as a means of cultural control. Movements that seek social change in such an environment began to examine and expose how cultural norms were established and maintained. Movement organizations and participants, then, act as an alternative to these norms and, in doing so, disrupt the naturalized discourses and practices associated with those norms. In this sense, social change is no longer primarily about enacting political transformation through collective action. Rather, it is about fostering individuals' awareness of their own agency in determining their identity, and through this, gaining influence into the manufacture of culture.

Cultural movements like the Ethical Vegetarian Movement work to establish personal and collective identities that differ from the norm as a way of exposing loci of power in order to disrupt and redistribute it. Alberto Melucci articulates the complicated

relationship among identity, culture, power, and information technologies in his 1994 article "A Strange Kind of Newness." In his article, he claims that domination and control no longer happen primarily through materialist coercion in first world countries. Instead, he argues that this process is more tacitly manifest as individuals learn to adopt the cultural norms that they are indoctrinated with through rapid advancements in information technologies. For him, those who control the production and processing of information also control "the crucial dimensions of daily life," which makes identity and cultural production key locations of domination ("Newness" 101). However, as such, identity and culture also have the potential to be important sites of resistance since these sites bridge the gap between the personal and the social, the civil and the civic, and the private and the public.

The manufacture of identity, then, is a battle between whom we are taught we should be by dominant culture as it is disseminated and whom we feel we are in contrast to that. Because the struggle to become something other than the norm is easier when we join a community of others that have already done so or are currently struggling to do so, movements engage in discourse and practice aimed at fostering individual agency and non-dominant collective identities. Melucci articulates the philosophy behind these activities. He writes,

> Dimensions that were traditionally regarded as private (the body, sexuality, affective relations), or subjective (cognitive and emotional processes, motives, desires), or even biological (the structure of the brain, the genetic code, reproductive capacity) now undergo social control and manipulation. The technoscientific apparatus, the agencies of information and communication, and the decision-making centers that determine policies wiled their power over these domains. Yet, these are precisely the areas where individuals and groups lay claim to their autonomy, where

> they conduct their search for identity by transforming them into a space where they reappropriate, self-realize, and construct the meaning of what they are and what they do. ("Newness" 101)

Since meat-eating has long been a dominant cultural norm, upheld by the symbiotic relationship among government policies and meat and dairy industry interests, vegetarianism offers a tangible example of the type of resistance Melucci envisions. Before we can understand this challenge, however, we need to recognize how the culture of meat is sustained in the U.S.

Sustaining the Culture of Meat

The relationship among the government, the business sector, and meat as an American cultural tradition is most apparent in information that the US government disseminates about nutrition. National dietary guidelines are understood as nutritional truths that Americans are taught which help them learn how to eat healthily. However, these guidelines are, and have historically been, created by businesses with a vested interest in promoting foods from which they profit. For instance, most of the educational materials on nutrition that educators use are developed and disseminated by the USDA, including the food pyramid. Growing out of dietary guidelines developed by the United States Department of Agriculture in the 1960s, the food pyramid quickly became the model of proper nutrition in the US. These guidelines, which are federal policy, have undergone several revisions since this time, resulting in the creation of the food pyramid in 1992. However, the pyramid has been criticized widely as out of date by the medical community. According to Walter Willett, chairman of the department of nutrition at

Harvard School of Public Health, the dietary guidelines illustrated by the food pyramid "[do not] reflect the latest research on nutrition and weight control, and it may be contributing to obesity and health problems in this country" (http://www.usatoday.com/News/health/2002-11-04-food-pyramid_x.htm). The influence of the meat and dairy industry has been so prevalent in US dietary guidelines that the USDA has come under pressure to revise those guidelines in a more publicly monitored way. In response, a new food pyramid was released by the USDA on April 15th, 2005 and, for the first time, a vegetarian nutritionist was involved in the revision process.

However, the USDA itself is, at the basest level, invested in maintaining the myth of meat and dairy, since "the primary mission of the USDA is, after all, to promote the sale of agricultural products," (qtd. in "*Food Pyramid*"). The organization has come under criticism as it tried to revamp the food pyramid because it is responsible for "subsidiz[ing] and promot[ing] commodities produced by U.S. farmers--including cheese, sugar and tobacco" (qtd. in "*Food Pyramid*"). In the words of Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, a Republican from Illinois who proposed legislation to separate the USDA from the process of defining American dietary guidelines, " putting the USDA in charge of dietary advice is in some respects like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse" ("*Food Pyramid*").

This bias is evidenced by tacit legislation and the creation of cultural codes that help sustain the myth of meat-eating (and dairy consumption) as necessity. The WIC or the "special nutritional program for women, infants, and children" is a federally funded program for low-income mothers designed to help them, and their children, get

appropriate nutrition by subsidizing a variety of foods considered high in important vitamins and nutrients. However, the program does not include soybean products like tofu or soymilk in the list of acceptable foods while it is does heavily encourage the consumption of dairy. According to the government program website, WIC eligible foods include: Adult Cereal, Infant Cereal, Adult and Infant Juice, Milk, Cheese, Eggs, Beans/Peas/Peanut Butter, Carrots, Tuna, Infant Formula, Exempt Infant Formula, and Medical Foods. Because this program is a product of and instrument of a dairy-based, meat-based culture of consumption, strict vegetarians who choose to get their calcium from non-dairy sources, such as soymilk, are excluded from the program. As one woman laments in her response to my survey

> WIC gave every pregnant woman and child under 5, free milk, cheese, cereal, peanut butter, tuna fish and juice! LOTS of it! I was supposed to drink 6 gallons of milk per month, by myself. WIC crammed all the milk products I could get down my throat. They even told me to add powdered milk to everything from ice cream and milkshakes to cereal for extra calcium.

The WIC program illustrates the degree to which the US government influences cultures of consumption by limiting what it endorses as an acceptable diet.

The USDA also encourages and subsidizes the consumption of dairy in less overt ways. Educational materials about nutrition that appear in public and private schools nationwide are mostly produced and distributed by the National Dairy Council. This council is the marketing arm of Dairy Management Incorporated. It receives funding from the USDA as part of their "National Dairy Promotion and Research Program." According to a 2003 USDA report to Congress on their dairy promotion program, the USDA gives money to the National Dairy Council to conduct research on dairy and

nutrition and to publish and disseminate educational materials (http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/prb/prb_rept_2004.htm). These materials are then distributed to schools nationwide. Educators can choose lessons about nutrition from an extensive "Nutrition Education Materials Catalog," which includes lessons for all grade levels, interactive handouts, posters (including the food pyramid), and nutrient comparison cards. Needless to say, references to tofu and soy as good sources of calcium are not available. In fact, the council's information on calcium intake is the 3A- DAY campaign. This poster for this campaign encourages children to eat three servings of dairy daily, preferably in the forms of milk, cheese, and yogurt. According to the educational materials, "stronger bones are as easy as 1-2-3." The materials suggest the following:

1. Begin mornings with Dairy
    - Parents be a role model. Enjoy milk with your children every morning—not only will you teach them well, but you'll do your body good too!
    - Jump-start your child's day with a smart breakfast by blending low-fat yogurt and fruit for a homemade smoothie.
2. Flavorful Fun for Families
    - Studies show that elementary school kids drink 28 percent more milk when offered in "cool" flavors and packages.[1]
    - Stock up on calcium-packed grab-and-go snacks such as fruit yogurt, cheese cubes and single-serve containers of low-fat milk.
3. Make Meal Time Family Time
    - Eating together as a family promotes good eating habits[2] and improves overall nutrition[3].
    - Involve kids in creative meal planning. Kids are more likely to eat foods they help prepare.

(http://www.nutritionexplorations.org)

Sounding more like an advertisement for dairy than an educational nutritional guideline, this "resource for educators" is an example of the type of nutritional information that children and adults receive from the government. The reference notes, indicated by footnotes within the body of the document, indicate that the sources of this information were studies conducted by the National Dairy Council itself in 2002, while it was receiving funding from the USDA.

Another section of the poster addresses lactose-intolerance. The bright pink section, boasting the picture of a joyful African American child about to eat a spoonful of yogurt, offers suggestions about how to get calcium if an individual is lactose intolerant. These suggestions include eating yogurt and hard cheeses, which are naturally lower in lactose, as well as drinking lactose-reduced milk. No mention is made of non-dairy sources of calcium. What these materials are really suggesting Americans get more of is calcium, although the poster suggests that calcium intake is directly related to the consumption of dairy.

The USDA also contributes money to campaigns intended to substantially increase the amount of cheese which is sold and consumed in the US. According to an article which appeared in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in September 2003 entitled "Uncle Sam Says CHEESE," the USDA is behind initiatives to increase the amount of cheese consumption in the US by offering incentives to fast food and chain restaurants to include more cheese in their menu items. This campaign, affectionately called the "summer of cheese" began in 2002 when Dairy Management Inc. (DMI) helped Pizza Hut develop their Stuffed Crust Pizza, and The Insider (a double decker pizza); Taco Bell develop and

promote their Chicken Quesadilla, “which features eight times the cheese of any of its other menu items”; and Wendy’s develop its Bacon Cheeseburger, with cheese sauce in addition to two slices of cheddar cheese (section F1). This agency, located in Rosemount, Illinois, is overseen by and receives funding from the USDA following a 1984 act of Congress. DMI targeted these fast food industry leaders as a way of increasing dairy use in the fast food and restaurant chain industry as a whole. Through cheese “trickle down,” DMI hopes that if they target “key leaders in each segment” of the industry that ‘chains two and three will follow the leader”(section FI).

Statistics suggest they are correct in their assumptions. As Fran Henry reports, “Thanks to the government, cheese consumption has risen to 30.6 pounds per person annually, about double the amount eaten in 1975” (section F1). The “summer of cheese” campaign alone increased consumption dramatically. According to the article, “during the quesadilla’s five-week promotional debut, Taco Bell more than doubled the amount of cheese it ordinarily used” and “during a four-week promotion period in August 2001, [Wendy’s] used 15 percent more cheese than usual, nearly 1.7 million pounds all together” (section F1). Despite efforts to discuss the cheese promotion with USDA officials, the office would say little other than “claims in the promo materials are accurate, defendable, and consistent with dietary guidelines.” This is little comfort to those who have witnessed the national obesity rate increase from 15% to 31% between 1980 and 2000, the moderate obesity rate from 47% to 64%, and the number of overweight adolescents from 4% to 15% (“Uncle Sam”). This particular promotion

illustrates the degree to which the USDA is an agency populated by special interest groups that advocate for the consumption of meat and dairy as part of a *healthy* diet.

The relationship between the dairy industry and the US government is also evidenced by the recently legislated “Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act,” which George W. Bush signed into law in 2004. Under this law, school cafeterias are required to sell milk during lunch. In fact, the law prohibits schools from “directly or indirectly restrict[ing] marketing of fluid milk products at any time or any place on school premises” (http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/sfs/cnra.asp). Similarly, the government subsidizes the beef industry by buying its otherwise unsellable meat for distribution in school cafeterias. According to Eric Schlosser, author of the best-selling non-fiction expose *Fast Food Nation*,

> For years some of the most questionable ground beef in the United States was purchased by the USDA—and then distributed to school cafeterias throughout the country. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the USDA chose meat suppliers from its National School Lunch food Program on the basis of the lowest price, without imposing additional food safety requirements. The cheapest ground beef was not only the most likely to be contaminated with pathogens, but also the most likely to contain pieces of spinal cord, bone, and gristle left behind by Automated Meat Recovery Systems (contraptions that squeeze the last shreds of meat off bones). (218)

Schlosser also cites a 1983 investigation by NBC News that exposed the disturbing practices of the Cattle King Packing Company, the USDA’s largest supplier at the time (approximately one-quarter of ground beef purchased for school lunch program). The report indicated that the company “routinely processed cattle that were already dead before arriving at the plant, hid diseased cattle from inspectors, and mixed rotten meat that had been returned by customers into packages of hamburger meat” (218).

As this example suggests, the USDA—the organization responsible for creating and revising the American dietary and nutrition guidelines—is not only heavily invested in maintaining a culture of dairy consumption, but also it is responsible for protecting and promoting the beef industry. This conflict of interest became apparent during the "Mad Cow Scare" that arose from the first confirmed case of Mad Cow disease in the U.S. in December, 2003. According to a report which aired on NPR on the program *All Things Considered*, the USDA has two roles. On the program, Snighda Prakash reports that "what the consumers may not know is that the USDA has two jobs—to protect the safety of the nation's meat and poultry while also promoting the economic interests of those that promote that food." With the outbreak of Mad Cow in the US, the USDA's dual roles came under attack by critics who claim that the government agency often neglected consumer safety in order to protect the interests of the meat industry. In response, Alisa Harrison, a spokeswoman for the USDA issued a statement denying a conflict of interest between these two roles. She claims, "It's very clear that public health is the number one priority." However, as the NPR story points out, Harrison came to the USDA from the National Cattleman's Beef Association, the major lobbying branch of the cattle industry as has many of the USDA's top officials, including the Agricultural Secretary's Chief of Staff and a deputy undersecretary. The USDA is also heavily peopled by individuals who represent the dairy industry, hog producers, and large Agro-business. In addition, these agribusiness interests also contribute substantially to both Republican and Democratic parties, 90 million and 33 million since the year 2000 respectively (*All Things Considered*, January 26, 2004).

The blurred boundaries between the meat industry and the USDA are not a new phenomenon. In *Fast Food Nation*, Schlosser examines how this blurring materialized in both the Reagan and first Bush administrations. He writes that both administrations "cut spending on public health measures and staffed the U.S. Department of Agriculture with officials far more interested in government deregulation than in food safety." During this time,

> the USDA became largely indistinguishable from the industries it was meant to police. President Reagan's first secretary of agriculture was in the hog business. His second was the president of the American Meat Institute (formerly known as the American Meat Packers Association). And his choice to run the USDA's Food Marketing and Inspection Service was a vice president of the National Cattleman's Association. President Bush later appointed the president of the National Cattleman's Association to the Job. (206)

Regan also introduced the Streamlined Inspection System for Cattle (SIS-C) which ran from 1988-1993 when it was discontinued. This federal program placed large meatpackers in charge of inspecting safety and sanitary standards within their own plants. These in-house inspections replaced those formerly conducted by USDA inspectors. Only after a 1993 outbreak of E. Coli which killed four people and sickened over seven hundred people in over four different states, mostly children, did the USDA run an investigation into and ultimately discontinue the program (Schlosser 207).

Whether it is through national dietary guidelines, WIC, legislation like the "Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act," cheese marketing campaigns, or government partnerships with the big agro-business, those who control information and its dissemination are actively working to sustain the myth of meat and dairy as necessity. By claiming that the consumption of meat and dairy is necessary as part of a healthy diet, those in power

naturalize the ritual of meat-eating as both necessary and appropriate. Through advertising and educational campaigns such as the WIC program and the 3-a-day campaign; public statements, such as those that dominated the media during the 2004 "Mad Cow Scare"; and iconic and cultural signifiers, such as the image of the cowboy as a representation of what it means to be an American (an image that is so apparent in the rhetoric of the current federal administration), the myth of meat-eating as an essential aspect of who we are is sustained. As Melucci indicates, the power to craft cultural and personal identity in contemporary societies is "grounded in an ability to 'inform' that is, to 'give form'" ("Newness 102). In the case of meat consumption, the government and the meat and dairy industries work together to give form to the myth of meat.

Dismantling the Culture of Meat

While those in power seek to reify these cultural norms, social movements, especially those that stress identity and culture as battlegrounds for social action, seek to dismantle these norms by exposing them as subjective and interested rituals, instead of inherent truths. A crucial component of a movement, then, is what Melucci calls a movement's ability to "highlight the insuperable dilemmas facing complex societies, and by doing so force them openly to assume responsibility for their choices, their conflicts, and their limitations" ("Newness" 103). This confrontation, of sorts, over cultural production is located in the individual and collective pursuit of self-determined identity. Arenas that were considered outside of social control, such as dietary preference, are now understood as social as well as personal. As such, it is these cultural representations of

identity that contemporary social movements, like the vegetarian movement, seek to transform.

In the following section, I examine how movement organizations promote vegetarianism as an alternative to the culture of meat. I look at the similarities and differences in the strategies and audiences of specific influential movement organizations. I analyze specific strategies that these various organizations employ and examine how these strategies affect change. What holds these organizations together as representatives of a single movement is their desire to replace meat-eating as the dominant culture of consumption with vegetarianism and their tacit acknowledgement that this is most likely to happen if individuals understand the values of vegetarianism as congruent with, and even part of, the values that already comprise their personal identities. The strategies that I examine illustrate some ways in which the movement attempts to link vegetarianism with identity.

