



## The sexual politics of veggies: Beyoncé's "commodity veg\*ism"

Ella Fegitz & Daniela Pirani

To cite this article: Ella Fegitz & Daniela Pirani (2017): The sexual politics of veggies: Beyoncé's "commodity veg\*ism", *Feminist Media Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/14680777.2017.1358200](https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2017.1358200)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2017.1358200>



Published online: 17 Aug 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 212



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



## The sexual politics of veggies: Beyoncé's "commodity veg\*ism"

Ella Fegitz<sup>a</sup> and Daniela Pirani<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Media and Communication, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK; <sup>b</sup>Management Department, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK

### ABSTRACT

This article explores the way vegan and vegetarian diets have been articulated within neo-liberal post-feminist culture. While these diets have an important role for vegetarian eco-feminists, as signs of resistance against the patriarchal and capitalist exploitative system, in post-feminism they have become sexy and business oriented. This shift is analyzed through the case study of Beyoncé's involvement with the commercial enterprise "22 days," a dietary regime that involves the elimination of any animal product for 22 days. Our argument is that while eco-feminists have embraced vegetarian and vegan regimes as ethical and political choices, post-feminism depoliticizes and deradicalizes them. In this way, they become part of an individualistic project that emphasizes empowerment and meritocracy; choice, agency, and responsabilization; and the focus on a healthy, sexy body. Ultimately, the post-feminist articulation of vegan diets promotes a form of "commodity veg\*ism," that is not only devoid of any critical force, but also reproduces existing patterns of discrimination and inequality. We use the term veg\*ism to indicate the fluid uptake of vegan and vegetarian diets, whereby the avoidance of animal products relies more on an individual than on ethical and/or political choice.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 11 June 2016  
Revised 17 April 2017  
Accepted 20 April 2017

### KEYWORDS

Food; gender; post-feminism; commodity veg\*ism; eco-feminism

### Introduction

Choosing to adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet can be motivated by several concerns: animal welfare and treatment, the environment, health issues, as well as unequal power relations and capitalism. Some strands of the feminist movement have conceptualized veg\*an diets as ethical choices that resist patriarchal, capitalist, white culture. However, in the past 10 years we have witnessed a noteworthy shift in mainstream media representations of veg\*an diets: vegetables have become sexy. PETA's advertisement campaigns are among several recent examples, including *Sexy Vegan Cookbook* by L. Brian Patton (2012), and, most importantly for this paper, the pop singer Beyoncé's endorsement of a vegan diet. While traditionally vegetables have been associated with femininity, sexual abstinence, and frigidity, in the examples above this association has been challenged: vegetarian and vegan diets have become associated with eroticized images of women and sexual prowess.<sup>1</sup>

This article explores this shift by focusing on the media spectacle of Beyoncé's connection with the "22 days diet," often referred to as "The Beyoncé Diet" in popular media (such as in the articles by Michele Persad [2015], Kate Winick [2015], Laura Mitchell [2015], and Emma Firth [2015]) due to the pop-star's endorsement. The diet, created by Paul Borges, Beyoncé's personal trainer, involves adopting a vegan diet for at least 22 days, stressing the health benefits and weight loss that it can bring. Focusing our analysis on Beyoncé originates from her centrality in debates about post-feminist culture, the "media spectacle" (Douglas Kellner 2003) that was created around her weight-loss attributed to a vegan diet, and her enormous popularity.

Through the analysis of the discursive production of Beyoncé's endorsement of a vegan diet, we argue that the availability of a discourse of "vegetables as sexy" in popular culture resides in its connection with post-feminism. The term "post-feminism" has been used by Angela McRobbie (2004, 2009) and Rosalind Gill (2007b, 2008) to indicate the way mainstream culture has employed some of the vocabulary and concerns of the feminist movement, but has twisted them in such a way as to support an individual ethic of success, rather than political engagement against gender and other inequalities. Although the connection between veganism and sexuality has already been claimed by vegansexual culture, post-feminist culture articulates it differently: rather than an ethical choice, veganism is made available as a commodified diet.

In our analysis, we detect three main dimensions that connect in the discursive production of Beyoncé's uptake of a vegan diet: empowerment in terms of consumer choice; full agency and responsabilization; and the investment in a sexy body while at the same time imposing strict self-surveillance, management, and discipline. Through an exploration of these elements, we argue that what has been conceptualized as an ethical and political choice by eco-feminism throughout the years, as well as other eco-friendly and anti-capitalist movements, becomes depoliticized and deradicalized, becoming part of an individualistic project of the self. Hence, we claim that alongside "commodity feminism" (Robert Goldman, Deborah Heath, and Sharon L. Smith 1991) we are witnessing "commodity veg\*ism," fully enmeshed with post-feminist culture.<sup>2</sup> We use the term veg\*ism to indicate the fluid definitions of vegan and vegetarian diets, in which the avoidance of animal meat and products relies more on individual choice than on compliance with an actual regime. Veg\*ism does not negate the existence of other simultaneously occurring practices that foreground vegan and vegetarian diets as ethical and political choices, but its study casts light on how food cultures are appropriated within post-feminism.

## The gendered pantry: food gender and sexuality

Food tastes and choices are not subjective: they follow social scripts and discourses too (for relevant debates see, among others, Jukka Gronow [1997]). In his foundational work, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has shown that how we display taste in food is similar to one's taste in art, sport, and fashion, and is closely connected to the habitus. Through this concept, Bourdieu argues that we are prompted to align our personal taste with that of the class we belong to, reproducing social disparities. However, taste in food is not only related to class: through the food we choose, prepare, and share, we reproduce a wide range of social boundaries, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality.

