

**Syracuse University**

---

**From the Selected Works of Richard Buttny**

---

November, 2020

# Vegans' problem stories: Negotiating vegan identity in dealing with omnivores

Richard Buttny

Etsuko Kinefuchi, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/richard\\_buttny/48/](https://works.bepress.com/richard_buttny/48/)



# Vegans' problem stories: Negotiating vegan identity in dealing with omnivores

Discourse & Society

1–19

© The Author(s) 2020

Article reuse guidelines:

[sagepub.com/journals-permissions](http://sagepub.com/journals-permissions)

DOI: 10.1177/0957926520939689

[journals.sagepub.com/home/das](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/das)



**Richard Buttny**

Syracuse University, USA

**Etsuko Kinefuchi**

University of North Carolina, USA

## Abstract

Given the fact that being vegan is generally considered odd or deviant from the mainstream norms of carnism, we examine how vegans manage such social positioning in their dealings with omnivores. This article employs a discursive analysis of vegans' narratives of problematic moments with omnivores and how they manage such situations and their identity. The vegans' narratives ranged from problem stories where some troublesome event occurred, but was not resolved, to solution stories of the best ways of dealing with meat eaters. In each case, being vegan is a social positioning that is problematized in various ways and a positioning that needs to be accounted for. The narrators give voice to themselves or others through the discursive practices of metadiscourse and reported speech in constructing the problem story. Vegans face the ideological dilemma in how to speak about their veganism as choice of diet, for environmental reasons or ethical considerations.

## Keywords

Discursive practices, ideological dilemma, omnivores, problem stories, vegan

Plant-based foods have become rapidly mainstreamed in the United States in recent years. Ninety five percent of US grocery stores now carry plant-based meat products (Forgrieve, 2018), and, according to the Plant-Based Foods Association (PBFA), the

---

## Corresponding author:

Richard Buttny, Communication & Rhetorical Studies, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244, USA.

Email: [rbuttny@syr.edu](mailto:rbuttny@syr.edu)

grocery store sales of plant-based foods have grown 11% in 2018, making the plant-based market a \$4.5 billion industry (Simon, 2019). This impressive growth, according to PBFA, is much driven by the sales of plant-based meat whose sales grew by 37% while the conventional meat sales grew just 2%. A new Gallup poll shows that four in 10 Americans have tried plant-based meats (McCarthy and Dekoster, 2020).

Despite the market trend, the vegetarian and vegan population remains staggeringly low. According to a Gallup poll (Reinhart, 2018), only 5% of US Americans report being vegetarian and 3% vegan, showing no change to the vegetarian population in the last 20 years and 1% increase in the vegan population since 2012. This statistical marginality makes the change in social norms difficult. In a college class discussion of Jonathan Safran Foer's polemical work, *Eating Animals*, vegan students reported that their abstaining from meat needed to be explained or defended while at the dinner table with family and friends. These vegans said they received comments, criticism or humorous jibes from omnivores. Their experience appears inconsistent with the growing presence of vegan and vegetarian options at stores and restaurants and assumed acceptance of veganism.

Veganism is a site of constant negotiation, and the experience of the vegan students above is not unique. Communication is where the negotiation takes place and ideas and practices, including veganism, are constructed. Yet, as Freeman (2015) observes, communication research remains largely anthropocentric and gives insufficient attention to such issues as meat-based diet and animal farming. Accounts of vegans' discursive practices while conversing with omnivores warrants attention because such conversations may be an opening for a productive dialogue about eating meat and the nascent vegan social movement, or alternatively their voices may be silenced by fear of hostile reactions. Foer (2009) called for better ways to talk about the ethical aspects of eating meat. Eating is, in part, a discursive act; 'the stories we tell ourselves and others shape our eating habits' (p. 8). Narratives offer an interesting site to consider Foer's call for better ways to talk about eating animals. Here, we examine *stories of confrontations with omnivores and how vegans manage such situations and their identity while interacting with omnivores*.

## Literature review

### *Hegemony of eating meat*

Given the staggeringly low percentages of vegans and vegetarians, eating meat is still a hegemonic practice and the mainstream media as an ideological apparatus play an important role in both upholding or challenging the hegemony. Until recently, the media largely naturalized meat-eating while stigmatizing veganism. For example, a 2007 study of UK newspapers found that these newspapers demonstrate 'vegaphobia' by portraying vegans as ascetics, faddists, sentimentalists or extremists and were ridiculed or presented as impossible to maintain in practice (Cole and Morgan, 2011). In the television program, *Gilmore Girls*, vegan and vegetarian characters were negatively portrayed while meat eaters were shown as sympathetic (Moore, 2014). This was widespread in popular culture; in other television shows such as *The Millers*, *How I Met Your Mother* and *Six Feet Under*, vegans were also consistently shown as fanatic, radical or odd. Popular magazines, newspapers and books that appear to be sympathetic to or even represent veganism

can unwittingly perpetuate ‘abnormality’ of those who do not eat meat as represented by, for example, vegan podcast and book, *Vegan Freaks* (Taylor, 2017). These mainstream media portrayals of veganism as extreme erase a space for considering its merit and remove it from any connection to animal rights or suffering. Instead, they help to shape a cultural context for omnivores to treat veganism as odd or obsessive and thereby protect mainstream meat-eating practices from ethical criticism.

Other studies, however, point to a growing trend of normalizing veganism. This can be partly explained by more positive portrayals of vegans in the media combined with the visibility of vegan celebrities (Doyle, 2016). In her longitudinal study of the representations of veganism in a UK newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, Lundahl (2018) found that the destigmatizing portrayals of veganism followed the articles portraying veganism as a celebrity fashion. A-list celebrities such as Beyoncé and Jennifer Lopez going on a vegan diet makes veganism trendy, which, in turn, makes veganism a positive kind of deviance from the norm that the public wants to follow. These changes can give rise to discursive strategies of ‘veganism as political consumerism’ (Jallinoja et al., 2018). Discursive strategies such as reimagining veganism as part of lifestyle as ‘cool’ or trendy, or politically advocating for farm animals.