Vegetarian organizations work together to create an alternative vision to the culture of meat as a means of redefining cultural norms, often by employing the same strategies for cultural production and information dissemination used by dominant culture. At PeTA's "Helping Animals 101" conference in Los Angeles in June 2004, organizational leaders discussed how vegetarians could best represent the movement. In his presentation, Dan Shannon, PeTA's Vegan Campaign Coordinator, has this advice for conference participants.

> *Date non-vegetarians
> *Dress for success. Defy the stereotype. Do not display tattoos. Get rid of non-ear piercings. Get an acceptable haircut and color. Tuck in your shirt.

> *Do not get antagonistic with those who are trying to get antagonistic with you.
> *Do not make veganism look difficult, even if this means eating a veggie-burger at a restaurant without asking lots of questions about whether or not it contains dairy.
> *Practice short, but effective, answers to questions like "Why are you a vegetarian" and "What's wrong with dairy" as well as responses to antagonism. Memorize your responses.
> *Read business books on how to be successful and persuasive such as *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Stephen Covey 1989) and *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (Dale Carnegie, original publication date 1937).
> *For television appearances, dress conservatively in solid dark colors. Memorize and talk in soundbites (7 seconds).

This advice echoes that which Bruce Friedrich, also from PeTA, gives in his presentation "Effective Advocacy: Stealing from the Corporate Playbook." In his essay, he writes,

> We need to work as hard—and, more importantly, as smart—as the people on Wall Street work to sell stocks and advertisers work to sell the latest SUV. Although our goals are different, the mechanisms of reaching other people and selling the message (in our case, of animal liberation) are well established. (http://www.goveg.com/active/effective-4.html)

He also encourages vegetarians to take advantage of information technologies, such as public access television, to disseminate the vegetarian message. Since public access television is run by and for individuals in the community, these stations will run a thirty minute loop of "Meet Your Meat" and other videos for free, often several times a week. According to Friedrich, PeTA receives "tons" of calls from viewers who respond to the invitation to contact PeTA for a free vegetarian starter kit which appears at the end of the video.

Another rhetorical strategy that the vegetarian movement relies on an ability to frame organizations for different audiences. The result is the formation of an organizational network in which organizations work together to bring attention to the

subjective nature of cultural norms by disseminating information which contradicts those norms to different audiences in a variety of ways. According to Donna Maurer in her book *Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment*, movement organizations recognize two distinct audiences for their rhetoric. First, they work to deepen the commitment of those who already subscribe, on some level, to the movement. Second, they hope to recruit new members. I will expand on my discussion about audience in the following section. In the meantime, it is important to note that movement organizations work together to appeal to each of these audiences in a variety of ways. While PeTA makes their message overt—"That animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use in entertainment"—The Vegetarian Resource Group offers vegetarian options and resources for everyone *without* overtly aligning vegetarianism with its ethical impetus. This is also true of the Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine. To illustrate how the rhetoric of each organization differs in order to reach diverse audiences, I examine the some of rhetorical approaches of each of these organizations and suggest how these approaches indicate the nature of their diverse audiences.

PeTA, as both a vegetarian organization and an animal rights organization, uses strategies that increase the visibility of the movement. They do so primarily through pathetic appeals designed to elicit strong responses, on both sides. For those who are moved by stories such as the "downed cow" narrative (see ch. 3), PeTA serves as an undeniable affront to the culture of meat-eating by presenting it as gruesome and inhumane. They use similar approaches to advocate for cruelty-free clothing and anti-vivisection agendas. However, PeTA also works behind the scenes to transform the

system through more traditionally accepted economic channels. In 1993, PeTA purchased stock in Applebee's, McDonalds, Safeway, Outback Steakhouse, and ConAgra and currently owns stock in numerous other fast food restaurants, family restaurants, and grocers.[17] Since PeTA purchased stock in each of these companies, PeTA representatives have worked with the board of directors to establish more humane practices for the care and slaughter of food animals and to encourage these companies to carry more vegan and vegetarian products.

In 2005, PeTA launched its first coordinated "shareholder resolution campaign" in which the organization submitted a resolution to the board of directors of over thirty large fast-food, family dining, pharmaceutical companies, grocers, cosmetic companies, oil companies, and so forth. Many of these resolutions were withdrawn on an individual basis after companies agreed to meet with PeTA representatives to discuss changes to practices that PeTA considered inhumane. These tactics are made possible because of the large system of resource acquisitions that PeTA has in place. With approximately 800,000 members and an annual contribution in 2004 of approximately $27,848,439[18], PeTA has the buying power to participate in information distribution technology in ways that rival the capacity of the meat and dairy industry and the government agencies that support it.[19]

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[17] Information about these acquisitions can be found in the following sources:
"PETA & Trillium Asset Management File McDonald's Shareholder Resolution." PeTA Press Release. 5. Dec. 2001; "PETA Buys Stock in ConAgra Foods." PeTA Press Release. 9 Dec. 2003; and Bhatnagar, Parija. "PETA's Beef into Stock." 4 Nov. 2003. CNN/Money. 10 Mar. 2005
< http://money.cnn.com/2003/11/03/news/companies/PeTA_stocks/>

[18] http://www.PeTA.org/feat/annual_review04/numbers.asp

[19] A link to both a sample resolution and more information on which companies were involved in this campaign can be found at http://www.stopanimaltests.com/f-shareRes.asp.

In contrast to the lavish protests and acquisition practices of PeTA, the Vegetarian Resource Group represents a more mainstreamed yet less affluent sector of the movement. The Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG) is located in a basement turned apartment in Towson, Maryland where makeshift walls create divisions between rooms. Unlike the meticulously organized library that dominates the third floor of PeTA headquarters, movement (and organization) archives at the Vegetarian Resource Group are crammed into a 10 ft. by 6 ft. closet off of the storage room. Comprised of only a handful of employees—including two cofounders, an accountant, and a computer programmer, and numerous freelance consultants, VRG is dedicated to increasing the number of vegetarians by providing educational and informational materials about vegetarianism. According to co-founder Charles Stahler, the guiding principles of the Vegetarian Resource Group are that

> We educate the public about vegetarianism. Our goal is to remove the obstacles to being vegetarian and vegan. Our health professionals, activists, and educators work with businesses, food services, schools, media, and consumers. We've always strived to provide information that is scientific and practical, and to treat people decently. (Interview August 10, 2004)

The primary strategies of this organization include creating and disseminating nutritional information that focuses on youth and family concerns. Stahler describes VRG as "pro family" and the types of activity that they conduct illustrates this perspective. In 2003, VRG begin offering two annual $5,000 college scholarships to high school seniors who have promoted vegetarianism in their school and/or community. Applicants submit an

essay in which they critically examine and explain what they have done, why they have done it, what the results were, and what they plan to do in the future.[20]

The Vegetarian Resource Group also attempts to educate the public about vegetarianism by counteracting the influence of the meat and dairy industries in the making of American dietary guidelines (*Vegetarian Journal* 3). With the help of several respected dietitians, VRG presented information to the American Dietetic Association on the health benefits of vegetarianism which has led to numerous ADA position papers on the subject. In 1993 the ADA created a nationally recognized position paper on vegetarianism in which they state,

> A considerable body of scientific data suggests positive relationships between vegetarian diets and risk reduction for several chronic degenerative diseases and conditions, including obesity, coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and some types of cancer.
> ***
>
> It is the position of The American Dietetic Association that vegetarian diets are healthful and nutritionally adequate when appropriately planned.
> ***
>
> In addition to possible health advantages, other considerations that may lead to the adoption of a vegetarian diet include environmental or ecological concerns, world hunger issues, economic reasons, philosophical or ethical reasons, and religious beliefs. (*Journal of the American Dietetic Association*)

[20] The application asks students to address the following: how applicants promoted vegetarianism in their high school and/or community; their successes; their challenges; what they learned/what they would do differently; how they expect to promote vegetarianism in college and beyond; their future goals; their strengths and weaknesses; their "perfect" life in five years; why they should receive this scholarship; how they became vegetarian and why they are vegetarian; how they define vegetarian; why vegetarianism is important to them; what else is important to them; what vegetarian foods they would recommend to non-vegetarians; and what restaurants they would recommend to non-vegetarians. (http://www.vrg.org/student/scholar.htm)

This echoes the mission of VRG, who identity as "a nonprofit organization that educates the public about vegetarianism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, ecology, ethics, and world hunger" (*Vegetarian Journal* 3). In addition, dietitians working with VRG and the ADA co-authored an article in the June 2001 issue of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association on "Considerations in Planning Vegan Diets: Children" and "Considerations in Planning Vegan Diets: Infants" and a report in the June 2003 issue entitled "Position of the American Dietetic Association and Dietitians of Canada: Vegetarian Diets."

Most recently, VRG sent testimony, in addition to that from the meat and dairy industries, to the USDA to influence the development of the new version of the food pyramid that was released on April 19th, 2005. After much searching on www.mypyramid.com, the USDA website for the new dietary pyramid, I did find an option for a vegetarian approach to the pyramid. Information on this approach to the pyramid included non-dairy, non-meat sources of important nutrients and tips on what types of restaurants have the best sources of vegetarian nutrition. Yet, the difficulty of accessing vegetarian options to the pyramid and the suggestion that vegetarians frequent Asian and Indian restaurants suggest that the USDA is not quite ready to dismantle the culture of meat in the US that it is so influential in sustaining. However, the influence of VRG can be seen in these new guidelines simply because they recognize a vegetarian version of the pyramid, which did not exist in the prior version which was release the in 1992, the same year that the ADA released its position paper advocating vegetarianism as a healthy diet.

Like the Vegetarian Resource Group, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine also recruits vegetarians by focusing on the health implications of eating meat (and dairy). The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine is comprised of "doctors and laypersons working together for compassionate and effective medical practice, research, and health promotion" (www.pcrm.org). Dr. Neal Bernard, the founder of PCRM, gives lectures and publishes books on the science of eating for mainstream audiences[21] in which he advocates strict vegetarianism as the healthiest type of diet. PCRM collects and conducts research that illustrates how the consumption of meat and dairy increases risks of major health problems in the US. One example that PCRM cites is a 2002 study conducted by the Diabetes Prevention Program of the National Institutes of Heath which was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The study indicated that a vegan diet reduced the incidences of full-blown type-2 diabetes in "pre-diabetic" individuals by approximately 58%, twice as much as the popular drug Glucophage (Bernard 26). In *Breaking the Food Seduction*, Bernard collects research on casomorphins, an opiate found in cow milk and, in exponential degrees, in cheese and uses this research to argue why many Americans suffer from obesity. He also cites the work of another well-respected proponent of vegetarianism as a diet, Dr. Dean Ornish, and his method for reversing heart disease and reducing cholesterol through diet. In his book *Reversing Heart Disease*, Ornish urges his readers to adopt a strict vegetarian diet as a way of reversing heart disease and lowering cholesterol. Although he does claim that it is more a matter of "changing your lifestyle" instead of diet, Ornish avoids terms

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[21] *Foods that Fight Pain*, *Eat Right, Live Longer*, *Food for Life*, *Foods that Cause you to Lose Weight*, *Breaking the Food Seduction*.

like vegetarian and vegan—another indication of the political and cultural weight of these terms. Barnard uses this research to advocate for a vegetarian/vegan lifestyle that PCRM endorses, one in which compassion plays a role.

Recently, PCRM has also begun to combat the throngs of dairy and meat promotional commercials that dominate network television. While at least two commercials per break in network programming advocate the consumption of meat or dairy, PCRM has begun running a commercial that promotes veganism by identifying it as vegetarianism. In the commercial, a noticeably overweight elementary age child watches television while cramming pizza and a super-sized cola into his mouth. As this is happening, the doorbell rings and his mother opens the door to find a minivan of doctors, ethnically diverse men and women, armed with bags of groceries to which she quips "Doctors, you are just in time!" In the following intervention, the "doctors" replace the child's junk food with veggie burgers, fruits, and vegetables while the voice-over warns parents that childhood obesity could lead to serious health problems and that a high-fiber vegetarian diet, combined with exercise, would reduce the chances of future health problems.

The most important aspect of this commercial as it relates to the ethical vegetarian movement and identity construction within it is the intentional blurring of the boundaries between vegetarianism and veganism, since veganism is inherently ethical in ways that vegetarianism is not. This is not to say that vegetarianism is not motivated by ethical concerns. What is means is that is does not have to be. The term "vegetarian" can imply at least two different motivations—vegetarians for health reasons and vegetarian for

ethical reasons. The term "veganism," however, inherently includes ethical considerations. As Erik Marcus claims in *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating*, "whatever one's reason for being vegan, it is at bottom **an act of compassion**" (191). People do not adhere to veganism simply for health reasons. This is evidenced by the definition of the term, which claims that vegans avoid not only animal-based foods, such as dairy, eggs, and honey, but also non-food items, such as wool and leather. I will discuss the ethical, or orthodox, nature of veganism further when I analyze how a vegetarian identity is formed and maintained in a subsequent section.

These examples from PeTA, The Vegetarian Resource Group, and the Physicians for Responsible Medicine represent the different ways in which the vegetarian movement conveys its message and the different audiences that receive it. As branches of the vegetarian movement, these organizations all infuse their work with an ethical rational. However, they differ in the rhetorical strategies they employ to reach multiple audiences in the hopes of fracturing the culture of meat as the dominant culture of consumption in the US. In this respect, these organizations work together to foster ethical considerations of the movement simply by challenging the dominant narrative of meat-eating and by becoming what Melucci would understand as producers and distributors of alternative or counter-cultural information technologies. As such, these organizations work together to transform non-vegetarians into vegetarians and then transform health vegetarians into ethical vegetarians. As part of their regular inventory, PeTA stocks cookbooks that are published by the Vegetarian Resource Group and Neal Bernard often appears in PeTA's *Animal Times* as in a column called "The Doctor in the House." Co-founders of these

organizations often work together to sponsor national conferences and discuss the best ways to utilize each other's areas of expertise and influence.

These movement organizations work together to disseminate information that dominant culture uses because such strategies are effective means of persuasion. As Melucci claims, "control over informational production, accumulation, and circulation depends on codes which organize and make information understandable" ("Symbolic Challenge" 805). By using accepted means of persuasion, the vegetarian movement is making use of accepted informational codes but using those codes as a way of dismantling other cultural codes. As a PeTA spokesperson at the 2004 "Helping Animals 101" conference puts it, "We don't make the rules, we just play by them." However, abiding by the methods of persuasion that have been established by the status quo is also problematical in terms of movement activity and identity. Such activity begs the question--how successful can a movement that seeks to dismantle cultural norms be if it attempts to do so by using the rhetorical and persuasive strategies of the status quo? Melucci draws attention to this problematic when he discusses how power is attained and maintained in complex societies. He writes, "in complex societies, power consists more and more of operational codes, formal rules, [and] knowledge organizers" ("Symbolic Challenge 805). The fundamental role of cultural movements, then, is to

> question who decides on codes, who establishes rules of normality, what is the space for difference, how can one be recognized not for being included but for being accepted as different, [and] not for increasing the amount of exchanges but for affirming another kind of exchange. (810)

If the vegetarian movement is a social movement whose aim is to redefine social norms and the actions that lead to them, then advocating that participants subscribe to some

norms while attempting to dismantle others may have consequences on participants' ability and desire to identify with the movement.

Perhaps this is why the work being done by these organizations is *not* what the majority of movement participants cite in their conversion narratives as the initial reason for their adoption of the lifestyle. Instead they reference movement materials, such as PeTA's "Meet Your Meat" video *in conjunction with* personal encounters that they have with others who exemplify the movement through their actions and by their self-proclaimed affiliation with a vegetarian community. Vegetarians, then, as a group and as individuals challenge the dominant ritual of meat-eating and do so on ethical grounds that not only exposes the "constructed nature of social action" but also the social nature of consumption. What was long thought to be the pinnacle of personal decision is uncovered as a social one by vegetarians who represent an alternative narrative of consumption. In this respect, the daily activities of movement participants and the reasons behind them become powerful tools of persuasion. Because of this, the movement's ability to craft a vegetarian identity that is, at its heart, personal as well as social, is a key factor in its ability to acquire and mobilize participants.