Scholarship on the relationship between food and gender claims that food practices are interlaced with gendered ones (Carol Counihan 1998; Eileen Fischer 2000), both at the

symbolic level and through everyday practices. On a symbolic level, masculinity is strongly linked to red meat, understood also as a symbol of virility and sexual prowess. Femininity instead is bound to sweetness, when conceptualized as sinful and irrational, or to vegetables, when conceived as asexual and pure. More often, though, it is the practices around food that contribute to establishing the “correct” roles and behaviours attributed to each gender. Indeed, “through the everyday practice of food consumption, gender performances take place” (Bethan Irvine 2015, 40), from the level of representation (for example in media and advertising) to the mundane level of everyday meal planning, provisioning and eating. These two elements, however, are often connected because the consumption of “gendered foods” bestows meaning onto the one who consumes them.

Meat creates the strongest polarity of gendered food. Even if it does not hold an exclusive connection with masculinity (see, for example, the work on coffee by Eminegül Karababa and Guliz Ger [2011] and Julie Kjendal Reitz [2007]), it is certainly the most powerful one. However, the specificity of the meat product is important: chicken or fish do not have the same connection with macho masculinity (Paul Rozin, M. Julia Holmes, S. Myles Faith, and Brian Wansink 2012). Red meat, instead, evokes a traditional notion of manhood that is tightly bound with sexual drive and domination (J. Carol Adams 1990; Erika Cudworth 2008; Irvine 2015; Annie Potts and Jovien Parry 2010; Jeffrey Sobal 2005)—eating red meat means to eat like a man (C. Wesley Buerkle 2009; A. Mark Newcombe, B. Mary McCarthy, M. James Cronin, and N. Sinead McCarthy 2012).

Along with sweetness, vegetables are symbolically associated with femininity, especially when considered in antithesis with red meat (Newcombe et al. 2012). Furthermore, because female sexuality has been historically connected with a lack of sexual desire and pleasure, vegetables are the epitome of the asexual, where the term is used to describe lack of sexual desires and sex drive (F. Anthony Bogaert 2012).

Because of this symbolic association, becoming vegetarian means eating “women’s food” (Adams 1990, 59), compromising the masculinity of vegetarian men, who are defined using discourses usually attributed to stereotypical femininity, such as compassion, weakness, and emotionality (Irvine 2015). Furthermore, eating little meat is linked with desexualization or reduced sex-drive (Potts and Parry 2010), to the point of stigmatizing the sexuality of men who refuse meat. As an infringement of the heteronormative performance of masculinity through food practices, the choice of a vegetarian or vegan diet by men is associated with sexualities considered deviant or nonnormative, such as homosexuality (Buerkle 2009; Potts and Parry 2010; Irvine 2015).

However, vegansexuals have objected to this symbolic association by reversing the link between meat and sexuality, since they conceptualize only vegan bodies as sexy, while being repulsed by meat-eating bodies (Potts and Parry 2010). As a participant in the G-Sprout video by Mirha-Soleil Ross (2000) says: “It would be impossible ... to have someone lick, and suck, and fuck me, who has contributed to meat slaughter [*sic*].” Vegansexuals not only reclaim their sexuality, but also make it inaccessible to meat consumers.

## The politics of veg\*anism

The feminine virtue of vegetables has been appropriated as a political statement. Formalized from the early 1980s, vegetarian eco-feminism incorporated the work previously done not only by feminists, but also by activists who operated in the countercultural movement. It

must be mentioned, however, that vegetarian eco-feminism is a distinct strand within the broad eco-feminist movement, and does not represent the whole of eco-feminism (Greta Gaard 2002). Unlike “masculine” culture, eco-feminist vegetarianism has engaged in a vision of compassion towards nature, animals being included in the moral community as well as humans, in an effort to condemn a consumer culture founded on patriarchal and capitalist values (Adams 1990; J. Carol Adams 2003; Josephine Donovan 1990; Sheri Lucas 2005). Ethical vegetarianism does not end with food, since it affects other areas of living, from clothing to cosmetics.

Meat eating also engages with a broader conversation of the deployment of natural resources that the capitalist economy perpetrates. Indeed, a proper sense of social and environmental justice has animated the eco-feminist debate (Greta Gaard 2010), where critical reflections on feminism stand within the context of environmental concern. The association between culture and masculinity versus nature and femininity supports the patriarchal and capitalist understanding that Mother Nature has to be bent to masculine domination (Elizabeth Dodson Gray 1981). That is why, as a belief system, it cannot be reduced only to a diet, but reflects an ethical way of inhabiting the world (Joanne Stepaniak 2000).

Carol Adams (1990) most famously framed vegetarianism as in opposition to the patriarchal system, and stated that eating meat corresponded to the reproduction of politics of oppression, not only towards animals but also towards women. Thus, eco-feminism argues that there is an important connection between the domination of women and the domination of nature (Adams 1990, 127), and the same structure of oppression defines women and animals as subordinated subjects. This argument resonates more recently with those of Potts and Perry (2010), who explain that consuming products such as meat, eggs, milk, and honey, all of which come from female animals, involves supporting the reproduction of patriarchal power over women through violence and abuse. In this theoretical framework, the vegetarian choice refuses to reproduce this logic of domination using the body (and its feeding) as a site of protest.