Normalization of veganism is also aided by changes to the material conditions. In his interview study to find out the contributors to the recent growth of vegan practitioners in the UK, Twine (2018) discerned four material practices for the transition to and sustenance of vegan eating practices. This included material substitution (availability of vegan substitute foods), food creativity (experimenting with new vegan recipes and sharing with others), new food exploration (trying food that wasn’t consumed before transition) and taste transition (getting used to the new tastes as well as the availability of vegan foods reproducing the taste of animal products). Taste transition also extended to ‘demonstrative veganism’ or the practice of inviting non-vegan friends and family to taste vegan food through cooking for them in hope of destigmatizing veganism through sensual experience.

The availability of vegan-friendly material conditions along with mainstreaming of vegan foods in the marketplace and celebrity endorsement advertised through the media are promising signs for vegans. Yet, omnivores’ perceptions of vegans may not necessarily follow the trend. In the study of omnivores’ perceptions of vegetarians, Minson and Monin (2011) found that omnivores felt negatively about vegetarians and believed that vegetarians would look down on meat-eaters. Simply thinking about how vegetarians may see the morality of meat-eaters triggered negative response. If not outwardly negative, vegans experience marginalization from their omnivore friends and family because assumptions are made about your political standing on issues with moral implications (Greenebaum, 2012). In a more recent study, a sizable proportion of the vegans and vegetarians have been the targets of bias or discrimination as a result of their veganism or vegetarianism with vegans reporting more negative experiences than vegetarians (MacInnis and Hodson, 2017). Additionally, they found that the motivation matters; that is, the omnivores in the study most negatively evaluated vegans and vegetarians who are motivated by animal rights followed by environmental reasons and by personal health. These studies show that the popularity of veganism in the media and availability of vegan foods do not easily translate into social acceptance of veganism in the world still dominated by omnivores. Moreover, the import of morality in the omnivores’ perception

of veganism presents a problem for vegans, for animal ethics and animal rights are a driving motivation for many vegans. Clearly, if veganism is to be truly accepted by the culture, there has to be a room for the morality it represents to be recognized and discourses. At a minimum, vegans and non-vegans must be able to engage in a productive dialogue, a topic to which we now turn.

### *Conversations about eating meat: Why important?*

While there are ample studies that examine media representations and cultural perceptions of veganism, few studies examined what occurs in the communication between omnivores and vegans. Vegans' conversations with meat-eaters is a salient site for a communication study for a number of reasons. From an environmental perspective, meat and dairy production have dire environmental impact. The meat and dairy industries cause water pollution and use 83% of the planet's farmland and produce 60% of agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions (Carrington, 2018) or 14.5% to 18% of greenhouse gasses worldwide (Friedman et al., 2018, 25 January). Yet, public discourse of climate change gives marginal attention to animal agriculture as compared to other sectors such as transportation and electricity, disjoining eating meat from the serious environmental problems. Consequently, potentially productive conversation about the link between eating and the environment is thwarted.

Perhaps the most important reason, at least from many vegans' perspective, why conversations about eating meat deserves merit is animal ethics. In their comprehensive study of current and former vegetarians and vegans in the United States, The Humane Research Council (2014) found that health concerns and animal protection are top two reasons for people's transition to veganism or vegetarianism. As we saw above, while the health reasons are far more accepted by omnivores, animal ethics is not (MacInnis and Hodson, 2017). Yet, it comprises a core motivation for veganism. Seeing images of animal cruelty often serve as an 'epiphany experience' regarding the consumption of meat (Rodan and Mummery, 2016), and accordingly vegans mobilize animal welfare as the main rhetoric for persuading others to forgo meat (Freeman, 2013). However, there is a general reluctance in the public discourse to make room for it. Even animal rights organizations refrain from criticizing the 'heartless meat-eater' while lauding the 'thoughtful vegan' for prioritizing altruistic values (Freeman, 2013). Instead, they rely on the implicit subtext to consumers; 'now that you know about the problems with animal agribusiness, an ethical and rational person . . . will surely make the right choice and go vegan' (Freeman, 2013: 26). This reluctance of vegan advocacy organizations to call out the ethics of meat-eating gives a clue to the hegemonic status meat culture enjoys in society. Intentionally or unintentionally, the media also refrain from framing celebrity vegans in connection to animal ethics and largely represent veganism as a matter of health, fashion and depoliticized lifestyle (Lundahl, 2018). While many vegans see veganism as a personal and collective identity and tactics for social change closely tied to animal ethics (Freeman, 2015; Haenfler et al., 2012), the mainstream culture depoliticizes veganism by detaching it from animal welfare.

As a result, the dominant discourse of society erases animals from our lives (Cook, 2015; Stibbe, 2012) and obscures the reality of animal suffering (Moore, 2014). Our

language use reflects and perpetuates this erasure. In *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*, Joy (2010) observes the lack of word to name meat-eaters. 'Vegetarian' does not only describe a behavior (plant-eating), but an identity of a person who follows and advocates a set of principles grounded in a belief system that plant-based diet is appropriate and moral. In contrast, we do not have an equivalent term for meat-eaters and thus simply refer to them as 'meat eater' or most likely do not name at all. This lack of naming places eating meat outside a belief system and thus ethics, although it is as much a belief system as vegetarianism and veganism are. Joy names this belief system *carnism* to bring attention to the ethical, philosophical choice that is being made every time when meat is consumed. Yet this choice does not appear to be a choice at all because carnism is a naturalized *ideology*. It just the way it is. In addition to the lack of naming, naturalization of carnism is aided by categorical separation between 'animals' and 'meat' pervasive in modern culture (Cook and Ancarno, 2019). The separation allows meat-eaters to remain unreflexive about the fact that they are eating dead animals. Cook and Ancarno further observe the power of taste; taste functions as a dominant reason to justify carnism as a normal practice.