My work with the vegetarian movement so far in this chapter has borrowed heavily from the Resource Mobilization paradigm in that I have focused on organizations and examined strategies that are carried out in public arenas and/or strategies that have a political impact—affecting public policy like nutrition guidelines. However, as the narratives of vegetarians suggest, this is only part of the story of transformation. These public and collective strategies are being used not only to replace the culture of meat, but

also to do so by encouraging individuals to claim an identity of their own making, one that differs from the one they are born into—meat-eater.

It is at this point in my argument that the Resource Mobilization paradigm becomes less helpful. Because of this, I now turn to New Social Movement and frame theories that prioritize the construction of identity and illuminate "culture" as a battlefield between social movements and the norms they attempt to overthrow. By doing so, I hope to bridge paradigmatic gaps that currently exist between models of analysis for social movements.

Identity Construction as Movement Activity

In order to understand the making of a vegetarian collective identity and how it interacts with personal identity, we must first examine the role of identity formation in contemporary social movements. The most substantial work to date on this subject has been done by New Social Movement theorists as part of their claim that New Social Movements are really battles over self-identification and by Frame Theorists who view identity construction on many levels as crucial movement activity. According to Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield, as articulated in their article "Identities, Grievances, and New Social Movements," self-constructed perceptions of identity are central to movement formation and participant mobilization. They write,

> The New Social Movement perspective holds that the collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formation. Mobilization factors tend to focus on cultural and symbolic issues that are associated with sentiments of belonging to a differentiated social group where members can feel powerful; they are likely to have subcultural orientations that

> challenge the dominant system. New Social Movements are said to arise "in defense of identity." (10)

As the previous chapter and the previous section suggest, vegetarians inherently claim an identity of their own making since they must distinguish themselves from the dominant culture at large that naturalizes the consumption of animals.

In doing so, vegetarians claim a self-determined identity that is both personal and collective in nature. Melucci defines a collective identity as an

> interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their actions as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their actions take place. (*Nomads* 34)

In layman's terms, the definition suggests that collective identity is a matter of developing an identity as a "place" to speak from that is universally accepted by movement participants. This "place" or distinguishable identity includes a shared understanding of 1) goals—what those who adopt it hope to accomplish 2) opportunities—what avenues exist for doing so, and 3) constraints—what challenges they will face as they act on behalf of those goals. A movement's ability to establish a collective identity, then, is intertwined with its ability to evoke social transformation, since identity is both the means of transformation and the place where this transformation is ultimately manifested.

Since movements attempt to inspire individuals to *claim* an identity instead of accepting ones that are assigned to them—heterosexual, white, American, meat-eater—collective identity is inherently related to personal identity. This relationship highlights the social nature of personal identity. Frame theorists examine this phenomenon in terms

of what they call “identity fields” which they claim are central to the framing processes or interpretive schema that help us understand movement activity.[22] Drawing on Blumer’s work with symbolic interactionism, frame theorists view identity as a product of social interaction and as such both difficult to quantify and constantly in flux. According to Hunt, Benford, and Snow, collective identity can only be understood when we examine personal identity as an aspect of collective identity. They write,

> personal identity, regardless of its objective constitution, is an interactional accomplishment that is socially (re)constructed. The discourse of personal identity is understood as a rhetoric ‘constructed in accordance with group-specific guidelines’ and ‘redefined continuously in light of new experiences.’ (“Identity Fields” 190)

This perception of identity construction led framing theorists to examine how organizations and important figures within those organizations use “’appropriate’ vocabularies and stories for participants and sympathizers to (re)construct their personal identities in ways that link or further commit them to the movement” (190). However, the “protagonist,” or movement advocate/sympathizer, is only one type of identity field that frame theorists identity. They also make claims about how movement organizations frame “antagonists,” or movement opponents and “audience,” or neutral/uncommitted observers. Although framing theorists acknowledge the blurred boundaries between and shifting boundaries of these “identity fields,” they use these distinctions to examine how questions of identity and representation affect movement activity and rhetoric.

Specifically, frame theorists examine how movements create and disseminate a collective identity with each of these identity fields in mind. According to Hunt, Benford,

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[22]See Benford and Snow 1992

and Snow, organizations and movement leaders use rhetorical strategies designed to deepen the commitment of movement adherents and motivate them to take action on behalf on the movement. They also use discursive strategies to impose a negative identity on adversaries "by identifying and defining individuals, collectivities, beliefs, values, and practices [of antagonists] as being in conflict with protagonist identities and causes" (198). The most complicated area of identity formation, however, might be the way in which movement organizations frame their audience, those who appear objective, and as such, who also have the most potential for being persuaded to identify with the movement. In addition, frame theorists examine the degree to which public perceptions of a movement and its members influences the ways that members view themselves and the way that they represent the movement in response.

The work of New Social Movement theorists and Frame theorists indicates the ways in which contemporary social movements rely on identity formation as a key component of movement activity. The ethical vegetarian movement is no exception. In the following section, I examine how a vegetarian collective identity has been described and what movement leaders see as challenges to creating and maintaining this identity. Then I examine how everyday movement participants understand the intersections between their collective and personal identities. I argue that the most effective heuristic for examining vegetarian identities is rhetorical in nature. It is a matter of how movement advocates convince new and less-committed members to internalize the rhetoric of the movement, including a desire to become more orthodox and a commitment to disseminating vegetarianism as a practice. By looking at how factions of the vegetarian

movement recruit members by appealing to already engrained beliefs and values, we can more thoroughly understand how this diverse community develops collectivity across difference.

The Vegetarian Self: Creating Collectivity Across Difference

Vegetarians are an unusually diverse community. According to a 2003 poll conducted on behalf of the Vegetarian Resource Group by the Harris Interactive, approximately 4-10% of the nation identify as vegetarian—the variance a result of how participants define vegetarian. According to US census 2000 information, the US population at the time of the survey was approximately 281,421,906. That means that number of people living in the US that identify as vegetarian is somewhere between 11,256, 876 and 28,142,190 people.[23] Although my survey results suggest homogeneity within this group in certain respects (race, gender, and education) and diversity in other respects (age, religious affiliation, political affiliation, and place of residence), the VRG survey suggests a more diverse population overall (see www.vrg.org/journal/ Vj2003issue3poll.htm).

This diversity is evidenced by those who advocate for the movement. In recent years, vegetarian converts acknowledge not only traditional vegetarian advocates and texts, such as utilitarian philosopher and movement pioneer, Peter Singer and his extremely influential text*Animal Liberation* , they also site the work of non-traditional advocates and their work, such as Matthew Scully, a Republican and senior speech writer

[23] *The World Almanac* 2002

for George W. Bush and his book *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. Likewise, advocates as diverse as Carol Adams, a self-identified anti- racist feminist advocate for animal defense with a Master's in Divinity from Yale and Richard Schwartz, professor emertis of Mathematics and City College of New York, Staten Island, and Jewish Vegetarian scholar and author have come to exemplify the movement. Pamela Anderson and Alec Baldwin, Rue McClanahan and Andre 3000 (one-half of the hip-hop duo *Outcast* and winner of PeTA's 2004 World's Sexiest Vegetarian award) have all donated their time and image to PeTA as representatives of the vegetarian community.

A vegetarian collective identity, as a crucial component of the movement, is held together by the fact that this identity embodies a counter-culture of consumption that disrupts the hegemonic narrative of meat-eating as necessity. However, as the above examples suggest, the community as a whole is comprised of individuals who differ significantly from one another. Each of the above mentioned advocates most likely speak to/appeal to a different audience. While Andre 3000 is a recognizable within the hip-hop community and those who listen to his music, these same individuals are much less likely to be familiar with the work of Rue McClanahan, last seen as a "Golden Girl" in the 1980s. Similarly, women who admire and/or want to emulate Pamela Anderson, who often poses nude for PeTA's anti-fur campaign, are doubtfully the same groups of women who subscribe to the Marxist feminist philosophies of Carol Adams, who sees the physical objectification of women as linked to the equally unappealing of practices of patriarchy and capitalism.

What binds this otherwise diverse community together is simply what they choose *not* to eat. Unlike other movements which are based on "shared" social status, such as class, race, or location, the vegetarian movement must work to not only convince individuals to join it, but also convince them to stay in the community. Donna Maurer sees this as one of the distinguishing features of the vegetarian movement. In her book *Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment*, she claims that creating a vegetarian identity is especially challenging because people *choose* vegetarianism as a lifestyle instead of claiming what is already a "pre-existing status." In addition, individuals come to claim this lifestyle for a variety of reasons or motivations and, even when individuals do claim a vegetarian identity for similar reasons, they may have very different interpretations of what it means to be vegetarian (120). Representing a vegetarian collective identity, then, is a matter of not only understanding the similarities that organizations and members highlight, but also a matter of understanding how the movement and its advocates encourage membership by appealing to difference. It follows, then, that in order to understand a vegetarian identity, we must examine the major ways in which the movement establishes and maintains a cohesive collective identity across difference.

This is accomplished by movement advocates by how they frame vegetarianism as a personal decision with social implications, and as such as a matter of personal identity as well as collective identity. This is easily accomplished since *non*-vegetarians already link eating habits to identity, as seen in chapter three. As a physical representation of a countercultural movement, vegetarians face stereotypes that affect how they are understood and received by others. Because these stereotypes saturate their

personal identities as well as collective ones, vegetarians often struggle to deconstruct these stereotypes on a personal level. In their conversion narratives and in responses to my survey, vegetarians articulate how this lifestyle contributes their own understanding of, and the perceptions that others have, about their identity. One survey respondent writes about her frustration with "how the media stereotypes vegetarians and vegans as a bunch of bizarre hippies and/or screaming, violent terrorists" citing that "[t]hese stereotypes focus mostly on personalities (extreme personalities) and avoid food ethics issues." Another laments the social stigma she feels as a vegetarian. She writes "I am a hippie, a bleeding-heart, naïve, uneducated, and even snobby woman; but never an intelligent, strong, compassionate woman who faces adversity daily head-on." These examples illustrate the relationship between what we eat and how we are perceived.

This relationship is so strong that for others an individual's vegetarianism often becomes their defining characteristic. Because vegetarianism is not the social norm, when someone claims themselves as such or is "outted" as such, this characteristic becomes the one from which judgments are made. In reference to her friend's response to her conversion to vegetarianism, one woman laments "she had been fine with all other oddities of my character, except for this one. I was now introduced as Erika…the vegetarian." Carol Adams quotes a similar experience in *Living Among the Meateaters*. Adams quotes one woman's story. In this account, the woman's friend introduced her as "Paige, she's vegan." After which, the woman she was introduced to said "Where's Vega?" assuming that Vega was a place and that Vegans came from there (qtd. in Adams 3). When I worked in Alaska, my co-workers identified me as Vegan Patty, so much so

that invitations to a joint birthday party went out for Vegan Patty and BusWash Tim. So, like nationality and employment, and other identifying, but non-visual distinctions, diet is linked to personal and cultural identity and used to make judgments about a person. These judgments come from previous encounters with other individuals that share the defining characteristic—in this case, their vegetarianism. This explains why vegetarians experience encounters like the following, "[meat-eaters] want to tell me how their second cousin twice removed was a vegetarian for two weeks, and do I know her." Vegetarians, then, can either claim a collective identity or be assigned one.

As these examples illustrate, a vegetarian collective identity is not only constructed by those who subscribe to it but also by those who lie outside of the movement whose perceptions of the movement come from how it is represented in the media *as well as* by those who subscribe to it and by the actions of movement organizations. So, vegetarian organizations and individuals must not only construct their own personal and collective identities as a counter to those assigned to them, they must deconstruct perceptions about this identity that already represent it. In this respect, movement participants represent the movement by combining their vegetarian identity with other aspects of their identity in order to dispel stereotypes. One woman writes, "We are not the hippies of decades past. We are doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business people. Most importantly, we are consumers." In this instance, she is speaking as part of a community of vegetarians and attempting to redefine what this identity looks like by offering an alternative to stereotypical representations like Phoebe on *Friends*, the teenage daughter on *Judging Amy*, the dreadlocked, hemp-clad employees of the Casbah

Teahouse, which features “Vegeterranean” cuisine in Tucson, AZ, and PeTA’s naked (and caged) Lisa Franzetta.

Since vegetarians are a minority that is not based on geographic, racial, political, gendered, and class affiliations, they are often isolated representatives of the movement. As the conversion narratives in chapter three indicate, this isolation affects the way in which individuals come to identify with the movement in that personal interaction appears to be an influential means of persuasion. Because personal interaction and dialogue are so influential, individuals—as *embodiments* of the movement—must assume personal responsibility for representing the movement and its members. In other words, vegetarians who consider themselves part of a vegetarian community are responsible for exemplifying an alternative to stereotypical perceptions of vegetarians that they encounter as a way of encouraging others to adopt a similar lifestyle. According to Donna Maurer, movement leaders promote vegetarianism as both personal and social by encouraging vegetarians to “incorporate their vegetarian identity into their personal identities.” Movement leaders encourage this synthesis by highlighting the transformative potential of simply living as vegan/vegetarian and exemplifying this lifestyle in a positive light.

The survey responses from everyday movement participants suggest that they have internalized this movement perspective. Participants often reference their vegetarianism as both personal and social in that they realize that their eating habits and attitudes represent the movement, whether they intend to do so or not. Through their vegetarianism, movement participants see themselves as “liv[ing] my message” and

"setting an example for others." As such, they also recognize their status as representatives of the movement and, as such, vehicles for transformation. The language that they use to characterize their vegetarian identities illustrates the social implications of their decision. One woman claims, "I want to be a good vegan ambassador wherever I go." Another woman sees herself as "something of a vegan diplomat, convincing [meat-eaters] through how I am as a person and how I live. It works."

However, movement adherents also recognize the challenges involved with being a representative of a counter-cultural lifestyle. Many feel the frustration of living under constant scrutiny and the difficulty of advocating the movement in a positive way amidst antagonistic encounters. One woman explains what this struggle entails when she writes,

> I'm always walking a tightrope between showing people why they should be upset, why they should change, and showing that I'm a happy, well-rounded person and that veganism is a positive, fun, easy choice. I want to make veganism look good through my attitudes; I need to break the stereotype of the fussy, picky, angry, mean, name-calling, irritating, holier-than-thou vegan. However, at the same time, I do need to show people how animals are treated on factory farms, which might not make me very popular in some crowds. It's a fine line to walk, and I'm still trying to get it right.

As representatives of the movement, then, vegetarians must not only struggle to live in contrast to the dominant culture of consumption, they must be hyper-aware of their actions since, as embodiments of the movement, they exemplify those who subscribe to it.

Since contemporary movements are essentially struggles over self-determined identity, it is important for these movements to create collective identities that resonate with the personal identities of potential members. In the vegetarian movement, personal

involvement translates into a perpetually demonstrated commitment to abstain from eating meat. Since this commitment is reversible, movement advocates must convince people to adopt or continue to adopt this practice despite inevitable social marginality. Movement organizations and leaders attempt to foster this activity, and an ethical motivation for it, by not only seeking to convert new members, but also by working to sustain self-appointed members by deepening their commitment to the movement.

Rhetorical Approaches to Constituency Recruitment and Mobilization

Like most contemporary movements that seek to increase their membership and the commitment of those who participate, the vegetarian movement has two distinct audiences for its identity-building claims and activities. These two audiences roughly translate into what frame theorists identity as protagonists and audience. Donna Maurer defines these constituents in terms of "newcomers" and "practicing vegetarians." According to Maurer, movement leaders hope to accomplish different sources of praxis from each of these groups. For individual vegetarians who already belong to the movement (protagonists), movement leaders attempt to foster the desire to advocate their beliefs to others as part of their commitment to vegetarianism. For potential members and those who are not firmly ingrained in or committed to the culture of meat (audience), movement leaders work to disseminate movement rhetoric that represents the transition to vegetarianism as simple and the movement as inclusive so as to attract new members. Advocating an adoptable collective identity is especially important since "sharing a collective identity of who they are helps motivate people to act on their beliefs" (Maurer 119). So, vegetarian organizations must simultaneously attempt to recruit potential

members and work to mobilize those who already subscribe to the lifestyle to become advocates of it to others. These two communities have different interests and needs and, therefore, respond to very different movement rhetorics. Consequently, organizations struggle with how they should frame a vegetarian collective identity that appeals to both of these audiences.