The gendered relation between culture and nature is not only one of domination, but also one of heterosexual consumption (Dodson Grey 1981). Eco-feminists argue that by rejecting meat, women can refuse to perform the logic of becoming flesh, to be sexually consumed by men and to be “ontologized as sexual beings” (Adams 1990, 137). In eco-feminism, the domination over nature is the sexual domination over the feminine, and one cannot be overcome without the other (Andrée Collard and Joyce Contrucci 1989; Mary Daly 1978; Irene Diamond and F. Gloria Orenstein 1990; Martin Kheel 1991). Hence, the eco-feminist vegetarian/vegan lifestyle is paired with the feminist refusal to become objectified to men’s consumption, and to be considered as mere sexual objects within a patriarchal system.

Similarly, some black vegans articulate veganism as a way to decolonize the black body. Aph-Ko (2015) explains how black people have been oppressed also via their identification with animals. Hence, by rejecting the discourse that animals are inferior to humans and thus can be exploited, black people stop supporting the same oppression they have endured. Furthermore, Amie “Breeze” Harper (2009) highlights how popular race-neutral veganism is oblivious to racial issues, as it concentrates on animal rights and health claims. According to her, a race-informed perspective adds to the debate on how race and class intersect in reproducing health disparities among the black community, with veganism being employed

to heal the manifestations of white supremacist culture upon the black body (Queen Afua 1999).

Vegan and vegetarian diets also have a longstanding presence in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) community. For example, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival has served vegetarian food since its beginning in 1976. In a study of the festival, Laurie J. Kendall (2008) reports that "becoming vegetarian is part of claiming a lesbian identity, which many conceptualise as both a spiritual and political act" (81). The queer vegan manifesto (Rasmus R. Simonsen 2012) also attends to "veganism as marker of identity" (54), claiming that deviating from eating meat means deviating from the heteronormative reproduction of gender identity.

However, recently, vegan/vegetarian diets have made a shift: vegetables have become sexy (A. Sherrie Inness 2006) and directly associated with sexual properties. This is not entirely new, as shown by the vegansexual movement. What is new, however, is the extent to which vegetable-based diets are represented, and seen as, sexy in mainstream media. A striking example is the promotional campaign by PETA, which has rearticulated the relationship between gender and food, in particular the one between masculinity and vegetarianism/veganism. These campaigns have made vegetables sexy, and aphrodisiacs, often through hypersexualized images of women and questionable sexual innuendos. In fact, PETA has a history of adopting hypersexualized women and celebrities as main subjects for its advertising posters. The gaze implied is often male; at times clearly so, as in the slogan: "Fight impotence. Go vegetarian" written across the image of a pin-up girl holding an "un-erect" hotdog. According to PETA's heteronormative campaigns, male omnivores are to be reassured that removing meat from their diets will not affect their masculinity and virility, while women will benefit from their enhanced sexual performances.

While PETA's communication has been heavily criticized for its open sexism, Beyoncé's link with the "22 days diet" is different because she openly labels herself as a feminist. She is not the only celebrity openly endorsing a vegan lifestyle: actress Gwyneth Paltrow is the editor of *Goop*, a successful blog on lifestyle and wellness. Her second book *It's All Good: Delicious, Easy Recipes That Will Make You Look Good and Feel Great* (Gwyneth Paltrow, Julia Turshen, and Ditte Isager 2013), written with chef Julia Turshen, is just a step away from being entirely vegan. Hence, there is a clear shift between the eco- and black-vegan feminist movements, which refuse meat along with the white, patriarchal, and capitalist system, and a celebrity culture that makes a business out of a veg\*an diet, while conveying a message of female emancipation. The move towards sensual commodified veg\*an feminism is possible only through a new vision of the body and the self as offered by post-feminism, the cultural trend that frames our analysis of Beyoncé's participation in the 22 days diet.

### **Beyoncé as post-feminist celebrity**

Angela McRobbie's (2004, 2008, 2009) and Rosalind Gill's (2007a, 2007b, 2008) theories about post-feminism have been useful for understanding how media culture participates in a new gender regime in which women's freedom, empowerment, and achievements are celebrated, while at the same time they are subjected to old and new forms of discrimination and control. While Gill (2007a, 2007b, 2008) describes post-feminism in terms of a "sensibility" made of several recurring themes, tropes and constructions, McRobbie (2004, 2009) thinks of it in terms of a "double entanglement" in which feminism is taken into account, only to be

repudiated as passé, outdated, and even backwards. Both authors see a close connection between post-feminism and neo-liberalism, arguing that the emergence of post-feminist subjectivities is related to the process of neo-liberalization that characterizes many Western countries.<sup>3</sup>

However, more recently there has been a resurgence of feminism and particular forms of feminist politics in mainstream media culture, with many female and male celebrities and personalities claiming the term feminist for themselves. Celebrities such as actors Benedict Cumberbatch, Emma Watson, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt; singers such as John Legend, Miley Cyrus, and Kate Nash; as well as politicians across the political spectrum, such as Theresa May, Justin Trudeau, and Jeremy Corbyn, have identified as feminists or spoken out about sexism and gender inequality.<sup>4</sup> Beyoncé is one of the celebrities who claimed the term “feminist” in 2014, famously incorporating the word into her MTV Video Awards performance by writing it in blazing capital letters on a giant screen, while performing the song \*\*\* *Flawless* (Beyoncé 2014). The song itself contains several lines of the speech by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as part of the TED talk titled “We should all be feminists” (2013).