This ideology frames meat eating as ordinary or normative while forgoing meat as a choice considered odd or extreme (Andreatta, 2015; Greenebaum, 2012). This poses a challenge when vegans and meat-eaters share a meal. Commensality, or eating together, is such an important part of connecting and sharing with family and friends and participating in the culture. Given the dominant meat culture, vegans who speak up may be seen as 'killjoys at the table' (Twine, 2014). Precisely because being vegan or vegetarian is considered odd or extreme, it needs to be explained to omnivores, but vegans who discuss the reasons for abstaining from meat may be seen as threatening table fellowship and be considered awkward or extreme. Nonetheless, to take a stance as vegan 'means constant negotiations with family and friends about dietary and lifestyle choices, negotiations that cannot but raise broader issues about the status and use of animals for interlocutors' (Rodan and Mummery, 2016: 385). To avoid confrontation or conflict with family or friends, many vegans employ various 'impression-management strategies' to mitigate against potential hostile reactions (Greenebaum, 2012). Such strategies include waiting for others to ask them about their forgoing meat or leading by example. When asked about their abstaining from meat, vegans often focus on health benefits, rather than on the more critical aspects of animal cruelty or environmental impacts since that would implicate moral criticism of the meat eater. The ethical basis of veganism is consequently downplayed by vegans in order to avoid negative responses from meat eaters. Confrontation over eating animals was found to be ineffective and may lead to defensive reactions from omnivores. The term 'vegan' may even be replaced with alternative labels such as 'plant-based diet'. The ethical aspect of veganism is muted or reconfigured as an individual choice to a healthy diet and lifestyle. Vegans face an ideological dilemma of when and how to communicate their beliefs or ethical stance to omnivores (Billig, 1991).

## **Rationale, analytic perspective, method and methodology**

To study the social construction of being vegan in relation to omnivores, an interactive discourse analysis is used, more specifically discursive constructionism (Buttny, 2004). The focus of this approach is on participants' discursive practices in constructing a version

of events, that is, an account. Discursive analysis attempts to reveal the interactive moves and positionings that participants take in making claims about self, others or context. The focus is not only on the content of participants' claims, but also on how these claims are interactively constructed and, in turn, evaluated by others, and how this plays out. Discursive analysis looks at the interaction to see how participants understand, evaluate and respond to their interlocutor.

We combine discursive analysis with critical discourse analysis in order to examine participants' 'naturalized ideological representations' (Fairclough, 1985). This taken-for-granted, background knowledge shapes the orderliness of interactions and participants' feelings about how things should be. CDA directs analytical attention to the ways in which dominance in the form of naturalized ideology is enacted in discourse (van Dijk, 1995) and is experienced by the participants. It can also reveal what openings, if any, participants have in negotiating and even disrupting background knowledge. In this way, our analysis serves also as a form of applied linguistics where social problems are investigated through a close analysis of language use in discourse (Cook, 2003).

## *Methods*

To investigate the problems and challenges that arise in the discourse of vegan's experience of eating with omnivores, the dialogues held by two groups were examined. The first dialogue occurred among five undergraduate students from a university in the Northeast United States. They were given the five discussion questions listed below and asked to have a conversation and record that conversation. The instructor/researcher was not present. Another dialogue occurred between two vegan students at a university in the Southeast United States. They engage in a discussion using the same questions. The discussions lasted for nearly 1 hour. Six of the participants were female and one male; five were White and two African American. Six of the participants identified as vegan and one as vegetarian. In this context, there were no discernable differences between the vegetarian's discourse and that of the vegans. These conversations were audio-recorded and a transcript was drawn up of their stories of encounters with omnivores. Pseudonyms were used to mask the participants' identities. The recording and transcript are used to do a discursive analysis of their reconstruction of events in their narratives.

## *Discussion questions*

1. How do you identify yourself, as a vegetarian, vegan or something else? For how long have you been a vegetarian, vegan or something else?
2. What moved you to become a vegetarian, vegan or something else? Do you consider eating animals unhealthy? unsustainable? unethical?
3. When eating with meat eaters, has your not eating meat ever come up as a topic? Describe a specific instance of such a moment. Who initiated talk about not eating meat? How did you respond? How did others reply to your response? Is this exchange typical or the usual response you receive?
4. Do you inform others about vegetarianism or veganism? Do you spread the word? Are you a personal activist? A public activist? Why or why not?



## Narrative, metadiscourse and reported speech

In listening to these vegans, we noticed that they told several stories or narratives of their interaction with omnivores. Narratives of personal experience are an interesting kind of discourse in that the narrator reconstructs the key events of the vegan-omnivore encounter in a causal sequence to tell what happened (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). The narrator's point-of-view is constituted in how events are selected and articulated as well as the narrator's assessment of the events in the story. That is, the story has a point that the speaker means to convey about what happened. The vegans' narratives ranged from *problem stories* of where some troublesome event occurred which was not resolved to *solution stories* of the best ways of dealing with meat eaters. In each case, *being vegan is a social positioning that is problematized in various ways and a positioning that needs to be accounted for*.

Given that these stories all dealt with some problematic aspect of conversing with omnivores, we want to examine these vegans' discursive reasoning and how they interactionally construct the meanings of these conversations. Our analysis draws on two key notions from discourse analysis, *metadiscourse* and *reported speech*, to better understand their narratives. At times participants refer to their own or others' talk. This reflexive practice of *talking about talk* has been called 'metadiscourse' (Craig, 2005). *Metadiscourse* is a discursive practice that allows us to see how participants characterize or evaluate their own or others' talk. Metadiscourse allows one to notice or comment on some feature of the interaction as good or bad, problematic, ironic and the like. This noticing or assessment of talk functions as a form of accounting – as criticizing, blaming, justifying or explaining the event in question. Most of the time in conversation we refer to people or objects in the world, but at times, we refer to the talk itself that is being used. For instance, one may refer to an interlocutor's talk as a 'debate' or as 'ranting' or as 'lash(ing) out'. Metadiscourse is an interesting reflexive activity in that it is a way of labeling how one sees what one is doing in and through their talk.

In recounting a story, narrators often convey what others, or what they themselves, have said. This telling of 'what was said' is one of the main ways we socially interact. Speaking is a performative activity, a doing things with words. Telling what was said often is the key moment in reconstructing an event in a narrative. These tellings of what was said can take the form of direct or indirect speech. *Direct speech* purportedly quotes or captures the wording of what was said. *Indirect speech* conveys the content of what someone said, rather than their exact words. Direct or indirect speech are types of *reported speech* (Coulmas, 1986); the speaker reports what was said directly or indirectly. An example of direct speech (indicated by quotation marks): . . . *when I first met her 'I'm vegan just to let you know but I'm not going to force it on you'*. An indirect speech manner of saying this would be (indicated by quotation marks): *when I first met her I told her that 'I was vegan but that I wouldn't force it on her'*. Reporting one's own or another's speech is a way of actively voicing the actors in the narrative. Reported speech is a 'double-voice discourse' (Bakhtin, 1981); double-voiced in that one is using some prior discourse for one's own discursive purposes now.