The most common way that organizations attempt to reach both audiences simultaneously is by claiming and controlling identity-related terminology and blurring the boundaries between less strict and more strict versions of the vegetarian lifestyle and by blurring the boundaries between ethical and health vegetarians. Such blurring helps to deepen the commitment of members, but it also helps to recruit new members. The movement's ability to "own" the language that represents it is directly related to its ability to control identity and advocate this identity. While the vegetarian movement struggles to define "vegetarianism" in ethical terms, organizations still claim those who consider themselves vegetarian even if their definitions differ from the one that the movement advocates. For example, many people who eat fish consider themselves vegetarian and organizations see this community as part of the movement because they self-identity as such. However, the definition of "vegetarian" that the movement disseminates is inherently at odds with those who eat any type of animal, including sealife. Nonetheless, if someone considers themselves part of a community, the most lucrative response from the movement is to welcome their membership in order to slowly convince such individuals to adopt the ethical beliefs of the movement and act in accordance with those beliefs. Maurer claims that this is why organizations do not

differentiate between vegetarians that do so for health reasons and those who do so for ethical reasons. According to her, the movement recognizes that many vegetarians initially became such for health reasons and then gradually begin to adopt ethical reasons as well. Because of this, the movement attempts to include health vegetarians within a collective vegetarian identity as a way of "deepening [their] motivation" and eventually luring them into espousing ethical considerations for vegetarianism as part of their identity.

Movement organizations blur the boundaries between vegetarianism and strict vegetarianism, or veganism, in order to appeal to both their protagonist field and their audience field and both to become ethical vegetarians. PeTA blurs these boundaries by using the terms "Veg" and "Veggie" as a way to speak to both communities simultaneously and to promote veganism as vegetarianism. In recent years, PeTA has marketed vegetarianism through their "GoVeg" campaign. This campaign includes a website, pamphlets, starter kits, stickers, and other forms of informational materials. Similarly, the Vegetarian Resource Group publishes books whose titles also avoid the distinction between the two terms, such as *Meatless Meals for Working People*, a vegan cookbook. However, the Vegetarian Resource Group has also blurred the terms in the opposite way. They downplay to drastic reputation of veganism by associating it with the more commonly accepted term vegetarianism. Their publications *Conveniently Vegan: Turn Packaged Foods into Delicious Vegetarian Dishes* and *Simply Vegan: Quick Vegetarian Meals* emphasize veganism as both easy and equitable to vegetarianism.

The movement as a whole has been introducing mainstream culture to "vegan" in recent years. Before 1995, only a handful of cookbooks identified as vegan. Since then, the numbers have reached approximately one hundred, with several new publications annually and updated reprints of the most popular titles. Also, PeTA has started marketing clothing which promotes veganism, such as a baseball cap embossed with a collegiate-style "V" and the word "VEGAN" beneath it. The *Vegetarian Times*, a much less politically charged movement publication, also began mainstreaming the term "veganism" in the past few years. First appearing in the January 2003 issue, the *Vegetarian Times* began to run a column entitled "Vegan Gourmet: a menu of vegan recipes from the kitchen of Marie Oser –"Menu for the plant-based palate." This column was preceded by an article in the December 2002 edition of the magazine which the magazine cover calls "Holiday Entertaining: Tradition with a Twist." Only after turning to the article itself do readers discover that the "twist" is "a *vegan* holiday fare to remember."

Mainstreaming Veganism is an attempt by the movement to keep the ethical rational for the movement at its core as the movement loses control of the term "vegetarianism." According to Maurer, the vegetarian movement struggles to claim the term that defines it—"vegetarian." The term itself includes several subcatagories, including those who eat eggs and dairy as well as those who abstain from all animal products, including non-food ones. In order to build membership, the movement must embrace all who identify with it, including those who eat fish and those who are vegetarians strictly for health reasons. However, if the movement allows the term to be

used by those who do not subscribe to the lifestyle as the movement defines it, but who do identify as vegetarian nonetheless, a vegetarian collective identity becomes virtually indistinguishable and, therefore, ineffective as a tool for social change (Maurer 118-120).

Veganism, on the other hand, is less contested. Veganism is strict vegetarianism, a lifestyle in which those who subscribe to it avoid all animal products, even animal product derivatives such as gelatin and non-food products like leather and wool. Unlike vegetarianism, the motivation for this lifestyle is inherently ethical, as I mentioned earlier. It is an orthodox form of vegetarianism. The distinguishing feature of vegans, abstinence from using any animal-derived product, is a result of the belief that it is immoral to use animals as products, whether this is because animals must suffer, because there are substantial environmental consequences, or because it is spiritually corrupt to ingest violence as nourishment. For those in the movement, veganism is the ultimate form of vegetarianism. Movement organizations endorse and promote this belief in the hopes that movement participants will internalize veganism as a personal goal.

Responses to my survey suggest that it is working. When asked if they see themselves getting less strict, more strict, or staying about the same in terms of their vegetarianism, almost every single respondent said that they saw veganism as their ultimate goal. Many participants already practice veganism and all who do, claim that this is a lifelong commitment on their part. Many included phrases that suggest the permanence of their decision in their narrative and survey responses. Their responses repeat phrases like "[this is a] lifelong commitment and not a fad or a phase," "Veganism is a life-long thing for me," "There was no turning back for me," "I went fully vegetarian

and I haven't looked back," "As far as I'm concerned, there's no going back," and "One day, though, I suddenly realized [veganism] was the way to go and I've never looked back." All of these responses illustrate that that vegans and vegetarians who hope to become vegan consider their participation in this lifestyle as a permanent one. Movement advocates also hope that vegetarians will feel compelled to move toward veganism because it deepens their commitment to the lifestyle. As Marcus claims, veganism is "**an act of compassion**, and compassion can become an act of deep transformation" (191). Vegetarian movement advocates belief that this transformation will lead those who experience it to advocate it to others.

This is not the case with vegetarians who do so for health reasons and subscribe to a diet rather than a lifestyle. Health vegetarians are more likely to subscribe only temporarily to the lifestyle, if at all, although they do impact the movement as a whole. Health vegetarians do not espouse the same rhetoric as those who become vegetarians for ethical reason, nor do they understand their dietary choices as a defining feature of their identity. Of the individuals who responded to my survey, which was distributed primarily to members of PeTA, Vegan Outreach, and the Vegetarian Resource Group via online newsletters and listservs, only a handful claimed that they were vegetarians solely for health reasons. Of these respondents, none of them indicated that they considered their vegetarianism as affecting their identity in any way, nor did they feel as if they were part of or seek out a vegetarian community. Maurer calls this phenomenon the "free-rider" problem, which has the potential to happen more often as vegetarianism becomes more mainstreamed and as the ethical impetus behind it becomes farther removed from the

concept of vegetarianism. So by promoting veganism, which is inherently ethical, as the vegetarian ideal and as a permanent lifestyle, the movement and its advocates struggle to keep the concept of vegetarianism aligned with the ethical impetus behind it.

The shift towards veganism is important for several reasons. First, veganism is “orthodox” vegetarianism and as such a lifestyle that movement organizations can promote as a goal for vegetarians to work toward. Second, this “goal” itself suggests that the veganism is motivated by ethical considerations and motivation becomes more deeply ingrained as people work towards veganism. And finally, veganism is a term that has moved from the movement out into mainstream culture. Because the movement did not struggle to “reclaim” or define the term “vegan” in contrast to popular conceptions of it, like the movement must with the term “vegetarianism,” they control the term “vegan” in ways that they cannot with “vegetarianism.” Also, because “vegetarianism” is not synonymous with “ethical vegetarianism” and because the notion of vegetarianism has become “trendy,” it is subject to representation which is outside of the movement’s control. However, organizations must encourage veganism without implying an overt hierarchical relationship because this type of approach might alienate, instead of align, the vastly diverse community of vegetarians they seek to organize.

One effective way to do this is by framing vegetarianism (and ultimately veganism) as an extension of ethical and social value systems that individuals already possess and that contribute to their identity as they understand it. By examining how movement advocates foster this synthesis, and by examining how everyday movement participants internalize it, we begin to see how the vegetarian movement appeals to

personal values and identity as a means of persuasion. In order to do so, Melucci claims that theorists must rethink the way we view contemporary movements in order to understand how movements build constituencies by tapping into pre-existing ones. He suggests that we re-categorize individual movements as aspects within movement networks that make use of each others' rhetoric and constituency. In "The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements," Melucci claims that contemporary movements are better understood as "a network of small groups submerged in everyday life which require a personal involvement in experiencing and practicing cultural innovation" (85). The vegetarian movement, and its participants, both individually and collectively, establish a cohesive identity across difference by appealing to shared traits and characteristics. The most common way is by using rhetorics of oppression. By using shared rhetoric to align the vegetarian movement with other movements that attempt to eradicate oppression, the ethical vegetarian movement builds a constituency from pre-existing ones. Through rhetorics of oppression, the feminist and the environmentalist, the conservative Christian and the Rastafarian unite, at least temporarily, to promote the vegetarian lifestyle that is a part of who they understand themselves to be.

Rhetorics of Oppression

The ethical vegetarian movement coalesced in the 1970s as a reaction to the rise of factory farming. Gone were the days of the family farm where animals lived peaceful and pleasant lives until they were sent to slaughter. Replacing these days was a new age of meat-production where food and dairy animals were confined to cramped cages and

pens without ever seeing the light of day. Simultaneously, bio-engineering and technology were transforming animals into "biomachines," products to be harvested instead of animals to be raised and rendered. As these changes became universal, the gray area that allowed for ethical approaches to meat-production disappeared and, as it did, new arguments for vegetarianism were birthed.

These arguments found their spokesperson in Peter Singer, an Australian-born Utilitarian philosopher. In 1975, he wrote *Animal Liberation* which would later become the quintessential text of the animal rights movement and a pillar text of the vegetarian movement. This book is universally recognized as one of the most influential texts of the vegetarian movement. It motivated Ingrid Newkirk to become a vegetarian and to found PeTA based on Singer's principles. It is the book most often cited by respondents to my survey as life-changing. It is the book that inspired me to become vegan and, tangentially, to study relationships among social movements. It is the book that led to this dissertation.

In it, Singer updates and extends Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1842) argument on behalf of non-human animals to include the process of factory farming. Bentham's major premise is "the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but Can they Suffer?" (Bentham Ch. xvii). Since the publication of *Animal Liberation*, this provocateur has become synonymous with the animal rights movement, and, for many, the vegetarian movement as well. Utilitarian philosophers argue the goodness of an act by identifying what provides the greatest happiness for the greatest number while avoiding the most amount of pain (Honderich 890). In other words, the goodness of an act or theory is measured by the consequences it evokes for all those affected. With the

rise of factory farming, according to Singer, the suffering that animals endure before slaughter becomes notably disproportional to the happiness that their consumption enabled.

However, Singer does not assume that his readers inherently value animals to the same degree that he does. In order to foster this perspective, he equates the ethical impetus for vegetarianism with that of other contemporary and popular identity movements which had already established a constituency. Adopting a rhetoric of equality, Singer argues for vegetarianism by aligning speciesism with other forms of oppression, namely racism and sexism. He makes this connection by promoting equality based not on rights, but equal consideration. Equal consideration is, for Singer, what the fundamental principle of equality is based on as opposed to actual equality. He writes,

> We should make it quite clear that the claim to equality does not depend on intelligence, moral capacity, physical strength, or similar matters of fact. There is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a factual difference in ability between two people justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to their needs and interests. The principle of equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a prescription of how we should treat humans. (5)

By rejecting the distinction being made between movements for the elimination of social injustice involving disempowered humans and those involving subjugated animals based on principles of equal consideration, Singer bridges these movements and aligns the principles behind each with one another.

Singer's work is so influential partially because he set the stage for future intersections between the vegetarian movement and other movements against oppression. It was also so influential because Singer made use of the turbulent context of a post civil

rights awareness of sexism and racism to foreground his argument for speciesism. Since his work, numerous subsequent works have expanded and deepened the connections that Singer first illuminated. *The Dreaded Comparison* by Majorie Spiegel (preface by Alice Walker), published in 1988, compares the oppression of animals to the oppression of slaves. PeTA and several other vegetarian advocacy groups (see www.meat.org) have launched the "Holocaust on Your Plate" campaign[24]. Carol Adams wrote *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, as well as other works, in which she explores the relationship between the oppression of, objectification of, and violence done to animals and that of women. All of these examples illustrate the way in which the vegetarian movement has attempted to tap into pre-existing social/ethical values that potential members affiliate with in order to promote vegetarianism as part of these values.

Survey responses indicate that movement participants internalize this connection between forms of oppression and that they understand their vegetarianism as related to these other forms of oppression. One respondent writes, "My dietary choices (and-I try- general consumer choices) are shaped by a growing awareness of the connections between cruelty and oppression and intolerance and violence and suffering." Another writes,

> the connections between treatment of animals and treatment of other humans is becoming very clear. Exploitation of other living things indicates a huge problem: the tolerance and respect at the foundation of a peaceful society are absent…animal abuse and human violence both start with the idea of superiority,

[24] Although this campaign was undoubtedly created to foster community between American Jews and the Vegetarian movement, it garnered strong criticism from Jews for Animal Rights (JAR) and Richard Schwartz, the leading Jewish Vegetarian Advocate. An initial analysis of this interaction suggests that discrepancies still exist between the value of an animal's life and that of a human. It suggests that, even within the vegetarian community, genocide is understood as more morally corrupt than factory farming and animal slaughter.

> which, once established over one person, animal, child, etc., is easy to reassert, and reassert, and so on…

Movement advocates sponsor an awareness of the connectedness of oppressions by blurring the boundaries between the rhetoric of other types of oppression and the rhetoric of the vegetarian movement as a means of acquiring and mobilizing constituents. In order to illustrate what this looks like, I will examine one of these threads in detail—the feminist/vegetarian argument.

The Argument for Feminist Vegetarian Advocacy

According to feminist vegetarian literature, there is an inherent connection between oppression of women and the oppression of animals. In numerous texts on the subject, most notably *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams analyzes this relationship. She argues that "interlocking systems of domination" fortify the oppression of both woman and animals and that these systems are inherently tied to capitalist ideology. In order to do so she employees and extends arguments about the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy to include a link to the consumption of meat and argues that society can not eradicate one of these without dismantling the others as well. She draws from historical accounts, literary texts, scientific research, and sociological theory to uncover how language and rhetoric have contributed to patriarchy and oppression by isolating concerns for the ethical treatment of animals from other arguments against oppression. She then blurs the language and the boundaries between feminist advocacy and vegetarian advocacy to re-awaken the connection between feminist ethics and animal ethics.

The connection that Adams fosters between feminist theory and animal defense theory begins with an account of the historic similarities of the women's movement and the vegetarian movement. Until 1847, vegetarians were known as Pythagorean, after Pythagoras who was the most outspoken and influential historical vegetarian thinker. In 1847, however, the modern usage of the term "vegetarian" was coined during the developing political aspirations of the humane movement (*Meat* 78). As Adams points out, the term "feminism" was also adopted around this time to fulfill the "need to represent in language a series of intentions and a constituency just cohering, a new movement in the long history of struggles for women's rights and freedom" (*Meat* 78-9). Although these terms arose in response to increasing numbers of concerned voices, these terms helped to create a community from which these voices could speak and organize vegetarianism and feminism as social movements. Despite the efforts of early feminists like DeBeauvoir and Wollstonecraft, Adams discusses remarkable similarities and interactions between both social movements from their organization in the 1800's to current organizations such as Feminists for Animal Rights (FAR). In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams argues that the important events in the vegetarian movement and the feminist movement mirror each other chronologically. She identifies intersections among the movements from the mid-1800's through the early 1920's. According to Adams,

> Both experienced a rebirth through books in the years after the French Revolution. Each considers a meeting held in the 1840s as very important: the 1847 Ramsgate meeting at which the term vegetarianism was either coined or ratified; the 1848 meeting at Seneca Falls in which American women's rights demands were outlined. (*Meat* 171)

Adams uses these historical markers to align feminist movements with vegetarian movements from the very beginning of her book but she then extends her argument to include overlapping constituencies, terminology, and systems of oppression.

Adams discusses members of the feminist movement whose interests overlapped with the aims of the vegetarian movement in addition to the overlapping events taking place within the movements. Such important figures in the suffrage movement as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Clara Barton (all vegetarians) joined with Sojourner Truth and other suffragists by sponsoring gatherings and banquets with a vegetarian menu (*Meat* 167). In fact, Adams "follow[s] the historic alliance of feminism and vegetarianism in utopian writings and societies, antivivisection activism, the temperance and suffrage movements and twentieth century pacifism" (*Meat* 167). An explanation for why these movements overlapped repeatedly relies on the blurred distinction between the oppression of animals and the oppression of women. The rhetoric involved in objectifying both women and animals united them in the struggle against patriarchy. This struggle, claims Adams, "renders women and animals absent as subjects, collapses referent points, and results in overlapping oppression, [which] requires a combined challenge by feminism and vegetarianism" (*Meat* 169). In other words similar oppressions and similar evolutionary moments in the formation of each movements sponsored a mutual understanding of one another and, from this, a shared constituency.