For Beyoncé and other celebrities to claim the term “feminist,” and for them to speak of gender inequality and feminist issues, might seem to contradict theories of post-feminism such as McRobbie’s and Gill’s, and instead signify a new “wave” of feminism. Indeed, a number of scholars, including Catharine Lumby (2011), Imelda Whelehan (2010), Hanna Retallack, Jessica Ringrose, and Emilie Lawrence (2016), have questioned whether the term “post-feminism” is still useful, or if it should at least be problematized. However, as we aim to illustrate through our analysis, we agree with Rosalind Gill (2016) that “a postfeminist sensibility informs even those media productions that ostensibly celebrate the new feminism” (610).

More specifically, Beyoncé’s engagement with feminist themes and issues has been debated on mainstream and online media, as well as in academic circles. The singer Annie Lennox has famously described Beyoncé’s feminism as “Lite” and “tokenistic,” suggesting that hypersexual performances dilute the message (Chris Azzopardi 2014), yet for many others Beyoncé’s feminism is a cause for celebration and joy (Eliana Dockterman 2013; Quinn Keaney 2014). At this juncture, we stress that the aim of this article is not to express a judgment on whether Beyoncé is a feminist. Instead, our objective is to contribute to the literature on the intersection of gender, race, class, and sexuality, in Beyoncé’s music, commercial enterprises, performances, media representations, and self-representations.

Critiques of Beyoncé have described her as lacking an intersectional approach, through neglecting the history of slavery, exploitation, and devaluation of black bodies in the USA, in particular that of black female bodies (Lucy R. Short 2015; Nathalie Weidhase 2015). According to Weidhase (2015), Short (2015), Shirley Anne Tate (2015) and Daphne A. Brooks (2008), Beyoncé speaks of and to the positions of black women in the US culture, challenging white supremacist culture’s dehumanization and devaluation of black femininity, and fear/eroticization of black female sexuality. Ultimately, they argue, Beyoncé succeeds in reclaiming her agency and subjecthood from a white cultural system that denies it.

Other scholars have rejected this interpretation, with bell hooks famously calling Beyoncé a “terrorist” in a panel discussion at the New School called *Are You Still a Slave? Liberating the Black Female Body* (The New School 2014). hooks criticizes Beyoncé for reproducing white culture’s construction of female black bodies as sexual objects. She makes a similar point in relation to *Lemonade*, claiming that, while she commends the diverse representation of the female body, and the will to challenge its devaluation and dehumanization in mainstream

culture, it nonetheless reproduces stereotypical representations of black women as victims or enraged. Celeste Manoucheka (2015) agrees with hooks, and states: “Knowles is indeed represented as the centre of admiration, but she is in that position partially because she plays the roles carved out for black women in this capitalist consumer culture” (151).

However, we argue that neither position fully grasps the complexity of Beyoncé’s relation to femininity and feminism. Fabio Parasecoli (2007), Aisha Durham (2012), and Farah Jasmine Griffin (2011) produced more nuanced readings of the Beyoncé phenomenon, stressing, on the one hand, the deep connection of her work with a personal and collective racial past, while, on the other, pointing out the ambivalences and contradictions within her songs, videos, and performances. Hence, we suggest it is possible for multiple and nuanced readings of her work and persona to coexist—she can be an inspirational figure for young (black) women, challenging white heteropatriarchal culture’s exclusion and devaluation of black female bodies, while at the same time reproducing normative discourses about female beauty, sexual availability, and heterosexuality.

Lastly, an important element often overlooked in pro-Beyoncé positions is her participation in celebrity culture and in the neo-liberal capitalist system. Manoucheka (2015) and hooks (The New School 2014) stress that Beyoncé is integral to commodity culture and the entertainment system, in which her image and brand are produced for profit. Ultimately, as we argue in more detail below, the kind of political engagement that Beyoncé purports is “complicit with rather than critical of capitalism, and of other systems of (classed, racialised and transnational) injustice” (Gill 2016, 617). Hence, we argue that in order to grasp Beyoncé’s feminism fully, we need to refer to literature on post-feminism.

Dayna Chatman’s (2015) analysis of the media representation and self-representation of Beyoncé’s particular feminist ethics reveals how the feminism-influenced ideas of Beyoncé fit within the frameworks brought forward by McRobbie and Gill.<sup>5</sup> Chatman makes a compelling argument: she claims that Beyoncé fully participates in post-feminist culture by endorsing a form of empowerment grounded on the physical body (accept your body), independence, and economic and sexual agency, while ignoring structural inequalities and continuing systemic struggle. As a result, Chatman (ibid.) believes Beyoncé to represent the ideal post-feminist subject, but also argues that she had the means to become so only because she already comes from the “right” social and economic position, coming from a middle-class background.

Building on both McRobbie (2009) and Chatman’s (2015) arguments, we agree that Beyoncé represents the ideal post-feminist subject. However, this is not because she already held the appropriate cultural and economic capital, but because she portrays the possibility for every woman, and black women especially, to be as successful as her, despite their social and economic position. What Beyoncé tells her fans is that with hard work, motivation, and commitment, they can overcome poverty, gender, class, sexuality, and dis/ability constraints. In this way female success is defined in individualistic terms, stressing competition, ambition, meritocracy, and self-reliance, at the expense of collectivity and political mobilization.