In addition to direct and indirect speech, there are other ways of reporting speech and giving voice to the actors in a narrative. A narrator may attribute speech, not to a particular individual, but to a group or an aggregate of people, what has been called *choral*



*speech* (Mayes, 1990: 333) in that there is a kind of chorus represented as speaking. For instance, attributing speech to a group of friends' remarks at dinner, '*they'll be like "Why are you eating so little?"*'

Another format is where a narrator gives voice, not to what was actually said, but to what *would* have or *should* have or *could* have been said, known as *hypothetical speech* (Myers, 1999). For example, '*once somebody feels like you're saying that "they're making a bad choice."*' This phrase, '*they're making a bad choice*', is hypothetical in that it was not actually said, but could have or should have been said.

These various forms of reported speech – direct speech, indirect speech, choral speech and hypothetical speech – are discursive practices used in constructing a narrative. Typically reported speech comes at a key point in the narrative, since these discursive practices allow the speaker to zoom in to the details of the event and present a closer look at the actor's speech actions. Reported speech allows the narrator to show rather than tell what happened, and thereby make the story more involving for recipients in that they can see it for themselves (Tannen, 1989).

Discursive analysis allows us to drill down further than traditional social science interview or coding and reveal in greater detail the discursive practices of how events are reconstructed through narratives. Due to our granular approach of examining transcripts of problem stories, discursive analysis sacrifices a large sample size for an in-depth look at participants' discursive practices, their language use in action. As such, discursive analysis is useful as *a method of discovery* of these participants' constructions of problems with omnivores.

In the following discursive analysis, we examine the metadiscourse and the different types of reported speech to better understand how these problem stories get interactionally constructed. These forms of voicing within participants' narratives gives us a nuanced view of these vegans' discursive reasoning.

## Vegan narratives

### Problem stories

One story that participants told was of omnivores noticing and questioning their not eating meat. This being singled out by others is presented as a problematic aspect of their dealings with omnivores. For instance, the following narratives are offered of others' 'comments' about the teller refraining from meat eating. (Note: the reported speech is marked in the transcript by quotation marks).

#1(friends' comments)

- 1 Jessica: I feel its like more people our age who have, not a problem, but have comments about
- 2 it but if I go to dinner with my friends or something and I don't want like a whole meat
- 3 thing they'll be like 'Why are you eating so little?' but it's not little it's just like pasta

- 4           than meat  
 5   Amanda: Or they make comments and make everything into like ‘vegan or not vegan’ and  
 6           they’ll be like ‘Oh what are you eating? Is that vegan?’ and I’m like ‘I can eat a salad and  
 7           it doesn’t have to be vegan, you eat salads too and eat things that are vegan all the time  
 8           but you just don’t know it’

In each of these brief stories, friends’ ‘comments’ are cited as calling attention to the teller’s food choices through their queries (line 3 and line 6). This identifying friends’ talk by the word ‘comments’ is an instance of metadiscourse. The term, ‘comments’, has a seeming neutral tone, but here in this context ‘comments’ takes on a somewhat negative valence for these vegans. Negative is that it is something noticed and topicalized as out of the ordinary. Also, both narrators offer an account to correct their friends’ assumptions. Amanda uses Jessica’s term ‘comments’ and then expands upon it by the metadiscursive description of their comments, ‘they . . . make everything into like vegan or not vegan’ (line 5).

In this excerpt, there are three instances of quoting others’ comments using choral speech to epitomize what their friends said (line 3, 5 and 6). These comments are presented as attributed to ‘people our age’ (line 1), ‘my friends’ (line 2) or ‘they’ (lines 5–6). Further, their friends’ comments implicate the view that refraining from meat is something out of the ordinary or not normative, and by implication, needs to be explained. Each narrator tells of the account they offered to defend their eating preferences. It is not clear whether Jessica’s response, ‘it’s not little it’s just like pasta than meat’ (lines 3–4), is her direct reported speech from that past time of eating with friends, or her present assessment now. In any case, her friends’ questioning appears to be based on the cultural assumption that meat is necessary for a complete meal. Amanda apparently does not like her vegan identity being raised about her food choices. These complaints reflect what they perceive as the microaggressions for being vegan, such that both Jessica and Amanda recall these instances and present them as problematic.

In each of these narratives, the teller is seemingly the only vegan among a group of omnivores. Their joint telling of problem with omnivores’ comments allows these vegans to support their critical stance. In other words, there is a social function to these complaint stories to reaffirm their vegan identity.

Another more explicit kind of problem story about being vegan occurs later when Emily recounts her father’s conversation at work. In response, Ashley and Jessica report similar brief stories of their own.

## #2 (Dad & people at work 21:40)

- 1   Emily:    When my dad, I don’t know why he told people at his work, but he told a few people at  
 2           his work that I was vegan and then a bunch of them were apologizing like ‘I’m so sorry’  
 3   Ashley:   Yeah that’s so interesting it’s happened to me already its happened to me five times  
 4   Emily:    ‘Oh it’s so unfortunate that your daughter’s vegan’  
 5   Jessica:   It’s happened to me in that way and its happened to me people get meat at the table  
 6           like ‘Oh I’m sorry’  
 7   Amanda:   Then it’s like awkward

Here Emily's problem story involves people at her father's workplace 'apologizing', or more precisely, sympathizing or commiserating with him for his daughter being vegan. She actively voices their concern using the hypothetical choral speech of what they might have said, 'I'm so sorry' (line 2). It is of course unlikely that each of these people at her father's work uttered exactly these words, but this choral speech serves to epitomize what Emily takes to be their sentiment. A moment later Emily imagines more explicitly what people at her father's work said by using hypothetical speech 'Oh it's so unfortunate that your daughter's vegan' (line 4). This hypothetical speech amplifies their negative assessment of veganism. By ramping up her father's colleagues assessment, Emily both presents it as a problem while at the same time ridiculing it through their exaggerated performance.