Adams creates a rhetoric specifically designed to align feminist concerns with ethical animal advocacy by intentionally blurring the lines between the objectification and violence done to women and that done to animals. In the collection *Animals and*

Woman, Adams and Donovan review the historical foundations of feminism in an attempt to explain why this connection has not been largely acknowledged. They point out that although the majority of animal rights activists both historically and currently have been women (an estimated 75% of all animal advocates currently), feminists have traditionally hesitated to acknowledge animal issues as a component of, or a contributor to, their own situation (Adams and Donovan 5). This disassociation, they claim, is a result of women's struggle for acceptance in which they align themselves with men and distance themselves from animals to demonstrate their sentient and rational abilities. As Adams and Donovan recognize, "[h]istorically, the ideological justification for women's alleged inferiority has been made by appropriating them to animals: from Aristotle on, women's bodies have been seen to intrude upon their rationality" (Adams and Donovan 1). In essence, women worked to overcome their status as the other by allowing animals to become the other while humanity in general fulfilled the role of the dominant force. Adams speaks from within the community of feminist ethical philosophers and challenges the possibility of feminist political and social action that exclude appeals to animal defense and advocacy. She uses the same argument of otherness that early feminists used to disassociate themselves with animals inversely by focusing on the interconnectedness of the oppression of women and animals as a method for justifying patriarchal authority over both.

Adams's feminism is aligned with others who advocate an ethics of care and she uses this pre-existing rhetoric and philosophical foundation to encourage feminists who subscribe to this social value to adopt vegetarianism as part of it. This ethics of care as a

feminist ethical philosophy arose as a subcategory of feminism in the 1980s with the publications of such works as Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982), Mary Field Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986), and the work of the French feminists (Cixious, Kristeva, and Irigary). Their approach transforms our understanding of experience as universal into an awareness of experience as embodied, enabling women to speak from their understanding as sexed and as engendered. In her work, Adams extends embodied knowledge to include vegetarians as embodiments of the social movements, such as feminism, that contribute to their decision to become vegetarians.

In one of her most successful arguments, Adams examines how the treatment of non-human animals has paralleled and intersected with that of disempowered groups historically through language. According to Adams, referential language and flexibly employed terminology have been and continues to be an essential aspect of these doubly-restrictive gender roles, binding the violence against and the objectification of animals to the violence against and objectification of women. It has also persistently reinforced the connection between meat and masculinity. She cites a wide variety of cultural representations of the meat/man connection including a myth from Australian Bushman, 19th Century British Cookbooks, traditional fairy tales of obscured origins, and Biblical excerpts (*Meat* 25-7) to indicate the broad span of time and culture that this connection includes. Contemporary examples include such modern advertising campaigns, such as "Manwich™" and "Hungryman™". By reviewing the patterns of consumption that develop in famine situations and poverty, Adams identifies "meat as a constant for men, intermittent for women" (*Meat* 26). Adams also examines the metaphoric use of meat as

a symbol of importance and power. Adams discusses phrases like "meat of the matter," "a meaty question," and "beef-up on" as based in the definition of meat as "the essence or principle part of something" (*Meat* 36). This is dangerous, according to Adams, because meat's simultaneous association with power and importance along with its association with masculinity reinforces the patriarchal culture feminism attempts to dismantle.

Conversely, Adams examines how women's historical and contemporary rhetorical relationship to meat differs from that of men. While meat is associated with men as a symbol of strength, women are referred to as meat directly, not symbolically, which reduces them to an object for consumption as opposed to a being deserving of respect and consideration. In her upcoming text *The Meat Market*, Adams illustrates societal representation of woman as animal and animal as woman by citing advertisements where animals are dressed as women or feminized by being represented with women-like features as well as slogans like a crab-house advertisement suggesting "Nothing beats a Great Set of Legs" (http://www.triroc.com/caroladams/link/someslides.htm). In *Neither Man Nor Beast*, she includes such offensive animal-as-woman paraphernalia as "the Turkey Hooker: An Easy Pick-Up from Pan to Platter" which is a large metal hook with a handle designed to be thrust, pointed end first, into the cavity of a turkey so as to facilitate easy post-cooking oven removal, and the "The Hardest Part is Getting In" T-shirt, a veterinary school motto which features a man immersed from hand to shoulder inside of a cow (*Beast* 32 and 133). Numerous accounts of rape victims' reflections in which they recount "feeling like a piece of meat," pornographic depictions of bestiality, snuff films, and even a Biblical account of the rape

and butchering of a concubine in Judges are all cited by Adams as perpetuating the objectification of woman as animal, reaffirming both the cultural acceptance of the degradation of women and normalizing the violence inflicted on food animals (*Meat* 45-62).

Adams also identifies lexical constructions that are designed to "mask" the violence inherent in acts such as rape and slaughter. She analyzes constructions like "forcible rape" and "humane slaughter" is an effort to discuss how the contradiction inherent in the phrase detracts from the violence which is inseparable from the act itself. She refers to the work of Mary Daly in her discussion of

> 'forcible rape' [as] a reversal by redundancy because it implies that all rapes are not forcible. This example highlights the role of language in masking violence, in this case an adjective deflects attention from the violence inherent in the meaning of the noun. The adjective confers a certain benignity on the word 'rape.' Similarly, the phrase 'humane slaughter' confers a certain benignity on the term 'slaughter.' Daly would call this the process of 'simple inversion': 'the usage of terms and phrases to label…activities as the opposite of what they are.' (qtd. in *Meat* 69)

By negating the violence in terms such as "rape" and "slaughter," the individuals that suffer from these acts of aggression are then silenced by the very vocabulary used to describe their experiences.

Adams's awareness of how referential rhetoric has been and is still being used to oppress both women and animals through patriarchy helps her use language to her advantage as she advocates for a vegetarian feminist identity. Because she is aware of the power that language has in shaping societal knowing and understanding, she is able to create her own lexical constructions and metaphors as a means of grounding her argument in a language that works in opposition to language in service to patriarchy. In

The Sexual Politics of Meat and *Neither Man Nor Beast*, she discusses animal defense as a necessary component of feminist theory by reinventing or redefining terminology traditionally relegated to one discourse or the other. Chapter and sections headings include such blurred distinctions as "The Rape of Animals, The Butchering of Women" in a discussion of the interrelatedness of violence against animals and violence against women; "The Words Made Flesh" as a means of discussing how reading vegetarian literature has often served as inspiration and bred ethical vegetarianism; "Dismembered Texts, Dismembered Animals" as an account of the decontextualization or de-emphasis of vegetarian themes in women's writing; and "The Feminist Traffic in Animals" alluding to "Emma Goldman's 'The Traffic in Women,' and Gayle Rubin's, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy of Sex'" (*Beast* 111).

Through these rhetorical reconstructions, she illustrates the societal norm of meat consumption as an indicator of patriarchal forces at work, thus establishing it as a necessary institution for feminist scrutiny. By addressing meat consumption as a social institution she reveals the guiding assumptions and "cultural intervention" implicit in the practice. Her insight allows her to claim that

> [v]egetarians recognize the cultural aspects of meat eating, what I have been calling the texts of meat. Since meat is not eaten in its 'natural' state—raw, off the corpse—but is instead transformed through cultural intervention, vegetarians have directed their energy toward analyzing the specifics of this cultural intervention. They claim the structures to transform flesh as it is eaten by other animals into meat as it is eaten by human being s are not unimportant or trivial, especially as they signal they degree of distancing that our culture has determined is necessary for consumption of animals to proceed. (*Meat* 151)

In other words, she believes vegetarians recognize meat-eating as cultural practice. Consequently, the language they use to discuss the consumption of meat reflects this recognition.

In analyzing the potentially destructive nature of language, Adams promotes and uses literal language in an effort to overcome the metaphoric manipulation she terms "false naming." She uses literal language in contrast to society's tendency to sugar-coat unappealing activity in order to avoid such difficult undertakings as the moral justification of eating animals as food. While denouncing terms such as "veal," "pork," "hamburger," and "meat" as language that serves to separate "the slaughtered, bleeding, butchered animal" from the being whose existence has been annihilated, she refers to the "meat-eaters" and forces the recognition of meat as "fragments of dead, and butchered animals" (*Meat* 48, 74).

Adams's refusal to use "symbolic" language to disassociate animal as food from animal as being forces her readers to recognize just what they are consuming in the same way that she forces them to see feminism as intertwined with vegetarianism. She references women's texts, which are neither overtly feminist nor vegetarian in nature, ranging from Mary Shelly to Alice Walker who also lay bare the practice of consuming animals. In these texts, the authors, through the characters they create, alert their audiences to the misrepresentative nature of the symbolic language of meat. Just as Mary Shelly's monster in *Frankenstein* "consumes 'bloodless food,'" Margaret Atwood in *Surfacing* claims "The animals die that we may live, they are substitute people….And we eat them, out of cans or otherwise; we are eaters of death, dead Christ-flesh resurrecting

inside us, granting us life" (qtd. in *Meat* 104, 185). Carl Sagan, in *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, also denies the objectification of animals through our consumption of them. He writes, "Chickens are ordinarily born with feathers, just as they are ordinarily born with two feet. How we mutilate them afterwards does not change their fundamental nature" (Sagan 366). Those who demand we see meat-consumption as the eating of animals stretch beyond the limits of literary commentary and traditional philosophic inquiry and into the realm of social reform as do women who refuse to participate in patriarchal practices that influence social norms.

The link between pacifism and feminism and pacifism and vegetarianism also served as a magnetizing force between feminism and vegetarianism. "The Golden Era of Vegetarianism," the period between WWI and WWII, resulted in an increased feminist awareness and condemnation of institutional violence (*Meat* 126). Perhaps the brutal conditions soldiers endured in WWI and the visible inhumanity of such a large scale destructive movement accounts for the "upsurge of interest in and scientific proof of the continuities between the other animals and human beings" (*Meat* 125). Adams also argues for overlaps among feminism, pacifism, and vegetarianism as a way of building a larger vegetarian constituency. In post-WWI women's literature, she identifies an increase in vegetarian references, in meat as a trope for women's oppression, and in claims that there is a connection amongst meat-eating, male dominance, and war (*Meat* 121). Her analysis asserts that "these works argue that domestic oppression and meat eating, usually considered private occurrences, are vitally connected to waging war, while vegetarianism, an apparently private act, constitutes the public rejection of war as a

method of conflict resolution"(*Meat* 136). By demanding feminist action on behalf of animals based partially in the context of women as pacifists, Adams again relies on the notions that women have a unique embodied understanding that differentiates their knowing from men's ways of knowing.

Feminists like bell hooks warns against generalizing women as naturally pacifist because this philosophy assumes that women are not political agents capable of participating in or effecting change. And if women are not acknowledged as members of the decision making community, either by supporting the status quo or actively rejecting it, they become invisible and powerless members of society. She warns that,

> Discussions of feminism and militarism that do not clarify for women the roles we have played and play in all their variety and complexity, make it appear that all women are against war, oppose the use of violence, that men are the problem, the enemy. This is a distortion of women's experience, not a clarification of it or a redefinition[. . .]for it seems that the suggestion that men have made war and war policy while women passively watched represents a refusal to see women as active political beings even when we are subordinate to men. (127)

Although hooks finds a universal association between pacifism and women problematic because it nullifies their abilities, even as a subordinate group, to influence societal values, she does argue that institutional violence (nuclear armament and warlike aggression) does assist in justifying other sorts of violence, like that targeted toward women and animals. Despite her distaste for claims that suggest women are naturally passive, she still advocates for women's condemnation of and resistance to violence when she writes,

> To help bring an end to violence against women, feminist activists have taken the lead in criticizing the ideology of male supremacy and showing the ways in which it supports and condones that violence. Yet, efforts to

> end most violence against women will succeed only if they are part of an overall struggle to end violence. (125)

If, however, ending violence against women will only be successful if this aim resides within the struggle to end violence in general, as hooks claims, hooks must accept a feminist rejection of the violence done to animals for the same reason.

Because knowledge for Adams, as it is for many who understand the influence of social construction, is both contextualized and embodied, she attempts to heighten social awareness of the contradictions inherent in supporting patriarchal practices in the consumption of meat while working toward overcoming oppression founded in patriarchal cultural practices. To some extent, the success of Adams's arguments relies on her ability to uncover referential rhetoric at work within societal efforts to divorce animal, the being, from meat the food. Her discussion of this implicit rhetoric allows her to "make the covert associations overt" and, in this, utilize these associations to support her own claims about the blurred distinction between the oppression of animals and the oppression of women. For feminists who do not acknowledge the oppression of animals as an intrinsic component to their own oppression, she challenges them to act. For feminists who already feel an obligation to defend animals, she articulates their proclivity toward feminism and animal advocacy in the hopes of fostering a feminist vegetarian identity.

Survey respondents seem to be making these connections on their own as well. Several respondents describe what they have come to see as a connection between their feminism and their vegetarianism. One woman writes, "I have been a vegetarian for over 25 years. I'm not sure I went through any stages, but as I've grown older my

vegetarianism has become more intertwined with my feminism. What was a simple personal decision when I was young has become more of a social statement as I've grown older." This response suggests that such understanding, the connection among oppressions, takes time. During this time, vegetarians reflect on their identity as such and begin to piece together connections between their vegetarianism and other social values. The following excerpt illustrates, to some degree, what this process looks like.

> My experiences with food, before I ever thought about what it meant to be vegetarian, are closely linked to the internal changes that have occurred over the past four years or so. Throughout high school and college, I really struggled with the relationship between food and femininity, which is very mixed up and complicated in cultural representations of women. Food is tied with pleasure and connected with sin. Food, which nourishes, is portrayed as an enemy. It is the main obstacle between women's actual bodies and the fictional bodies they are trained to desire/admire. My relationship with food was almost completely determined by what I knew about the correlation between starvation and thinness, and this relationship affected my life in other ways, too—my priorities, my energy, my self-esteem and self-respect…it was through Women's Studies that I first started to realized how much control is exerted over our lives by corporations, by money, by the media (by many, many things that control our desires, our needs, our values…)
>
> […]I started to realize that there are so many ways of separating ourselves from others (by gender, sexuality, nationality, race, religion, etc.) and forgetting that the problems that other people face are our own problems, too. For example, we may be able to ignore starvation that occurs thousands of miles away, and we may be able to avoid homelessness in our own cities, but when human suffering occurs close enough that we cant' ignore it, we can be happy…The result of my interest in Women's Studies has been the initiation of a process of questioning, examining the assumptions that I have taken as human nature.

By linking vegetarianism with other pre-existing social values through rhetorics of oppression, like sexism, racism, poverty, and starvation, movement advocates hope to accomplish three goals. First, the movement advocates hopes to create a collective

identity which can encapsulate an extremely diverse population. Second, they hope to foster a lifelong commitment on behalf of participants. And finally, they hope that individuals will come to understand the need to convert others as part of their commitment to vegetarianism. By presenting vegetarianism as an ethical lifestyle rather than diet, vegetarian organizations and advocates encourage all three of these goals.

Survey responses suggest that this is working. Uniformly, ethical vegetarians express a desire to move toward a more "strict" lifestyle, which often means the gradual transition from vegetarianism to veganism. They also stress the permanence of their decision. In testimonials and in the surveys that I collected, vegetarians clearly and forcefully illustrate their commitment to "never going back." This phrase appears in numerous narratives and is usually associated with important dates, such as the date someone became vegetarian or the date that someone decided to go vegan. One woman writes, "the 'defining moment' at which there was no looking back to meat eating was in 1976, when I was shocked to see a freshly slaughtered cow hanging by a foot in a display window." Another writes, "Finally, in October 2001, I went fully vegetarian and I haven't looked back." Yet another writes, "I've been a vegetarians since about January 2004, and a vegan since about May 2004. I am as strict vegetarian, being vegan, that I can be and I foresee staying that way. As far as I'm concerned, there's no going back."