Furthermore, Beyoncé is an industry in her own right, and the 22 days diet is a side investment of her enterprise. Indeed, not only has Beyoncé actively endorsed a vegan diet, but she herself has invested in the business, partnering up with Marco Borges in an enterprise that delivers vegan meals door to door. With each meal costing between \$9.24 and \$14.85 (three meals a day for 22 days coming to a total just under \$630), the diet plan is in fact accessible only to the middle-classes, making “healthy eating” an exclusive and exclusionary practice.

While Beyoncé can campaign for and afford healthy and vegan diets, many people have to rely on a much smaller budget to feed themselves (and often their household too). Thus, veg\*an diets become a way through which economic and cultural capital are manifested, reproducing class divisions while at the same time providing income for the rich (i.e., Beyoncé).

This confirms Angela McRobbie's (2013) claims, who convincingly argues that the inclusion of feminism in mainstream media belongs to the way it has been appropriated by the Right, with media representations articulating their version of feminism in such a way as to support and win consent for conservative ends. Similarly, Catherine Rottenberg (2013) has proposed the term "neoliberal feminism" to describe the recent uptake of feminism by dominant culture, claiming that its effect has been the creation of a feminist subject who takes full responsibility for her well-being and self-care, further entrenching neoliberal rationality. This aspect will be further developed in the analysis of Beyoncé's endorsement of the vegan diet in the next section.

Beyoncé's iconic role in post-feminism becomes even more significant when contrasting the aspirational Beyoncé to what American society perceives to be the abject black female body. Indeed, while in the British context the figure of the working class, single mother is particularly charged, the USA has had a similar attitude toward the "welfare queen," the abject maternal figure introduced by the Regan administration (Patricia Hill Collins 1990). Cultural representations of this dreaded figure have often centered on the black, poor, welfare-dependent, single mother, who is also often depicted as fat. These representations work to complement Beyoncé's ethics of empowerment, such that, taken together, they produce a dichotomization of "bad" and "good" femininity. The competitive, ambitious, entrepreneurial Beyoncé, fully integrated in upper middle-class tastes and lifestyles, who has built for herself a normative heterosexual nuclear family, comes to represent the ideal post-feminist subject, having made the right choices with respect to marriage, motherhood, career, and, most importantly for this article, dietary choices and health concerns.

### **Veg\*ism as a post-feminist dietary practice**

Beyoncé's association with the 22-days diet confirms the central place that the discursive production of Beyoncé has in post-feminist culture. The appropriation of a vegan diet is mobilized as part of a post-feminist ethics that promotes an individualistic form of emancipation, which sustains existent patterns of discrimination and inequality, consumerism and neoliberalism. In this context, the endorsement of veganism is radically different from the ethical and political stance of eco-feminism or black veganism, becoming commodified as just another lifestyle choice. This commodification of veganism is articulated through three main interlinking issues: the understanding of empowerment in terms of participation in consumer culture;<sup>6</sup> a stress on autonomous choice and agency, in life and in consumption, that leads to the responsabilization of the individual about the choices they make; and the focus on having a sexy body, which subsumes new techniques of self-management, -control, and -discipline.

Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra (2007) argue that besides incorporating and negotiating feminist goals, post-feminism also works to commodify feminism through the articulation of women as empowered consumers. The term "empowerment" is an important trope of post-feminism, with women being sold make up, sex toys, and even pole dancing classes as manifestations of their empowerment. For Beyoncé, the uptake and promotion of a vegan

diet is connected with the ambiguous notion of empowerment as well. In the preface to the book by Marco Borges (2015) called *The 22 day revolution*, Beyoncé galvanizes the audience: “you deserve to give yourself the best life you can. Empowerment starts within you and your decisions. You can control the quality of your life with the food you eat” (par. 6). In such a way, the vegan diet becomes one of the many lifestyle choices that consumer culture makes available, and one that has in itself the promise of “empowerment.”

Indeed, Beyoncé’s uptake and promotion of a vegan diet highlights what Elspeth Probyn (1993) has called “choicechoisie,” by which she means the bourgeois, neo-liberal logic of shaping personal identity through the exercise of consumer choice, but also the way in which individuals are made responsible for the choices they make, assuming a position of blame if these reveal themselves not to be the correct choices (Gill 2008). Within the same preface, Beyoncé claims “I decided I wanted to take a more pro-active role in my health, and knowing all the amazing benefits [of the vegan diet], I knew this was the one” (par. 3). This statement stresses the post-feminist responsabilization of the individual for making the correct life choices and seeking self-improvement (McRobbie 2009)—in this case, the correct consumer choices in regards to fitness and health. Furthermore, the narrative produced by Beyoncé is one that stresses the full autonomy and agency of the subject. Beyoncé appears as an individual completely free from external constraints of gender, wealth, and class in the choices available to her, and this is assumed to be the case for those toward whom the promotional video and preface are directed.

While Beyoncé herself does not directly address “sexiness” in her uptake and promotion of the 22 days diet, the central focus that her sexy, curvy body has had in the discursive production of her persona inevitably brings the two together. Beyoncé has made her body one of the most significant aspects of her career. She is well known for taking pride in her “nonhegemonic” body: curvy but well maintained, with a specific focus on the “big” booty. This is further strengthened by the media frenzy created around the news that Beyoncé’s spectacular weight loss was due to her uptake of a vegan diet. Indeed, not only was this news a staged “scoop,” but the aftermath involved many publications making the connection between the vegan diet and her return to a “bootylicious” body.<sup>7</sup> In such a way, vegetables become sexy, challenging traditional (and sexist) associations between meat as male and sexual, and women as vegetable and asexual.