In response, Jessica and Ashley offer brief accounts of similar responses from others about their being vegan. Jessica uses choral speech, 'Oh I'm sorry' (line 6), to report what omnivores at the table said to her. Presumably what is implicated here by this use of 'sorry' is that Jessica's table mates get to eat tasty meat while she does not. They appear to be sympathizing with her for her abstaining from meat.

These narratives of others commiserating or sympathizing implicates that the narrator recognizes that others see being vegan as in some sense deviant. Amanda's assessment of Emily's or Jessica's stories, 'Then it's like awkward' (line 7), indicates the unresolved problem or dilemma. Again we see these vegans not wanting their food choices to be noticed and singled out, let alone being the object of sympathy.

Another kind of problem story involves vegans wanting to talk about the treatment of animals but not wanting it to be seen as criticizing omnivores. In the following, we can see the ideological dilemma that a vegan faces of wanting to express her views on animal welfare but not wanting to offend others or be seen as being critical of them.

### #3 (Mom 12:16)

- 1 Emily: there's been a few times where my Mom if I start, if my parents feel like I'm criticizing
- 2 them . . . when I talk about eating meat if they feel criticized, even if I'm not criticizing
- 3 them, I'm just talking about it they feel criticized I've noticed that my Mom lashes out,
- 4 . . . when I start talking about these things my parents feel slightly attacked then she
- 5 always pulls the card 'Well your father working in dairy is what made it possible for you
- 6 to go to school and learn these things' and it's far and few these aren't this doesn't
- 7 happen very often but 'You wouldn't be where you are today if it wasn't for him working
- 8 at this dairy and providing' like 'him hunting fed you' and I always say 'Okay I
- 9 acquired new information I ingest it I learned something'
- 10 Ashley: That's what I was talking about a lot with this the conversation about eating animals
- 11 . . . once somebody feels like you're saying that 'they're making a bad choice' or
- 12 'they're hurting the animals' or 'you're making a better choice than them' . . . it doesn't
- 13 make you feel good about yourself it doesn't if you know what's goes on how does it
- 14 make you feel you go straight to justifying it

Emily's problem story is of being misunderstood by her parents in her talk about eating meat. Emily uses metadiscourse to describe her parents' misreading her intent, her parents 'feel criticized' (lines 1–2), even though she avows that she is not criticizing them (lines 2–3), she is just talking generally about the problems of eating meat (line 3). She further uses metadiscourse to characterize her Mom, 'lashes out' (line 3) or 'always pulls the card' (line 5), thereby presenting her Mom's response as defensive or argumentative. Emily uses direct reported speech of her Mom to show her Mom's explanation for their past treatment of animals (lines 5–8). The fact that her Mom's response defends or justifies her father's actions implicates that Emily's 'just talking about it' was heard by her Mom as being critical of them. Vegans face the dilemma of how to talk about the treatment of animals without being heard as being critical of omnivores.

Emily concludes her problem story by conveying her response to her Mom's implicit criticism, 'I always say, "Okay I acquired new information I ingest it I learned something"' (lines 8–9). Emily's reported speech here can be heard as her justifying her critique of animal suffering.

In response to Emily's problem story, Ashley formulates a kind of moral lesson to be taken from it. Ashley imagines the situation of a vegan speaking to an omnivore using hypothetical speech to characterize the vegan's critical stance: 'they're making a bad choice' or 'they're hurting the animals' or 'you're making a better choice than them' (lines 11–12). These instances of hypothetical speech from a prototypical radical vegan are heard as being judgmental and, she supposes, will be taken by omnivores as criticism. Such judgment or criticism will likely be ineffective since the omnivore will likely feel bad and attempt to justify their eating meat. So in this exchange Ashley and Emily appear to disagree on the wisdom of critiquing those who eat animals. Such disagreement can be a useful way of testing one's discursive reasoning.

A vegan may fear that others see them as too radical. In the following, Emily's narrative displays this recognition of anticipating others' negative response to her veganism.

#### #4 (it sucked)

- 1 Emily: I also don't like though in the same sense that when I met my current roommate when I
- 2 first met her 'I'm vegan just to let you know but I'm not going to force it on you' I had
- 3 to clarify it for her 'I'm not going to judge you' but it sucked that I had to do that she
- 4 ended being vegetarian anyways so it worked out she's 'Oh no you're fine'

Here Emily uses direct reported speech of her first meeting her roommate to illustrate her anticipation of a negative reaction to her being a vegan. She disclaims any vegan radicalism to her roommate 'I'm not going to force it on you' (line 2) and 'I'm not going to judge you' (line 3). Interestingly, she imagines that a vegan may be seen as *forcing* and *judging* others. These disclaimers reflect her anticipation of how vegans are generally perceived by omnivores. In both except 3 and 4, Emily presents vegan dilemmas and bemoans how vegans are generally perceived.

Looking at these problem stories, in the first two excerpts, the problem of the narrative is initiated by omnivores discussing the vegan's food choice, while the third and fourth story is structured with the vegan being seen as judging or criticizing the meat eater. These stories have a problem-response structure to them. In each case, the problem is initiated because the statement is heard as evaluating another's food choices.

Another type of difficulty vegans face is that omnivores are just not moved by the ethical, environmental or health aspects of eating animals. In the following, Jake and Sandy recount their frustration in talking to omnivores and the resistance they face.

#5 [25:15]

- 1     Jake:     People close to me, every now and then ask 'Yeah, what you are doing is a good thing, a  
2               positive thing, but I'm not about to give up my steak.' You know, so that's pretty much it  
3               always ends, every conversation.
- 4     Sandy:    I think that's a society thing. That's more of the norm in our society than those of us  
5               who don't. They are right. We are the odd ball. 'You are welcome to be that, but we are  
6               put here to eat meat.' And that is the usual answer I get back from people when I say to  
7               people 'What you get from eating hamburger is what I'm eating here. Why did you have  
8               to eat a hamburger? There is this grain, rice, and vegetables?' 'Well, I like hamburgers.'  
9               'Okay, I like this. I used to like hamburgers, too. But then you realize the whole  
10              processes and how animals are treated, how health is impacted, why did you need to eat  
11              it? There is nothing in that hamburger that you would die if you didn't eat it, so why?'