This "no going back" semantic indicator suggests that once vegetarians become aware of the reasons for the lifestyle, those reasons are so compelling that they drive them and motivate vegetarians every day to stay the course. After all, since vegetarians necessarily embody the lifestyle, they must remain committed continuously or they are

no longer a part of the community. Non-practicing vegetarians are no longer considered a part of the community simply because they once belonged. As one woman claims, being a vegetarian involves "the power of choosing minute, by minute to be a more honorable human being." Vegetarians must live their ethics, which, in a world that dismisses those ethics, means constantly choosing to do so.

The "never going back" attitude of vegetarians suggest that they have internalized the ethical impetus behind vegetarianism in a way that is similar to the way that other converts internalize religious doctrine. Conversion narratives illustrate a "coming-to-the-light" quality, which is not unlike the religious conversion suggesting that, in some ways, vegetarianism is understood in religious terms by to those who subscribe to it. Because it becomes the ethical system by which the "goodness" of daily actions is measured, vegetarians are likely to feel more compelled to share this ethical impetus with others. In this respect, the need to "witness" and proselytize their lifestyle becomes synonymous with living the lifestyle in the first place. In the following section, I examine the religious rhetoric that vegetarians use to articulate their commitment to the ethical vegetarian movement and how this rhetoric suggests "witnessing" is a vital component of a vegetarian lifestyle.

Coming to the Light

The study of social movements is, according to the rhetoricians who have studied them, a study of personal and spiritual transformation. Robert Cathcart begins his influential article "Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form" with a quote from

Leland Griffin, which Griffin wrote in response to Kenneth Burke. Griffin writes, "to study a movement is to study a drama, an act of transformation, an act that ends in transcendence, the achievement of salvation" (qtd. in "Movements" 233). This quote suggests that those who become involved with social movements experience some sort of "transcendence" or religious awakening. This is most clearly illustrated by the ethical vegetarian movement. In the following section, I examine vegetarianism as a religion by analyzing how ethical vegetarians (and vegans) describe their conversion and commitment to the lifestyle.

Vegetarianism is often associated with religion, but it is rarely discussed as a religion of its own, just as it is rarely discussed as a social movement all its own. However, movement scholars do recognize that it shares many qualities with religion in how it is perceived by those who subscribe to it. Maurer claims that "for some people, vegetarianism may be an integral part of an individual spiritual ethic" (*Vegetarianism* 13). She also claims that vegetarianism has the potential to "replace some of the needs that religion fills" because it "offers a perceptual framework that organizes one's personal social world, what sociologist Peter Berger calls a nomos: a schema that both generates meaning and structures choice, protecting a person from chaos in the social world" (13). In his article "Eating Ethically: 'Spiritual' and "Quasi-religious' Aspects of Vegetarianism," published in 2000 in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Malcolm Hamilton analyzes what he interprets as "quasi-religious themes" in ethical vegetarianism "including taboo and avoidance behaviour, reverence for life, the denial of death, reincarnation, observance of disciplines, and the rejection of domination and oppression"

(65). Ultimately, however, he argues that although perceptions of vegetarianism as a religion or "quasi-religion" are currently useful, "they must in the longer term be replaced by concepts that do no imply that such behaviour is a form of religion or which characterize it always in relation to religion, but which recognize its own distinctive and essentially non-religious character" (65). Hamilton's study and his resulting scholarship come out of research that he conducted on British vegetarians. In responses to the survey that I conducted with vegetarians in the U.S., numerous vegetarians describe their lifestyle in religious terms and attribute their sense of serenity and purpose to their vegetarianism.

In responses to my survey, vegetarians often describe their conversion to the lifestyle as a form of "enlightenment" from which they garner a sense of moral superiority. The following are typical examples of how vegetarians describe their vegetarianism in religious terms:

> "I write a number of publications [on vegetarianism], and continuously try to include bits of 'enlightenment'"
>
> "[converting to vegetarianism] was an enlightened decision"
>
> "What I like most about vegetarianism is that it is 'clean eating'"
>
> "On a physical level, my body feels much more "clean."…On an emotional level, I feel happier and freer…a feeling of inner peace."
>
> "It was liberating…That I can fall asleep each night knowing that I did not contribute to violence in any way."
>
> "I know I will learn something tomorrow that will enlighten me even more."
>
> "[Veganism] is almost like a religion to me. It is my belief"

> "I truly get off on being vegan… I don't want to be responsible for the torture and death of thousands of living sentient beings, just because I don't think I can live without a cheeseburger and some French fries. I'm so much more enlightened than that."

> "Being a vegetarian grants me a freedom that can't be described…it has to be experienced. It's a joy behind compare!"

One respondent even shares a conversion narrative that bears striking similarity to those that inspire individuals to become religious. In her narrative, she describes her "moment of awakening." She writes,

> Then one day, about three years ago, I was flying across the country and we had a very long and very bad spell of turbulence. I was utterly terrified and helpless inside this huge shuddering metal trap, and suddenly I knew how if must feel to be an animal trapped in a chute or an assembly line going to slaughter. I made a vow that if we got out of this flight safely, I would never eat animal food again.

Often, individuals who "find God" do so as a result of a life-threatening experience like the one described above. In this instance, however, the affected woman felt a kinship to animals who suffer under the conditions of factory farming, leading her not to find God, but to "find vegetarianism."

Respondents also attribute a sense of moral superiority to the decision to become vegetarian/vegan. One laments her lapsed veganism in such terms. She writes, "I felt social pressures and added dairy to my diet…I long for the days of being a vegan because it carried a sort of high moral authority in addition to the fact that I have never quite felt as good as I did then." Another struggles with how this attitude affected her interpersonal relationships. She writes, "The most difficult aspect of becoming vegetarian was the moral superiority and overwhelming passion I felt." In her case, she felt as if her

unintentional air of moral superiority contributed to some of the antagonism she experienced from meat-eaters since such an attitude easily compounds the guilt that meat-eaters already felt in her presence. As a counter to such encounters, one woman struggles with how to advocate the movement without appearing as "holier than thou." She writes, "As a vegan, I need to help others understand that veganism is a viable choice for them as well, and that not all vegans are self-righteous misanthropes."

This sense of moral superiority is not always described in terms associated with Western religion as one participant illustrates when she claims, "I hate to admit this, but I feel somewhat special being vegan—I feel as though the world has rewarded me with "good Karma." Another woman describes her conversion to vegetarianism as sparking "something spiritual/natural from inside me. I simply had an "awakening" of my own…I feel lighter karmically." Similarly, several vegetarians see their veganism as contributing to their overall sense of spirituality and connectedness with the world around them. One vegan writes, "I also feel that my veganism and my entire life has become more spiritual. I have a better understanding of the natural world around me due to my veganism." Another expresses the joy she feels because of her increased sense of spirituality and connectedness. She writes

> I LOVE the fact that being vegan has expanded the depth of my compassion and spirituality for this world and all living beings in a way that I could never have imagined was possible. I feel that I am part of the healing process of this world instead of adding to the destruction. I love the way my body feels after a great vegan meal-like I'm vibrating with energy instead of feeling full and stuffed. I love that I am now the proud owner of 2 cats because eliminating dairy eliminated my allergies to almost everything.

In these testimonials, religious language and descriptions illustrate the degree to which vegetarians consider their lifestyle as ethically and spiritually compelling. One woman articulates this perspective as she explains what compelled her to become vegetarian. She writes, "At some point I realized that my actions were not in line with my …..beliefs? my soul? What I knew was right?" Even though she was not sure how to define the spiritual component of her decision to become a vegetarian, her reflections suggest that she recognizes it is there.

Vegetarians describe their lifestyle in religious terms in other ways as well. Like religion, an individual's commitment to vegetarianism takes priority over other concerns as suggested by the following excerpt. "Even if a doctor told me that eating meat would make me feel better physically, I don't think I could do it, because the ethical concerns are so monumental for me." In this case, his commitment to vegetarianism supersedes his concerns about his own health. Few other commitments besides religion exhibit such allegiance. Another vegetarian aligns her commitment to stay faithful to her vegetarian lifestyle with her oath to stay faithful to her husband, amidst temptations to the contrary. She writes,

> I am able to maintain my vegan lifestyle because I know that it's the right thing to do. I don't see any other ethical options. So it's kind of like how I stay faithful to my husband. There are a lot of attractive men and women (I'm bisexual) that I'd like to sleep with, but I won't because I love my husband and I've made vows with him. The only ethical option is to remain faithful. Similarly, I love meat and sometimes I miss cheese pizza, but I know that to consume those products would contribute to animal suffering and are therefore unethical. So I don't do it.

In this instance, her commitment to her husband, made official in the eyes of god and country, friends and family, through marriage, is not dissimilar to the one that she makes

to her vegetarian lifestyle. Both are permanent and both are ethically grounded. Vegetarians also feel as if they understand other vegetarians in a unique way because they share experiences and beliefs, like individuals who were raised in accordance with specific religious doctrine. One woman makes this connection explicitly when she writes, "When I meet a fellow veg*n I feel a sort of kinship with them (I feel the same way when I meet a fellow Jew)."

Others feel so bound to vegetarianism/veganism as a conviction that they express feelings of guilt even at the thought of lapsing from the lifestyle. One woman writes, "Now, whenever I consider eating some animal product, I am aware that there would be karmic consequences, probably serious ones, and I am deterred." Another feels as if, because of her vegetarianism, "a tremendous weight had been lifted off my shoulders." Although vegetarians do not consistently claim that they felt guilty for eating animals prior to their transformation, though many do, they do claim that the guilt that they feel at the thought of returning to an omnivorous lifestyle keeps them dedicated to sustaining their vegetarian lifestyle. One respondent writes that, "the most transforming part of going vegetarian is the way I started to feel spiritually. The guilt of eating animals was gone…and I did not even realize it was there until I made the commitment to stop." Another describes herself as "a devout vegetarian." The most striking indicator that vegetarians internalize their lifestyle in religious terms was evidenced in my survey be a respondent who felt compelled to confess her deviation from the lifestyle. She writes

> I have a few weaknesses-Hamburgers and Pizza with cheese. I feel deprived if I cannot have a few things I really like. I do feel guilty but I eat them any way[. . .]I feel weak and sometimes overwhelmed. I tried the Veggie Burger at Burger King and hate it. I tried veggie shreds cheese and

> hate it too. I tried tofu, too. I eat cage free eggs! Is that Ok? I drink soy milk. I use products that do not do animal testing. I do a lot of good things and still a lot of bad too!! God help me.

This example offers rare insight into the psychological aspects of conversion, especially self-regulated conversion, like vegetarianism tends to be. It also suggests that vegetarians who subscribe to the lifestyle for ethical reasons believe that their ability to sustain it comes from their desire to act in accordance to what they "know is right." All of this suggests that vegetarianism acts as the spiritual foundation for many who subscribe to it and, as such, is understood as a spiritual practice.

Discoveries, Connections, and Implications

In this chapter, I examined how the culture of meat is sustained in the US. I then examined how the vegetarian movement, organizations, and advocates attempt to disrupt and, ultimately, overturn this cultural norm. Within this shifting cultural landscape, I explore the ways vegetarian organizations and advocates attempt to define and disseminate a collective vegetarian identity by cultivating it as an aspect of personal identity, including their ability to claim and (re)construct terminology and their use of rhetorics of oppression. I argue that movement advocates do so in order to align the concept of vegetarianism with its ethical imperatives and convince individuals that to be vegetarian also means being an activist on behalf of the lifestyle. I analyze how participants internalize this rhetoric by examining the ways in which everyday participants talk about their vegetarianism and how it relates to their identity.

The primary implication of this chapter is that the ethical vegetarian movement is, in many ways, a movement about claiming a personal identity of our own making as it is about social transformation. Organizations and advocates foster this belief by building connections, on many levels, and by employing rhetorical approaches that encourage these connections. Since the most committed movement activists are those who see vegetarianism as both a personal and social value, personal interaction is an especially influential means of persuasion. As role models, sources of information, provocateurs, and embodiments of the movement, vegetarian individuals have the potential to single-handedly facilitate others' journey toward ethical vegetarianism and collectively transform social and culture norms. In essence, vegetarianism is more than a diet, more than a lifestyle. It is a call to action. It is a gateway into social/civic participation on many levels.

In this chapter, I have illuminated many rhetorical features of the ethical vegetarian movement and used these features to further develop an analysis of another major feature—personal interaction as movement activity in the vegetarian movement. This sort of analysis exemplifies what an inquiry into a movement's rhetorical footprint might look like. Such analysis advances scholarship that has already been done and that which is currently being done by both sociologists and rhetoricians. A rhetorical approach to the study of social movements, then, allows scholars to overcome the limitations of other models. As a rhetorician, an outsider to the study of social movements in many ways—I have been able to integrate useful theory from different sociological models of inquiry—the Resource Mobilization Model, New Social

Movement Theory, and Frame Articulation Theory—without becoming encumbered by paradigmatic fences. In other words, I have been able to integrate otherwise competing wisdoms into a framework that makes use of the insights that each has to offer without arguing that one is inherently more comprehensive than another.

In this sense, identifying a rhetorical footprint becomes a heuristic that helps scholars name and analyze the rhetorical features of a movement—the intersection between the aims and the means of a movement—in relation to one other. This, in turn, helps scholars further differentiate among similar movements, like the ethical vegetarian movement and the animal rights movement, and make connections between seemingly disparate movements, such as feminist movements and the ethical vegetarian movement. As I conclude my analysis of the ethical vegetarian movement in the next chapter, I use this method of analysis to forecast the future of the movement, the successes it is beginning to enjoy and the threats that are emerging against it. I also look back at what we have learned by applying a rhetorical model of analysis to the study of social movements and argue that this model be used for the study of other movements, other than the ethical vegetarian movement.

Chapter 5 What Lies Ahead: The Future of the Ethical Vegetarian Movement and Rhetorical Studies

The decision to be vegetarian/vegan changes you in more ways than just what you eat. It's like someone took the blinders off. For me, everyday, I feel more political and engaged. I care more about people and animals. I care more about the environment. I'm more willing to stand up and fight now than I ever have been. Veganism is a protest against cruelty and the status quo. It is a protest that, while removing a number of things from my life, provides me with many more: a community, a purpose, a creative outlet, and a sense of accomplishment.

-Josh Hooten, editor of *Herbivore*

In the May 6th 2005 issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, Song Airlines (operated by Delta Air Lines) placed a two page ad for their airline in which they claim to have the "widest food and beverage menu in the sky, 24 channels of live DISH network® TV, 10 movies on-demand, 11 interactive video games and over 1600 mp3's." Two-thirds of the ad space is dominated by the image of a peaceful sky, not unlike the one that passengers often see out of the portal window of a jetliner. The bottom of the page is softened by a layer of patchy cloud cover. Above the wisps of clouds, the scene becomes what could best be described as sky blue which then fades, towards the top of the page, into a darker, more celestial blue. In a horizontal line within the band of sky blue, three images draw

the reader's eyes. The far-most left image is a bowl of mixed nuts. Above this bowl, just as one blue fades into the next, are the words

Seat 12a

vegan

The center image mimics this format, only this time the image is of two wedges of cheese, one stacked on top of the other. Cheddar below, Brie above with the words "seat 12b, low carb" above the image. The far right image includes three Twizzlers®, one chocolate chip cookie, one green olive (with pimento), and a handful of popcorn mixed together under the words "seat 12c, pregnant."

This advertisement tells us quite a bit about the state of the ethical vegetarian movement in the U.S. The ad itself is targeting a younger and pop-culturally aware audience--one who will find interactive video games, 1600 mp3's, Texas hold-em, fun zone, and "chick flicks" appealing. One who is also presumably familiar with the term "vegan" and its meaning, since the ad does not offer a definition of the term, other than the bowl of mixed nuts. By representing individuals by their food choices, the ad affirms the relationship between what we eat and who we are perceived to be—between diet and identity. In the case of the vegan passenger, the ad suggests, in no uncertain terms, that

vegans are, well, nuts. However, this ad also helps promote the vegetarian movement because it helps to familiarize individuals with the term “vegan” which, as I argued in chapter 4, also familiarizes readers with an ethics of eating since the term itself implies such an ethic.

The ad also illustrates Melucci’s claim that meaning is made in contemporary culture by those who control information “production, accumulation, and circulation” and by their ability to influence how this information will be perceived and internalized. Power, then, in complex societies is about controlling the flow and interpretation of information by controlling the codes that dictate both. After all, what makes Song Airlines so appealing are the numerous ways that passengers can access information and entertainment in-flight through the latest technological advances. Like a momentary, but disabling, power outage, one that disrupts a video game quest mid-play so that players must start over, this time a bit more prepared for the choices they will encounter on their journey, social movements seek to disrupt the flow of information that is disseminated by those in power and offer an alternative to dominant cultural narratives. According to Melucci, individuals who search for self can make one of two choices—they can either seek “incorporation into dominant codes, fusion with a power that denies diversity” or separateness, “difference as exclusion” (“*Newness*” 120).