This “nonhegemonic” body is the assemblage of elements from ideal Western (white) beauty standards, such as blonde hair and fair skin, and from popular culture signifiers of black culture—a voluptuous butt. As Manoucheka (2015) reports, Beyoncé is often presented as a hybrid whose ethnicity can be flexible and is able to appeal to multiple audiences: she is often described as beautiful by European standards, yet her buttocks remain a spectacle and a marker of her blackness. Furthermore, one can argue that Beyoncé has contributed to changing beauty standards for women, or at least expanding them, although in a very circumscribed direction.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, Beyoncé’s sexy and curvaceous body is not as “natural” as it appears to be. While the aforementioned song \*\*\* *Flawless* is also a hymn to accepting your body as it is, suggesting that any form and shape of body is flawless in itself, Beyoncé’s body is a result of intense work and discipline, the vegan diet becoming part of this lifestyle. In her preface to Marco Borges’s book (2015), and the promo video for his website (*22 days nutrition* 2015), she acknowledges that her body has been the result of extreme dieting habits and exercise routines. The choice of a vegan diet results from her need to lose weight quickly, but healthily.

Thus, the uptake of a vegan diet becomes completely detached from ethical and political concerns, but is simply one of the many possible “diets” one can employ not only to lose weight quickly and keep it off, but also to experience “increased energy, better sleep, weight loss, improved digestion, clarity, and an incredibly positive feeling” (Beyoncé 2015, par. 4).

Furthermore, the uptake of a vegan diet is closely attached to motherhood, both in Beyoncé’s own narratives and in media representations. In the preface, she claims

[a]fter having my daughter, I made a conscious effort to regain control of my health and my body [...] [s]o I turned to no one other than my good friend and fitness and nutrition confidant, Marc Borges. I’ve worked with him for years to keep me on-track, motivated and ahead of the health game (par. 2).

Similarly, the media frenzy was centered on how the vegan diet had allowed Beyoncé to lose the “pregnancy weight” so effectively, showing off her newly fit and toned body at the Met Gala four months after having given birth to her child.

As McRobbie (2013) argues, the post-feminist focus on women’s bodies in the media extends to motherhood, such that women are required to maintain their (hetero)sexual desirability throughout, as well as after, pregnancy, and achieve “affluent, middle-class maternity,” which is visually translated via “a spectacularly slim body, a well groomed and manicured appearance, with an equally attractive baby and husband” (131). Indeed, the “yummy mummy,” the mother who has not lost her sexiness despite motherhood, has become commonplace in media representations and in society at large (Jo Littler 2013). However, as the example of Beyoncé shows, this praised status is achieved through intense self-management and self-monitoring, which includes a change in food habits.

Hence, Beyoncé’s uptake and promotion of a vegan diet reconfigures the relationship between food and gender, making vegetables sexy. Through the vegan diet, Beyoncé can be sensual but not carnal: she is in charge of her body and of her desires, to the point where failing to control what enters one’s body resembles a failure to perform an appropriate femininity. The post-feminist endorsement of veganism borrows this rhetoric of control from vegetarian feminisms, where vegan and vegetarian rules are used to resist capitalist consumption, patriarchal power, and white supremacy, but this appropriation only works to promote consumerism, an individualistic ethic, and a sexy body, rather than challenging unequal power relations.

The result is that veg\*n diets stop being ethical, they become “commodity veg\*anism.” Food morality, what is good and bad to eat, loses its political ground and does not go further than the ingredients’ nutritional profile, leading to a wider ecological indifference. Moreover, this means that post-feminist veg\*ism is not a way of living, but simply another lifestyle to be chosen among the many, which can be as easily picked up as discarded. As a result, you do not need to *be* vegan or vegetarian, but you can buy veg\*an meals or prepare veg\*an recipes to participate in the commodified veg\*an trend. This participation is confined in time and variety (22 days, 185 recipes) and in the field of action (one’s own kitchen). Indeed, it seems that Beyoncé’s commitment to veg\*ism has taken a back seat as her political efforts have moved to race politics in 2016—from vegetables to Red Lobster.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

By incorporating vegetable-based diets in the profile of self-owned, sexually liberated women, post-feminist practices have integrated and redefined the symbolic gendered

associations between vegetables and women. Historically closer to purity and asexuality, vegetables have now become sexy and linked to a voluptuous femininity. This reconfigures a feminist critique of cultural associations of food and gender, relegating it to the sphere of the personal, such that the selection of a vegetable-based diet becomes fully integral to the post-feminist trend. Hence, post-feminism extends to the field of food, such that alongside “commodity feminism” (Goldman, Heath, and Smith 1991), we are witnessing a “commodity veg\*ism,” fully enmeshed with postfeminist culture.

Through the analysis of Beyoncé’s involvement with the “22 days diet,” we have uncovered how commodity veg\*ism supports a post-feminist understanding of empowerment in terms of participation in consumer culture; a stress on autonomous choice and agency, in life and in consumption, and full responsabilization of the individual; and the focus on having a sexy body, which subsumes new techniques of self-management, -control, and -discipline. Through these interlacing aspects, we have argued that commodity veg\*ism does not challenge the status quo, but instead promotes a post-feminist ethic that emphasizes individualism, consumer choice, and empowerment.