Here both Jake and Sandy use reported speech to epitomize their family and friends' answer to veganism – the desire to eat meat. Jake's reported speech represents omnivores as recognizing that not eating meat is 'a good thing, a positive thing' (lines 2–3), but apparently not good enough to move them to forsake their steak. As Jake puts it using metadiscourse, 'that's pretty much it always ends, every conversation' (lines 3–4). This raises the interesting question of how a conversation about a topic of ethical import may come to an end without being given a meaningful engagement. Animal welfare is important for vegans, but it does not raise enough moral concern for omnivores to move them to not eat meat.

Sandy also uses choral speech to reconstruct 'the usual answer' she receives from omnivores for continuing to eat meat (lines 6–7). Interesting how she represents the typical omnivore reply to veganism, 'You are welcome to be that, but we are put here to eat meat'. She goes on to construct the kind of dialogue she has with omnivores. The point of contention is over the omnivore's liking meat and inherent entitlement rather than seeing the issue as about animal cruelty. A key feature of the omnivores positioning is the discourse of individual choice.

## Problem-solution stories

Some of the vegan stories told of successfully managing the dilemma or problematic aspects of interacting with omnivores. For instance, in the following brief narrative we

see Samantha's direct reported speech conveying a solution to the problem of not eating turkey at Thanksgiving Day dinner (line 2).

#6 (Thanksgiving 21:00)

- 1 Samantha: Or even like Thanksgiving when I went over to his grandmother's house I was just
- 2 like 'give me the sides' and it's like if you make it approachable then they'll ask you
- 3 questions about it
- 4 Jessica: I agree it doesn't have to be a whole drama you can just do your thing

This seemingly simple solution Samantha shows by reporting her utterance to her boyfriend's grandmother. She then uses metadiscourse to formulate her social positioning, 'if you make it approachable then they'll ask you questions about it' (lines 2–3). Being 'approachable' is presumably refraining from criticizing or preaching about the health, environmental or ethical aspects of meat eating.

Jessica shows support for this solution by using metadiscourse to draw the contrast, 'a whole drama' and 'just do your thing' (line 4). The 'whole drama' here presumably meaning having an argument about eating meat or perhaps the omnivore host needing to prepare a vegan option. More broadly in the US, Thanksgiving dinners have been characterized of late as potential sites for disagreement or argument as distant relatives or acquaintances gather in the present polarized political climate. Jessica's solution, 'just do your thing', suggests that veganism is merely an individual choice we all make about eating, rather than part of a social movement for animal welfare.

Kayiah's solution to the vegan dilemma is waiting to be asked about being vegan. This tact is consistent with the impression management strategy of waiting for an 'appropriate time' to talk vegan (Greenebaum, 2012). By allowing others to raise the topic gives a vegan some options in what to talk about in reply: the health aspects, the environmental impacts or even the ethical, animal welfare aspects. This passive approach may also avoid the potential of being labeled as being judgmental or aggressive but its very passiveness can be a problem because one may not be asked about one's forgoing meat.

Another solution story is presented below where the narrator tells of observing her brother's veganism and how it led to her personal change.

#7 (Food is so personal)

- 1 Amanda: I think the best approach that I've seen is just leading by example and informing
- 2 people when they want it for instance my brother he never shouted anyone down and
- 3 was just this quiet humble man doing what he believed in and I made fun of him I didn't
- 4 really eat meat but I was like 'Vegan ha ha' I wasn't ready for that I don't know food is
- 5 so personal that you cannot force someone to do something with food that is their own
- 6 journey I got to it on my own. All you can do is suggest and have people look at you like
- 7 my friends back home I never tried to push it in their face but right now they're
- 8 vegetarian they asked me 'how to make almond milk'

Amanda uses metadiscourse to describe her brother's restraint, 'he never shouted anyone down' (line 2), and his demeanor, 'this quiet humble man doing what he believed in' (line 3). She presents her brother's social positioning as a kind of solution to the vegan dilemma. She uses metadiscourse to describe her initial reaction, 'I made fun of him' (line 3), along with direct reported speech 'I was like "Vegan ha ha"' (line 4). But then she herself became vegan. The point of her narrative being that she changed in part due to her brother's example and that vegans should 'lead by example and inform people when they want it' (lines 1–2). She explains with the contrast, 'food is so personal that you cannot force someone' (lines 4–5). Her account here, 'you cannot force someone', implicates the assumption that vegans want to change omnivores.

She goes on to offer another brief narrative of her own leading by example with friends from back home who have become vegetarian. She uses metadiscourse, 'push it in their face', to contrast to leading by example. So she sees the leading by example as preferable to the radical vegan style of 'shouting down', 'forcing someone' or 'pushing it in their face'. This leading-by-example solution to the vegan dilemma is also found as an impression management strategy in Greenebaum (2012). The solutions offered in excerpt 4 and 5 rely upon others to inquire about veganism before talking about the various aspects of veganism.

Other solutions to the vegan dilemma are offered. In the following excerpt, two ways of communicating are considered – gain trust and avoid extremism.

#### #8 (extremists)

- 1 Jessica: That's like when we talked about *Omnivore's Dilemma* you have to gain their trust
- 2 before you can even try
- 3 Ashley: Or maybe not even try at all just show them that there are people who are not judging
- 4 them that are making that choice because a lot of people, same things like feminism, the
- 5 extremists are the ones that always stands out people that are vegetarian like 'You
- 6 shouldn't eat meat, you're this or that' or like 'Be feminist because of this or that' it's
- 7 like those are the people that always stand out to everybody else so just to show that
- 8 there's no judgement

Jessica references a prior class discussion by using the choral speech, 'when we talked about *Omnivore's Dilemma*', to support her view for the need to 'gain trust' as a precondition for discussing veganism. Her raising the notion of needing to gain someone's trust implicates that veganism can be a sensitive topic. Sensitive in that veganism carries an implicit environmental and ethical critique of ordinary eating patterns.