It follows, then, that social movements are really engaged in a struggle over the identity and the “production and reappropriation of meaning” in general (“*Newness*” 110). In this respect, contemporary social movements are both the means and the end simultaneously. In essence, a movement is recognizable by the form that it takes.

Claiming an identity of our own making in contrast to one that is assigned to us is not only a feature of the movement, it is the goal. As such, the self-manufacture of identity "becomes a remedy against the opacity of the system" and allows individuals to "recognizes themselves as producers of meaning" and "challenge the manipulation of meaning by the apparatus" ("*Newness*" 114). In the case of the ethical vegetarian movement, this identity is both personal and collective and intertwined with consumption on a literal and symbolic level.

In this dissertation, I have examined the ethical vegetarian movement as a contemporary social movement in which the formation of identity and resistance to the dominant culture of consumption are both the means and the goal. As part of this, I analyzed the historical and current means of persuasion that characterize the ethical vegetarian movement. I also analyzed how we, as scholars, approach the study of social movements, including the strengths and weaknesses of our various approaches in order to argue for a rhetorical approach to the study of social movements—one in which we identify, align, and differentiate between movements based on their most representative "rhetorical features" (Kohrs-Campbell), or the relationship between their strategies of persuasion and the goals they wish to accomplish. I argue that a comprehensive means of analysis is one in which we identify these features in relation to one another in order to distinguish the rhetorical footprint of individual movements.

I embed this conversation within an analysis of the ethical vegetarian movement. After analyzing how persuasion happens in this movement, I argue that the rhetorical footprint of the vegetarian movement is characterized by several features which function

in relation to one another. These features are the distinctive ways that the movement creates a shared constituency with other movements, makes use of embodied and unintentional rhetoric, reclaims oppositional terminology, handles dissidence between movement message and member goals, uses religious rhetoric, and employs personal interaction and conversion narratives as movement activity. I have chosen the ethical vegetarian movement, in part, because it is a clear example of the way in which personal interaction can contribute to the recruitment and mobilization of movement constituencies, an area of movement activity that has, until now, been overlooked by movement scholars. I use the concept of a rhetorical footprint as a heuristic of analysis in order to highlight personal activity as a type of collective action and movement activity in a way that it has not been looked at before.

This is an important time for the ethical vegetarian movement, and for those who belong to it. It is a time when the movement faces dissolution and success simultaneously. It is a time when the movement must expend a great deal of energy to try to maintain control of the terms and conditions that characterize it without impeding the growing interest in vegetarian products, since this interest may serve as a gateway into the lifestyle. If the vegetarian movement hopes to survive, to successfully overturn the culture of meat as the dominant culture of consumption in the U.S., the movement must examine which methods of persuasion are working and which are not. This current situation of the vegetarian movement, a simultaneous chance for success and dissolution, is a rare opportunity for analysis for theorists who study social movements and social change. By studying the vegetarian movement as it becomes self-reflexive, we gain

insight into the challenges that movements face once they become moderately successful. This analysis allows us, as scholars, to understand social movements from beginning to end and, as a result, offer suggestions about how social change is best facilitated at every stage of a movement.

This investigation has highlighted the challenges that the movement faces currently, but it has also illuminated several implications for the future of the movement. As I conclude my rhetorical analysis of the ethical vegetarian movement, I want to pose a few concerns about the future of the movement, suggest possibilities, and reflect on the usefulness of rhetorical approaches to the study of social movements in general. I hope that this analysis serves as a case study and example for others who see the value in studying the rhetoric of social change and cultural resistance.

The Future of the Ethical Vegetarian Movement

Popular culture's growing awareness of vegetarianism and veganism, in particular, as represented in this dissertation, suggests that the movement has, in many ways, "arrived." In other words, it has been successful to some degree in dismantling and "reappropriating" the cultures of consumption in the US. However, as with most social movements, mainstreaming brings with it a new set of challenges. As more and more people identify as vegetarians and put their money where their mouth is by seeking out and purchasing more vegetarian/vegan friendly products, vegetarianism is becoming big business. As vegetarian organizations buy stock in fast food restaurants and promote industry brand products, such as RoseMoon Soymilk (Sysco), more and more movement friendly companies and cooperatives are being purchased by large conglomerates, such as

Boca Burger (bought by Kraft), Silk (owned by WhiteWave Inc., recently incorporated into Dean Foods, and recently reconsolidated as WhiteWave Foods, Gardenburger (bought by Kellogg). These companies, unlike their predecessors, do not affiliate with the vegetarian movement and tend to market vegetarian *products* instead of the vegetarian *lifestyle*, thereby eclipsing ethical consideration for adopting it. Donna Maurer calls this the "free-rider" problem in which more and more people identify with the movement on some level, but do not feel compelled to act on behalf of those beliefs.

All of this suggests that the vegetarian movement finds itself in a complicated place. The identifying characteristic of the movement—vegetarianism—is mainstreamed enough to be recognizable. More importantly, the movement has also been successful in disseminating the term "vegan" and, as part of this, the philosophy behind it, as a way of keeping practice and rationale intertwined. However, as vegetarianism has become more mainstreamed, it has also succumbed to popular culture's reception of it. Vegetarians are represented as stereotypes—the hippie, the new-age spiritualist, the PeTA person, the lesbian, the comic sidekick, the defiant teenager, etc. Ads like Song Airlines' also suggest that the vegetarian movement might face a struggle to keep veganism from meeting the same sort of "end" as vegetarianism is facing, one in which veganism is understood as a diet instead of a lifestyle, as about health instead of ethics, as personal instead of social.

So, one major problem that the ethical vegetarian movement must address is the threat of cooption. As the movement becomes more mainstreamed, the defining characteristic—vegetarianism—becomes farther removed from the ethical impetus behind it. This is especially the case as the movement becomes more corporatized. This

trend can be seen in movement literature. Whereas early issues in the *Vegetarian Times*, an important movement periodical first published in 1974, were advertisement free and included highly political/socially conscious articles on the United Farm Worker Strike, Whale Hunting, World Hunger, and anti-corporate food production printed on recycled paper, the magazine is now a blend of vegetarian recipes, health-related articles, and corporate advertisements printed on glossy and colorful paper. It no longer includes articles on the social and political implications of meat-eating as part of its core agenda. The magazine has also begun to target a different population—Flexitarians, or individuals who include vegetarian meals in their diet but who do not consider themselves vegetarians because they occasionally consume meat products.

This shift in focus was part of the age of the Flexitarian, which began gaining national media attention in 2003. CBS news reported in March 2004 in an article called "Meet the 'Flexitarians'" that "the 30-year-old *Vegetarian Times*, considered the standard-bearer of vegetarianism" has begun to advocate Flexitarianism. In this article, J.M. Hirsh reports, that "Though still meat-free, the once mostly vegan magazine focuses less on activism and more on recipes with broader appeal." Hirsh also claims that the Vegetarian Resource Group and PeTA have embraced Flexitarian advocacy as has Mollie Katzen, author of the quintessential vegetarian cookbook, the *Moosewood Cookbook*. No longer a vegetarian herself, she endorses meat proteins as long as they are from non-factory farmed animals.

Flexitarianism can either be interpreted as an indication of the success of the vegetarian movement or an indication of its failure. If Flexitarianism is, as movement

organizations hope, a gateway to vegetarianism and the ethical considerations that motivate it, then it is a clear indication of the restructuring of cultural norms. If, however, it is a reification of vegetarianism as a diet, instead of a lifestyle—one motivated by personal health instead of ethical considerations, then it suggests that the vegetarian movement is facing a powerful counter-movement. In the past few years, Flexitarianism has gained popularity and recognition. According to Hirsh, the term was voted "most useful word of 2003 by the American Dialect Society" ("Flexitarians"). It applies to a growing number of individuals who feel like 28-year old Christy Pugh, a woman who claims that "I really like vegetarian food but I'm just not 100 percent committed" ("Flexitarians"). This statement suggests that Flexitarians understand vegetarianism as a personal choice, one they make to suit their own likes and dislikes, interests and needs. This attitude is in direct contrast to the one that vegetarian organizations work to promote. These organizations, and movement members that support them, understand vegetarianism as a personal choice with ethical and social implications. If "veganism," and the philosophy that it implies, stands as an affront to what Melucci calls the discourse of the privileged who exert control "through their power of naming and the monopoly that they seek to impose on language," Flexitarianism may be the system's response ("*Newness*" 113).

Even if the hopeful believe that the ethical vegetarian movement in the US is winning the battle against meat-eating as the dominant culture of consumption, it may, in fact, be losing the war. The forces behind cultural production have a not-so-secret weapon that is capable not only of sustaining the culture of meat, but also expanding this

culture exponentially. This weapon is the increasingly normalized practice of globalization. In *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser makes the case the dominant American culture of consumption is as simple as meat and potatoes--a hamburger and fries. He traces the evolution of fast food culture in the U.S. as it has become the "All-American Meal." He also examines how American businesses are exporting this culture of consumption to countries around the globe. By 1994, McDonald's had opened its first restaurant in Kuwait. Around the same time, Kentucky Fried Chicken opened a restaurant in the holy city of Mecca. In 1997, McDonald's opened a restaurant approximately 1/3 of a mile from Dachau, the first concentration camp opened by the Nazis. As part of their advertising initiatives, McDonald's employees "distribut[ed] thousands of leaflets among tourists in the camp's parking lot" which read "Welcome to Dachau[. . .]and Welcome to McDonalds" (233).

In 1994, I spent time in Prague in the recently created Czech Republic. During this time, Prague was undergoing the first in what would be many waves of Westernization. The most obvious outward sign of this physical and psychological transformation was the McDonalds that had recently taken up residence among the traditional shops and restaurants in Wenceslas Square. This old city center, paved in cobblestone, was the site of numerous communist revolts, and now lies in the shadow of the Museum of Communism. During my visit, I often spent time in McDonald's. It was a bit of home when I was so far away. However, I wasn't the only one who found the bright lights and American cheese slices appealing. Of all of the restaurants in the square, it was by far the most crowded, the least upscale, and the most expensive. Similarly,

when the McDonald's opened in the town square in Schwabisch Gmund, Germany where I lived during the 1993-4 school year, the restaurant soon became the favored hang-out of local teens, families, and tourists, replacing the crepe and ice cream shop and the weinersnitzel stand, which served traditional regional foods.

My experience is not unique. The fast food industry is aggressively working to disseminate fast food culture world-wide. According to Schlosser, McDonald's has gone from operating 3,000 restaurants outside the United States in the early 1990s to over 15,000 currently in more than 117 foreign countries, with at least four new overseas restaurants opening daily (229). This is relevant to the study of the ethical vegetarian movement in the US because, as Schlosser indicates, food is not the only product that is being promoted. The fast food industry also promotes "the values, tastes, and industrial practices" of the industry as they "are being exported to every corner of the globe, helping to create a homogenized international culture" (229). This homogenized culture is one that prioritizes the consumption of meat and dairy and employs the practice of factory farming to meet increased demand for these "products."

In other words, the fast food industry is closely related to increases in the consumption of meat and dairy in the US and world-wide and the practice of factory farming which led to the formation of an organized ethical vegetarian movement in the US. A product of American culture and, more importantly, a representation of it, the fast food industry is closely aligned with meat and dairy production industries. As the fast-food empire expands to other countries, so do American practices of raising and rendering food animals, namely factory farming. This is evidenced by the growing

number of American businesses that are entering, and often dominating, foreign meat markets. Schlosser exposes this trend. He writes,

> In 1987, ConAgra took over the Elders Company in Australia, the largest beef company in the country that exports more beef than any other in the world. Over the past decade, Cargill and IBP have gained control of the beef industry in Canada. Cargill has established large-scale poultry operations in China and Thailand. Tyson Foods is planning to build chicken-processing plants in China, Indonesia, and the Philippines. (230)

With the acquisition of foreign meat markets, ConAgra, the American meat-packing giant, has recently become the world's largest meat-packing corporation. It is also the largest foodservice supplier in North America, the nation's largest sheep and turkey processor, and the third largest chicken and pork processor (Schlosser 158).

This is relevant to the vegetarian movement because it illustrates how the meat/dairy as a culture of consumption is being promoted worldwide, targeting populations who did not previously subscribe to the narrative of meat-eating. In *Fast Food Nation*, Schlosser looks at the effect that increased beef and dairy consumption has had, and will continue to have, on the Japanese diet, and as a result, on the health of Japanese people. Citing research that indicates that the traditional Japanese diet of rice, fish, vegetables, and soy is among the healthiest in the world, he highlights the negative health effects that have resulted from increased red meat consumption. He also attributes this increased consumption of red meat to American cultures of consumption. According to Schlosser, red meat has increasingly become part of Japanese diets since the post-WWII American occupation and has recently grown exponentially as a result of the arrival of fast food. As a result, Japan, a country once recognized for its lack of obesity, is facing obesity issues that are similar to those in the US. In the 1980's, the rate of obesity

among Japanese children doubled which has led to the current situation in which one-third of all Japanese men in their thirties are overweight (Schlosser 243). In addition, Japanese men and women are now much more likely to suffer diet-related diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer, and stroke; all diseases saw little incidence in Japan prior to increases in the consumption of red meat (243).

As technological advancements have made the transportation of food around the globe a reality, the meat and dairy industries in the US have set their sights on countries, like Japan, that have not traditionally subscribed to these meat and dairy heavy diets. In a 2003 article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* entitled "Let Them Eat Cheese," Rebecca Buckman details Western Campaigns to increase the amount of cheese consumption in the fastest growing marketable population on earth, China. In her article, she writes "China is not a nation of cheese lovers. At least one company wants to change that, and Western supermarkets and fast-food chains are helping." Although the article primarily focuses on the success of an Australian distribution company, Frontier Foods, Buckman attributes their increase in cheese sales to the growing number of American Fast Food restaurants, namely McDonalds and Pizza Hut, and "Western-style" supermarkets, most recently Wal-Mart. Written in 1993, the article mentions a Pizza Hut that is fresh from participating (with USDA funding) in the 2002 "Summer of Cheese" in the US. Although no mention is made of specific menu items that the Chinese branch of the Pizza Hut Corp. offers, the "Summer of Cheese" monies that Pizza Hut received from the US government undoubtedly influenced the marketing and sale of large quantities of cheese to the Chinese people. As these examples illustrate, the dominant American

culture of consumption, one which steadily promotes the consumption of meat and dairy, has already had an impact on cultures of consumption around the globe. As the ethical vegetarian movement gains ground in the US and more vegetarian/vegan alternatives to this culture of consumption become available, such as soymilk, those who control dominant cultures of consumption are reaching out to populations outside of this influence of the movement.

On the other hand, the globalizing of meat and dairy may be an indication that the ethical vegetarian movement is having success in the US. After all, increased production, distribution, and sales of vegetarian/vegan alternative food products suggest that more people are choosing to eat these products instead of meat and diary-based products. If large corporations, like Sysco (MoonRose Soymilk) and Kraft (Boca Burger), are spending money on vegetarian/vegan product development and advertising, there must be an increased market for these products. An increased market means that more people are choosing to eat vegetarian alternatives more often, even if they do not do so exclusively. What this essentially translates into is a decrease in the amount of animal products which are being used, which is one of the most fundamental goals of the ethical vegetarian movement. Even if individuals do not adopt the ethics of a vegetarian lifestyle initially, or even eventually, mainstream recognition suggests popular culture's acceptance of vegetarianism and, as a result, an increased potential that more people will consider adopting the lifestyle. In many ways this is fulfillment for the movement. Once vegetarianism becomes an accepted culture of the consumption in the US, it will have essentially displaced the culture of meat and dairy as the dominant culture of

consumption, replacing it with *cultures* of consumption and providing individuals with an opportunity to choose which one they want to follow.