While eco-feminists sustain their resistance to a patriarchal economy of exploitation through this diet, post-feminists fully align their vegetarian choices with the capitalist marketplace. It should be acknowledged that the endorsement of feminism and veg\*ism by a public black figure such as Beyoncé has the potential to open up these discourses to people who might have previously felt excluded and/or alienated from them. However, ultimately, the post-feminist endorsement of veg\*ism becomes a business opportunity, with celebrities such as Beyoncé capitalizing and aggrandizing their wealth through a dietary practice that eco-feminism has employed for political and ethical reasons.

Conclusively, this paper highlights how food choices cannot be reduced to a private matter, because consumption practices and access to the marketplace are always interlaced with power discourses (Roberta Sassatelli 2007). The incorporation of veg\*ism into post-feminist culture has reinforced a configuration of gender and class, reproducing systems of inequalities and putting them on people’s tables.

## Notes

1. We acknowledge that separating politics from the body and subjectivity is impossible. Indeed, the choice of a vegan or vegetarian diet is not only and not always motivated by political factors; personal experiences equally contribute. Despite this, in this article we would like to focus specifically on the eco-feminist discourses that make this choice an ethical and political one.
2. Others who have dealt with the commodification of veganism, but in different contexts, are L. Gary Francione (2012), and Kim Socha and Sarajane Blum (2013).
3. Until recently, the literature on post-feminism has been based mostly in Europe and the USA. However, in the past few years a number of scholars have engaged in exporting and modifying these theories to analyze non-Western countries (see, for example, Simidele Dosekun [2015]).
4. The mainstreaming of feminism is the subject of an issue of the forum special of the journal *Celebrity Studies* (Hanna Hannad and Anthea Taylor 2015).
5. This is not to say that forms of popular feminism such as Beyoncé’s are worthless; quite the contrary, by destigmatizing the term and making it an acceptable identification for young and not-so-young women, it might in fact make feminism and the study of gender an appealing possibility.
6. Consumer culture is defined as a society in which consumption works as privileged means for meaning sharing and creation (B. Douglas Holt 2002; Don Slater 1997), such that “cultural

reproduction is largely understood to be carried through the exercise of free personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life" (Slater 1997, 8).

7. *Boatyscious* is the name of a song by Destiny's Child, former band of Beyoncé, that popularized the term. Since then, it has been employed by Beyoncé herself to describe a voluptuous body, characterized by a prominent backside.
8. Durham (2012) references a newspaper article that indicates a significant increase in buttocks augmentation, with patients openly requesting Beyoncé- or Jennifer Lopez-style bottoms.
9. In her video-album *Lemonade* released in 2016, Red Lobster, hot sauce, and lemonade were symbols of her Southern black identity.

## Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the anonymous reviewers and the editors for the insightful comments that helped shape this article.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on contributors

**Ella Fegitz** is currently a PhD candidate in the department of Media and Communication at Goldsmiths, University of London, working on mediated representations of femininity and female sexuality in the age of Berlusconi. Her research interests are on post-feminist subjectivity and sexuality, neo-liberal governmentality, and Italian media and culture. Email: [e.fegitz@gold.ac.uk](mailto:e.fegitz@gold.ac.uk)

**Daniela Pirani** is currently a PhD candidate in the Management Department at Royal Holloway, University of London, working on gender representations in food advertising. Her interests lie at the intersection of gender performativity, food practices, and consumer culture. Email: [daniela.pirani.2014@live.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:daniela.pirani.2014@live.rhul.ac.uk)

## References

- 22 Days Nutrition. 2015. Accessed October 15, 2015. <https://www.22daysnutrition.com>
- Adams, J. Carol. 1990. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York: Continuum.
- Adams, J. Carol. 2003. *The Pornography of Meat*. New York: Continuum.
- Adichie, N. Chimamanda. 2013. "We Should All Be Feminists". *TEDx*, April 29. Accessed June 11, 2016. <https://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/We-should-all-be-feminists-Chim>
- Afua, Queen. 1999. *Sacred Woman : A Guide to Healing the Feminine Body, Mind, and Spirit*. New York: One World.
- Aph-Ko [Black Vegans Rock]. 2015. "Aphro-IsM: What Does Animal Oppression Have to Do with Our Anti-Racist Movements?" You Tube. Accessed October 23, 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLG\\_nanqdAI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLG_nanqdAI)
- Azzopardi, Chris. 2014. "Q&a: Annie Lennox on Her Legacy, Why Beyonce is 'Feminist Lite.'" *Pride Source: From the Publishers of between the Lines*, September 25. Accessed October 26. <https://www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=68228>
- Beyoncé. 2014. \*\*\* *Flawless*. Music Single. USA: Parkwood/Columbia.
- Beyoncé. 2015. "Foreword." In *The 22-Day Revolution: The Plant-Based Program That Will Transform Your Body, Reset Your Habits, and Change Your Life*, written by Marco Borges [e-book]. New York: Penguin Books. Available through: the British Library database. Accessed May 3, 2016. [https://explore.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?dscnt=1&tab=local\\_tab&dstmp=1459841530105&vlfreeText0\)=22-day%20revolution&fn=search&vid=BLVU1&mode=Basic&fromLogin=true](https://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?dscnt=1&tab=local_tab&dstmp=1459841530105&vlfreeText0)=22-day%20revolution&fn=search&vid=BLVU1&mode=Basic&fromLogin=true)