Ashley counters this tact of gaining trust as a precondition to talk veganism to showing omnivores that you're not 'judging' them. She argues that some vegans are seen as too radical or extreme, like some feminists. She uses hypothetical speech to epitomize the extreme vegan, 'You shouldn't eat meat, you're this or that' (lines 5–6). In other words, Ashley wants to avoid 'stand(ing) out', 'judging' or being an 'extremist'. This is similar to excerpt #7 where the radical vegan was characterized by the metadiscourse:



‘shouting down’, ‘forcing someone’ or ‘pushing it in their face’. Again we see an attempt to normalize being vegan by being circumspect and refraining from judging omnivores.

An underlying assumption in these different vegan solution stories is the notion of individual choice and the desire to avoid being seen as radical. Individual choice or the freedom to choose is such a fundamental value in mainstream US American culture. At the same time, the actions and the views that question hegemony are labeled as extreme. So these vegans feel constrained in what they can say even though they may feel that eating animals is morally wrong or environmentally problematic. A safe way for vegans to present themselves to omnivores as based on their individual choice.

## Discussion

As seen in their narratives, these vegans realize that they are in a minority and their abstaining from meat goes against the current of the mainstream meat culture. All of their narratives were problem stories, though some also contained solutions. These vegans told stories of awkward moments of eating with omnivores, recognizing that their vegan identity is stigmatized, or of unintentionally making them defensive. Their responses to these problems varied from continuing to speak out on vegan matters, to waiting to be asked about being vegan, or to leading by example. These vegans face the ideological dilemma on how to frame their abstaining from meat similar to the ideological dilemma that vegetarians faced in an online discussion with omnivores (Wilson et al., 2004). The results from our study are consistent with Greenebaum’s (2012) findings of vegan attempts to manage impressions and use of face-saving strategies. The contribution from our study comes from a more detailed discursive analysis of the vegans’ practices in dealing with the dilemma. Our discursive analysis serves as a form of applied linguistics (Cook, 2003) to reveal how these vegans negotiate their position and identity in the world of naturalized carnism.

In her autoethnography, Andreatta (2015) concludes that being a vegan ‘implies the constant possibility of confrontation with others, because giving up animal products supposes, for instance, not sharing the meal that others, who often are our loved ones, are eating at the same table’ (Andreatta, 2015: 485). Our study showed how this confrontation is interactionally managed or negotiated in discourse. The vegans’ narratives give voice to themselves and others by metadiscourse or reported speech in constructing the problem narratives. For instance, the recognition of *vegan as stigmatized* is shown through Emily’s father’s colleagues apologizing (excerpt #2), or Amanda making fun of her vegan brother (excerpt #7). While the media may represent celebrity vegans as a fad or a positive deviance to be emulated (Lundahl, 2018), this media discourse does not easily transfer to social interactions. The narratives of the *vegan as critic*, such as Emily’s ‘ranting’ and making her Mom defensive (excerpt #3), illustrated how their vegan identity became noticed or commented on by omnivores (excerpt #1 and #2). Their stories showed that they recognized their problematized status as, for instance, where Emily feels it necessary to announce to her new roommate that she is vegan (excerpt #4). To talk about vegan matters is recognized as a potentially sensitive topic that may require trust in order to do so. This suggests the presence of the question of morality that contextualizes vegan-omnivore interactions. As previous research showed, omnivores recognize veganism as a moral

stance and a criticism of them, thus makes them defensive (Greenebaum, 2012; MacInnis and Hodson, 2017; Minson and Monin, 2011). Animal ethics constituted a core part of identity for many vegans (Freeman, 2015; Haenfler et al., 2012; Rodan and Mummery, 2016), but the dominant society silences this ethics (Cook, 2015; Moore, 2014; Stibbe, 2012). As the problem-solution stories illustrate, the vegans in our study dealt with their relational tension with omnivores by silencing this ethics as well.

These vegans are not only telling problem or problem-solution stories together, they are also confirming or qualifying a fellow vegan's complaints or even disagreeing with their interlocutor's stance. This confirming or qualifying response works as a social support or social testing function as participants discuss self-presentation strategies in dealing with omnivores.

To avoid being perceived as a 'killjoy' (Twine, 2014), these vegans took special care not to appear extreme or critical in the presence of omnivores. They performed their vegan identity in these social situations as more of a personal choice. We must see the discursive strategies that the vegans employed as situated in this larger social discourse of hegemonic carnism. The normative social discourse about veganism creates what Deetz (1992) calls discursive closure, so that open exploration of the subject is blocked and thus understanding is circumvented. While the desire of the vegans to avoid the stigma of marginalization is understandable, the discursive tact they employed by focusing on veganism as a matter of individual food choice circumvents the discussion about larger structural issues. Foer (2009) questions Pollan's (2006) call for table fellowship or commensality since it comes at the cost of maintaining the dominant ideology of carnism. For Foer, veganism needs to be a social movement, not just an individual's diet. That is why Foer called for better ways to talk about eating animals. At minimum, as critical animal studies point out, we need to take seriously other animals as living beings in their own right (Andreatta, 2015) and what eating animals – sentient beings – means to us humans. In addition to animal ethics and animal rights, there are other structural issues (e.g. meat-eating as an essential part of the food pyramid and the substantial lobbying by the meat and dairy industries to normalize it) that get bypassed by the discourse focusing on individual choice and maintaining table fellowship.

To seek an acceptance in the culture of carnism, the vegans in our study are forced to (or choose to) silence the very ethics that drove them to become vegan. Where is the room for this silenced voice? How can the discursive closure be interrupted? Our discursive analysis does not suggest a blanket claim about the social discursive landscape, but, as a method of discovering potentially important stories, it suggests a need for entertaining discursive openings in the landscape so the question of eating meat or not eating meat is not relegated to individual diet.

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to thank Guy Cook for his thoughtful comments on our paper.