However, the corporatization of the movement, resulting from and illustrated by increasing numbers of large food manufacturers who have begun to offer vegetarian/vegan products, also suggests that the movement may be dissolving as it becomes mainstreamed. This is suggested by the decreased association between the term "vegetarian" and the ethical impetus behind the lifestyle. It is at this crossroads that the ethical vegetarian movement—and the organizations and individuals that support it—now finds itself. Throughout this dissertation, I have illustrated what the movement is doing to increase membership, regulate perceptions of the movement (and those in it) through self-definition, and maintain the relationship between vegetarianism and the ethical considerations behind it. At this point, several questions still remain. If the culture of meat and dairy is becoming globalized, what role can or should the ethical vegetarian movement play in challenging this culture? Alternatively, if vegetarianism is becoming more acceptable and more popular in the US and, as a result, fewer animals and animal products are being consumed, does it matter whether or not the ethical vegetarian movement is at the heart of this transformation or multi-million dollar food production and distribution corporations? In other words, if more and more people are eating vegetarian meals, does it matter why they are doing it? How does the study of the ethical vegetarian movement, especially a study grounded in rhetoric, contribute to our understanding of how social change happens? What insight can we take away from this study that will be helpful in the study of other movements?

These are complicated questions that require equally complicated answers—ones that demand further research. Although my study suggests answers to these questions, these answers are only a beginning. In response to globalized food cultures, PeTA has opened offices in Spain and India. Because of the technological capabilities of the internet, individuals from as far away as Australia and Israel responded to my survey. Does this suggest that a growing counter-culture of consumption is mounting, or at least possible? If so, might it be capable of challenging a globalized American culture of consumption? Does the fact that so many people willingly responded to my survey, anxious to share their narrative, and used religious rhetoric to describe their commitment to a vegetarian lifestyle suggest that individuals *do* consider their vegetarianism an essential part of their identity? If so, then the ethical vegetarian movement is essential for the overthrow of the culture of meat since the movement consciously attempts to foster vegetarianism as an aspect of identity through various forms of rhetoric (see "rhetorical features" of the ethical vegetarian movement listed earlier).

The most essential question that remains, it seems, is how this analysis contributes to our perceptions and understanding of social movements in general, especially those under threat of incorporation, and the ways that we study them. To this, I have many answers, but one stands out above the others. What seems apparent in the survey responses of movement participants, in the aims of movement organizations, and in the rhetoric of the movement in general is that participation and movement activity is just as much about claiming identity as it is using this to evoke social change. As such, this study suggests that participation in a movement is an effective way to foster individual

awareness of our own agency in determining social and cultural norms and practices. As one participant sees it being a vegan means "Vot[ing] 3 times a day by choosing what is on the end of your fork!"

Many movement participants understand veganism as an individual contribution to "making the world a better place." One participant writes, "I want to save the world, to change it for the good—I see myself doing that thru veganism." Another writes, "[veganism] makes me feel like I am making a positive choice about how I want the world to be on a day-to-day basis, even when I don't do anything else. It makes me feel like I have not surrendered hope." Yet another writes, "I want to reduce the amount of suffering in the world, and I believe that veganism is one of the most important contributions I can make on an individual level." Still another claims that being a vegetarian helps her "feel a sense of unity with the world. I also feel good about myself because I feel as though I am doing something to make a small difference in the world."

Other vegetarians talk more overtly about vegetarianism as part of a larger vision of social change. One woman writes,

> I hope that my veganism makes some contribution toward a saner and more decent world…I do hope to be more aware of interconnectedness and social/environmental responsibility on the political and spiritual levels. I think veganism has given me a push in this area and has challenged me to do as much as I can to improve the conditions around me.

One of the few men who responded to my survey credits his vegetarian leanings for opening his eyes to "oppression of all kinds." He writes

> I do what I can to only purchase cruelty-free products. I avoid, when I can, purchasing products made by multinational corporations (which is tough, what with all the mergers and buy-outs), and instead buy from local or

> small companies. I try not to buy clothes from companies that use sweat-shop labor [. . .] I have become more politically minded, and aware that my choices—even the most seemingly innocuous—are important and make a difference…There is still so much work to do, but I think because going veg heightened my awareness to such a massive degree and changed my perspective in such a profound manner, that I feel incredibly good and at peace with how I live my life and the choices that I make.

Others view their vegetarianism as part of a commitment to reduce their environmental impact. One woman writes, “The more that I have committed to my vegan lifestyle, the more I appreciate life around me. I’m doing this because I have a profound respect for the whole biosphere, and it makes me stop to admire it all the more.” Another writes, “More commitment in my eating habits has encouraged me to become more aware of the harmful effects of other things on the planet.” The responses of these vegetarians mirror the sentiments of Josh Hooten, editor for *Herbivore*. Taken together with often professed desire of vegetarians to move ever closer to veganism, these excepts suggest that vegetarianism is a precursor to veganism and, more importantly, that veganism often acts as a “gateway” to social action.

As such, we must return to the question of whether or not the corporatization of the movement is inherently at odds with the ideology of the movement. Many vegetarians and vegans seem to think so. Many survey respondents claimed that their decision to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle greatly impacted their consumerism, as in the following examples.

> My dietary choices (and general consumer choices) are shaped by a growing awareness of the connections between cruelty and oppression and intolerance and violence and suffering…It a distant and general way, food is partly responsible for beginning a transformative cycle that has recently returned me (with a very different perspective) to that starting point.

> *****
> Very essentially, I am trying to ask myself how I can change my behavior so that I can be less complicit with a social structure I consider to be problematic. One answer that I have found is that I can try to be a more conscious consumer, of resources and food…to use this simple form of protest as a tool of activism, to speak about the connection between capitalism, meat, sustainability, and hunger…my choice not to eat meat is part of my identity.

By linking their choices as consumers to their thrice daily vote to "choose kindness, over cruelty," vegetarians and vegans are actualizing their capacity as agents of social change instead of agents of social maintenance. Because the choice to become vegetarianism is both personal and social, and it is received as such, vegetarians are more likely to understand themselves as makers of culture instead of receptacles for it.

This echoes past libratory efforts that see developing individual agency as key to social transformation. In Brazil in the 1950's, libratory educator Paulo Freire worked to bring literacy to the working class/peasantry of the nation as a means of fostering their "critical consciousness" or their "reflection upon their world in order to transform it" (60) In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire explains why literacy as a means of reflection helps people realize their own potential as agents of social change. Of education, as a means of promoting reflection, he writes,

> it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people[. . . through reflection] people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and in *which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (62-4)

In many ways, the ethical vegetarian movement works in the same way. By defining vegetarianism as a social choice and by linking it with other libratory and advocacy

movements, through shared rhetorics, the ethical vegetarian movement is creating more than a community held together by what they *don't* eat. It encourages this community to internalize their own ability to affect the world they live in and inspires them to help others "see the light."

Why Rhetoric?

Rhetoricians are uniquely equipped to contribute to the study of social movements. Rhetoric helps us study identity—how collective identity is crafted, how it is internalized, how it intersects with personal identity. In other words, the study of rhetoric—as a study of how social identity is negotiated through language and action—illuminates how people define themselves, especially in terms of their ability to affect social transformation. In the vegetarian movement, personal and collective identity is intertwined with consumption and complicated by dissidence between who vegetarians see themselves as and who they are perceived to be. It is precisely this study—how identity vagaries influence our relationships with others—that rhetoric is well-suited for.

While sociological models focus on collective action and the public sphere (or spheres) as the location of this action, a rhetorical approach to the study of discursive constructions of identity can make sense of the dialectic of personal interaction as movement activity. Such an approach, one that examines embodied and unintentional rhetoric as part of movement activity, as well as conversion narratives as dually-conversionary, encourages us to re-examine non or less-public personal interaction as an important type of constituency recruitment and mobilization. By examining these non-

traditional spaces of movement activity and of rhetoric, we can characterize movements by their rhetorical qualities. In other words, we can align movements and differentiate between them based on similarities and differences between their rhetorical footprints, or their relationship among various methods of persuasion as they relate to the goals of the movement and to one another.

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated what a rhetorical approach to social movements could look like by investigating the rhetorical features of the ethical vegetarian movement and how these features relate to one another to comprise a distinct identity, or footprint, for this movement. In order to create a comprehensive analysis of the ethical vegetarian movement, I have integrated the most useful insights from various sociological models and made use of the rhetorical tradition of social movement scholarship as a foundation for my investigation into personal interaction as movement activity. In other words, in this dissertation and through a rhetorical model of analysis, I have attempted to explain the unexplainable—unintentional and embodied rhetorics as defining movement activity. I have also argued for a fresh understanding of the role that personal interaction, which takes place primarily in non- and less-public arenas, has in manifesting social transformation. In other words, I have examined all of these as forms of collective activity that fall outside of the parameters of traditional sociological and rhetorical scholarship on social movements.

This model of analysis has proved especially useful in helping me identify relationships among movements that other models of inquiry have not. Defining a movement by its rhetoric has helped me, at a fundamental level, argue for ethical

vegetarianism as a unified movement network. A rhetorical definition of the ethical vegetarian movement has also helped me differentiate it from similar movements, such as the animal rights movement, and align it with other movements, such as feminist movements. I have been able to make such distinctions partially because I have looked at how each movement uses shared or distinct rhetorics to recruit and mobilize constituents. Because I am an "outsider" in many ways, a rhetorician instead of a sociologist, I have also been able to integrate sociological paradigms of study without becoming encumbered by inner-field controversies that have, until recently, prevented scholars in different paradigms from talking to and learning from one another. As Margit Mayers claims in "Social Movement Research and Social Movement Practice: The U.S. Pattern," a comprehensive model of analysis, one that "emphasiz[es] *cultural* and *symbolic* dimensions and the construction of meaning" is emerging, but it has not yet taken shape (49). This dissertation, and the theory that I advocate within it, is one attempt to give form to this emerging model of analysis.

Until this point, I have suggested the ways that rhetoric could contribute to the study of social movements. The study of social movements, however, can also contribute to the field of rhetoric and help us bridge our various interests and responsibilities as rhetoricians. The most obvious way is that this work helps rhetoricians bring their scholarship into the classroom where they most often find themselves—the composition classroom. At the center of this classroom is a commitment to fostering a student's ability to become a critical thinker, and eventually, a critical writer. We teach analysis as a way of helping students learn to assess what they witness as well as what they are a part of. As

part of this analysis, we teach students to be more critically aware of their own role in shaping the societies they live in. By writing, students contribute something tangible to the world around them. They enter it just as it often enters them. This belief motivated Freire to teach literacy to Brazilian peasants. It motivated bell hooks and Henry Giroux to teach critical literacy. It teaches our students that they are not witnesses, but participants in shaping this world. By incorporating the study of social movements into composition classrooms which attempt to develop critical thinking as a precursor to critical writing and which attempt to teach these skills by asking students to study rhetoric, we motivate our students to realize their own agency.

It follows that examining the nature of social change and the social movements that affect it by studying the rhetorical features of movements helps students learn how social changes happens and, more importantly, helps them identity the implications and impact of their own social participation/actions. Once they see themselves as agents, just like those who become active in social movements, students are more likely to care about and reflect on the choices that they are making. In this sense, they become both better thinkers *and* better writers, as well as better students *and* better citizens. As teachers and rhetoricians who teach rhetorics of social change, we have an opportunity to expand our field of inquiry and take this new knowledge into the classroom.

However, this is not the only way that the study of social movements can contribute to the field of rhetoric. The study of how social change happens is, at its most simple, a study of how persuasion happens. For over half a century sociologists have examined social movements, how they form, how they acquire resources, how they

evolve, and how they mobilize people to act. Communications scholars have more recently been tapping into this body of work and adding their own insights to it, as illustrated most thoroughly in chapter two. However, the study of social movements has not made its way into rhetorical theory, nor has it become commonplace in the literature of our field, especially the work of rhetoricians in English departments.

An approach to the study of social movements that focuses on language and other forms of persuasion and that defines movements by their strategies for persuasion allows us to better understand how movements relate to differ from one another. This is becoming more essential as our definition of social movements falls in line with what Melucci calls "movement networks." Defining a movement rhetorically also makes use of scholarship from other fields without being limited by paradigm boundaries. In other words, rhetoricians can pick and choose which models of analysis are most effective for the study of specific movements and which best illuminate their rhetorical practices without being bound by the rules and approaches of rigid paradigmatic boundaries and without being tied down by inner-field conflicts. Since the study of social movements is, at its heart, a study of persuasion, rhetoricians are well equipped to offer insights. To date, rhetoricians have missed an opportunity to increase the breath of our scholarship in a very organic way. An opportunity awaits, a space for critical refection that we are primed to contribute to and that has been waiting for us.

APPENDIX A

SHARE YOUR STORY!

A graduate student at the University of Arizona is interested in your personal experiences as a vegetarian--including your own transformation story, your struggles, your motivation, and your own perceptions of vegetarian as not only a dietary guideline, but as a lifestyle as well. She would like to hear from “new” vegetarians and longtime practitioners alike. If you are interested in sharing your story and your experiences, please contact Patty at vegstories@hotmail.com.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire on Vegetarianism
PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS QUESTIONAIRE AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE!

Demographic Information

Name*[25]:____

County and State of Residence:____________________________________

Age: ____ Ethnicity:________________ Religious Affiliation:__________________

Sex: Female Male Sexual Preference: Hetero Homo Bi Other

Profession:____

Questions of Vegetarianism

(Please take you time and answer these questions thoroughly. You can answer on a separate piece of paper or you can type and save your answers directly into this questionnaire and email it back to me. Feel free to add any additional relevant information. If you write your answers separately, you will need to mail your answers back to me. Please let me know if this is the case and I will send you a self-addressed stamped envelope for your questionnaire. Thanks again! I look forward to hearing about your experiences!)

Personal History

1) Please share your "transformation" story. How, when, and why did you become vegetarian?
2) How do you define your vegetarianism? Describe your dietary choices and the philosophies that guide them. How do you label yourself? (i.e. Do you eat dairy? Are you vegan?) Please define your terms (such as vegetarian, vegan, ovo-lacto, etc.)
3) What inspired you to become a vegetarian? (Health? Ethics? Environmental concerns?) Please explain.

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[25] *****Every participant in this survey will be assigned a codename. If you checked/initialed the clause that does not allow me to use your name, your name will be REMOVED from this document, a code name will be assigned to you, and the codekey with your name and code name will be stored in a locked cabinet away from this questionnaire.**

4) What/Who directly influenced and motivated your decision to become a vegetarian? Be as specific as possible about the experiences and encounters that affected your decision to become vegetarian.
5) How long have you been vegetarian? How has your understanding of vegetarianism or of yourself as a vegetarian changed over time? Describe the different phases/stages you went through as part of your transition to becoming vegetarian. Where do you see yourself headed in your vegetarianism (more strict? Less strict?)?
6) What was the most difficult aspect of becoming a vegetarian? What is the most difficult aspect of maintaining a vegetarian lifestyle?
7) If you have been a vegetarian for more than a year, how have your experiences as a vegetarian changed over time? Has it become easier or more difficult? Why? Be as specific as possible.

Personal Context

8) What do you like most about being a vegetarian?
9) What do you find most frustrating about being a vegetarian in a non-vegetarian world? What factors affect your ability to maintain this lifestyle? (Think about the influence of geography, circles of friends, the internet, product availability, the media, current events, etc.) In what ways is it becoming easier to maintain this lifestyle? In what ways is it becoming more difficult?
10) What are the greatest challenges you face as a vegetarian—on a day to day basis and specific experiences?
11) What type of responses do you get when you tell people that you are a vegetarian? (Supportive? Confused? Respectful? Antagonistic?) Please be as specific as possible. In what instances do you feel pressure to eat meat or resistance against vegetarians? In what instances do you feel reassured in your decision to be vegetarian? In particular, how is your choice to be a vegetarian received by your friends, your family, your acquaintances, strangers? Please share particular experiences and/or common responses that you feel other vegetarians also endure.
12) As you have become more committed to a vegetarian lifestyle, how has this affected other aspects of your life, such as your daily habits, your activities and interests, your relationships, your goals? Please give specific examples.

Social Context

13) Do you think being vegetarian is a personal decision? How and when (in what circumstances) do you usually talk about your choice to be vegetarian? Please give specific examples.
14) Do you feel as if you belong to (a) vegetarian community/communities? If so, describe these communities and why you belong to them. How did you become part of these communities? How do you maintain your membership in these

communities? If not, why not? Do you think that your membership in a community or lack of community affected your vegetarianism? Explain.

15) Do you consider yourself a vegetarian activist? On what level are you interested in fostering others to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle? What do you do to foster this ideal, both on your own and with others? Explain.
16) What groups/organizations/causes do you consider yourself a part of, including vegetarianism? Please indicate which organizations/groups you are an official member of and which you simply support. (For example: You may be an environmentalist, but you belong to the Sierra Club and the Green Party. You may be Christian, but you belong to Crusaders for Christ.)

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