## **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

## References

- Andreatta MM (2015) Being a vegan: A performative autoethnography. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 15(6): 477–486.
- Bakhtin MM (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Billig M (1991) *Ideology and Opinions: Studies in Rhetorical Psychology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Buttny R (2004) *Talking Problems: Studies of Discursive Constructionism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Carrington D (2018) Avoiding meat and dairy is ‘single biggest way’ to reduce your impact on Earth. *The Guardian*, 31 May. Available at: [https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/31/avoiding-meat-and-dairy-is-single-biggest-way-to-reduce-your-impact-on-earth?CMP=twl\\_a-environment\\_b-gdneco](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/31/avoiding-meat-and-dairy-is-single-biggest-way-to-reduce-your-impact-on-earth?CMP=twl_a-environment_b-gdneco) February 17, 2020
- Cole M and Morgan K (2011) Vegaphobia: Derogatory discourses of veganism and the reproduction of speciesism in UK national newspapers. *British Journal of Sociology* 62(1): 134–153.
- Cook G (2003) *Applied Linguistics*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cook G (2015) ‘A pig is a person’ or ‘You can love a fox & hunt it’: Innovation & tradition in the discursive representation of animals. *Discourse & Society* 26(5): 587–607.
- Cook G and Ancarno C (2019) ‘I do still love the taste’: Taste as a reason or eating non-human animals. *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. Epub ahead of print 7 February 2019. DOI: 10.1093/isle/isy098.
- Coulmas F (1986) Reported speech: Some general issues. In: Coulmas F (ed.) *Direct and Indirect Speech*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 1–28.
- Craig RT (2005) How we talk about how we talk: Communication theory in the public interest. *Journal of Communication* 55(4): 659–667.
- Deetz SA (1992) *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Doyle J (2016) Celebrity vegans and the lifestyling of ethical consumption. *Environmental Communication* 10(6): 777–790.
- Fairclough NL (1985) Critical and descriptive goals in discourse analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9(6): 739–763.
- Foer JS (2009) *Eating Animals*. New York: Back Bay Books.
- Forgrieve J (2018) Growing acceptance of veganism. *Forbes*, 2 November. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janetforgrieve/2018/11/02/picturing-a-kindler-gentler-world-vegan-month/#4b9da9c42f2b> July 30, 2020
- Freeman CP (2013) Stepping up to the plate: Framing veganism as living your values. In: Plec E (ed.) *Perspectives on Human–Animal Communication: Internatural Communication*. New York: Routledge.
- Freeman CP (2015) *Framing Farming: Communication Strategies for Animal Rights*. New York: Rodopi.
- Friedman L, Pierre-Louise K and Sengupta S (2018) The meat question, by the number. *New York Times*, 25 January. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/climate/cows-global-warming.html> July 30, 2020
- Greenebaum JB (2012) Managing impressions: ‘Face-saving’ strategies of vegetarians and vegans. *Humanity & Society* 36(4): 309–325.

- Haenfler R, Johnson B and Jones E (2012) Lifestyle movements: Exploring the intersection of lifestyle and social movements. *Social Movement Studies* 11(1): 1–20.
- Humane Research Council (2014) *Study of Current and Former Vegetarians and Vegans*. Olympia: The Humane Research Council. Available at: [https://faunalytics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Faunalytics\\_Current-Former-Vegetarians\\_Full-Report.pdf](https://faunalytics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Faunalytics_Current-Former-Vegetarians_Full-Report.pdf) February 1, 2020
- Jallinoja P, Vinnari M and Niva M (2018) Veganism and plant-based eating: Analysis of interplay between discursive strategies and lifestyle political consumerism. In: Boström M, Micheletti M and Oosterveer P (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Consumerism*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 157–179.
- Jorgensen B (2015) To meat or not to meat? An analysis of on-line vegetarian persuasive rhetoric. *Poroi* 11(1): 1–19.
- Joy M (2010) *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press.
- Labov W and Waletzky J (1967) Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In: Helm J (ed.) *Essays of the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, pp. 12–44.
- Lundahl O (2018) Dynamics of positive deviance in destigmatisation: Celebrities and the media in the rise of veganism. *Consumption Markets & Culture*. 23(3): 241–271.
- MacInnis CC and Hodson G (2017) It ain't easy eating greens: Evidence of bias toward vegetarians and vegans from both source and target. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 20(6): 721–744.
- Mayes P (1990) Quotation in spoken English. *Studies in Language* 14(2): 325–363.
- McCarthy J and Dekoster S (2020) Four in 10 Americans have eaten plant-based meats. *Gallup*, 28 January. Available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/282989/four-americans-eaten-plant-based-meats.aspx> February 1, 2020
- Minson JA and Monin B (2011) Do-gooder derogation: Disparaging morally motivated minorities to defuse anticipated reproach. *Social Psychology and Personal Sciences* 3(2): 200–207.
- Moore AR (2014) That could be me: Identity and identification in discourses about food, meat, and animal welfare. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences* 9: 59–91.
- Myers G (1999) Unspoken speech: Hypothetical reported speech and rhetoric of everyday talk. *Text* 19(4): 571–590.
- Pollan M (2006) *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Natural History of Four Meals*. London: Penguin Books.
- Reinhart RJ (2018) Snapshot: Few Americans vegetarian or vegan. *Gallup*, 1 August. Available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/238328/snapshot-few-americans-vegetarian-vegan.aspx> (accessed 17 February 2019).
- Rodan D and Mummery J (2016) Doing animal welfare activism everyday: Questions of identity. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 30(4): 381–396.
- Simon M (2019) U.S. plant-based retail market worth \$4.5 billion, growing at 5X total food sales. *Plant Based Foods Association*, 12 July. Available at: <https://plantbasedfoods.org/2019-data-plant-based-market/January 31, 2020>
- Stibbe A (2012) *Animals Erased: Discourse, Ecology, and Reconnection with the Natural World*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Tannen D (1989) *Talking Voices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor S (2017) *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*. New York: The New Press.
- Twine R (2014) Vegan Killjoys at the table – Contesting happiness and negotiating relationships with food practices. *Societies* 4(4): 623–639.
- Twine R (2018) Materially constituting a sustainable food transition: The case of vegan eating practice. *Sociology* 52(1): 166–181.
- van Dijk T (1995) Aims of critical discourse analysis. *Japanese Discourse* 1(1): 17–27.

Wilson MS, Weatherall A and Butler C (2004) A rhetorical approach to discussions about health and vegetarianism. *Journal of Health Psychology* 9(4): 567–581.

### **Author biographies**

Richard Buttny is a Professor of Communication & Rhetorical Studies at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York. His research interests are in environmental communication, discourse analysis, and intercultural communication.

Etsuko Kinefuchi is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies and affiliated faculty in the Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her research investigates the relationship between the environment, culture, and identity and how communication shapes the ways the relationship is understood and enacted.