- Bogaert, F. Anthony. 2012. *Understanding Asexuality*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Borges, Marco. 2015. *The 22-Day Revolution: The Plant-Based Program That Will Transform Your Body, Reset Your Habits, and Change Your Life*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brooks, Daphne A. 2008. "All That You Can't Leave Behind': Black Female Soul Singing and the Politics of Surrogation in the Age of Catastrophe." *Meridians* 8 (1): 180–204.
- Buerkle, C. Wesley. 2009. "Metrosexuality Can Stuff It: Beef Consumption as (Heteromascuine) Fortification." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 29 (1): 77–93.
- Chatman, Dayna. 2015. "Pregnancy, Then It's 'back to Business.'" *Feminist Media Studies* 15 (6): 926–941.
- Collard, Andr ee, and Joyce Contrucci. 1989. *Rape of the Wild : Man's Violence against Animals and the Earth*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Collins, Patricia. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: HarperCollins.
- Counihan, Carol. 1998. *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Cudworth, Erika. 2008. "Most Farmers Prefer Blondes: The Dynamic of Anthroparchy in Animals' Becoming Meat." *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 6 (1): 32–45.
- Daly, Mary. 1978. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Diamond, Irene, and F. Gloria Orenstein. 1990. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Eco-Feminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Dockterman, Eliana. 2013. "Flawless: 5 Lessons in Modern Feminism from Beyonce." *Time*, December 17. Accessed October 26, 2016. <https://time.com/1851/flawless-5-lessons-in-modern-feminism-from-beyonce/>
- Dodson Gray, Elizabeth. 1981. *Green Paradise Lost*. Wellesley: Roundtable Press.
- Donovan, Josephine. 1990. "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory." *Signs* 15 (2): 350–375.
- Dosekun, Simidele. 2015. "For Western Girls Only?" *Feminist Media Studies* 15 (6): 960–975.
- Durham, Aisha. 2012. "Check on It." *Feminist Media Studies* 12 (1): 35–49.
- Firth, Emma. 2015. Beyonc e's Vegan Diet: 3 Recipes You Need to Try from the Star's Nutritionist. *Marie Claire*, June 9. Accessed October 14, 2015. <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/blogs/549263/beyonc-3-comforting-vegan-recipes-you-need-to-try-from-the-star-s-nutritionist.html>
- Fischer, Eileen. 2000. "Consuming Contemporaneous Discourses: A Postmodern Analysis of Food Advertisements Targeted toward Women." In *Advances in Consumer Research*, edited by Stephen J. Hoch and Robert J. Meyer, 288–294. 2000 Provo, Association for Consumer Research.
- Francione, L. Gary. 2012. "Animal Welfare, Happy Meat and Veganism as the Moral Baseline." In *The Philosophy of Food*, edited by David M. Kaplan, 169–189. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gaard, Greta. 2002. "Vegetarian Eco-Feminism: A Review Essay." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 23 (3): 117–146.
- Gaard, Greta. 2010. "New Directions for Eco-Feminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. 17 (4): 643–665.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2007a. *Gender and the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2007b. "Post-Feminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10 (2): 147–166.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2008. "Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising." *Feminism Psychology* 18(1): 35–60.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2016. "Post-Postfeminism?: New Feminist Visibilities in Postfeminist times." *Feminist Media Studies* 16 (4): 610–30.
- Goldman, Robert, Deborah Heath, and L. Sharon Smith. 1991. "Commodity Feminism." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8 (3): 333–351.
- Griffin, Farah Jasmine. 2011. "At Last ...?: Michelle Obama, Beyonc e, Race & History." *Daedalus* 140 (1): 131–41.
- Gronow, Jukka. 1997. *The Sociology of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Hannad, Hanna, and Anthea Taylor. 2015. "Forum Special: Feminism & Contemporary Celebrity Culture." *Celebrity Studies* 6 (1): 124–139.

- Harper, A. Breeze. 2009. *Sistah Vegan : Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society*. New York: Lantern Books.
- Holt, B. Douglas. 2002. "Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding." *Journal of Consumer Research* 29 (1): 70–90.
- Inness, A. Sherrie. 2006. *Secret Ingredients: Race, Gender, and Class at the Dinner Table*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Irvine, Bethan. 2015. *Vegetarian Masculinities: How Discourses of Normative Masculinities Are Challenged and (Re)Produced through Food Consumption*. Birmingham, AL: University of Birmingham.
- Karababa, Eminegül, and Guliz Ger. 2011. "Early Modern Ottoman Coffeehouse Culture and the Formation of the Consumer Subject." *The Journal of Consumer Research* 37 (5): 737–760.
- Keaney, Quinn. 2014. "Beyonce Schools Everyone on Body Image and Feminism in Her Latest Surprise Video." *MTV News*, December 12. Accessed October 26. <https://www.mtv.com/news/2024545/beyonce-yours-mine-video-feminism/>
- Kellner, Douglas. 2003. *Media Spectacle*. New York: Routledge.
- Kendall, Laurie J. 2008. *The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival : An Amazon Matrix of Meaning*. Baltimore, MD: Spiral Womyn's Press.
- Kheel, Martin. 1991. "Eco-Feminism and Deep Ecology: Reflections on Identity and Difference." *Trumpeter* 8 (2): 62–72.
- Littler, Jo. 2013. "The Rise of the 'Yummy Mummy': Popular Conservatism and the Neoliberal Maternal in Contemporary British Culture." *Communication, Culture and Critique* 6 (2): 227–243.
- Lucas, Sheri. 2005. "A Defense of the Feminist-Vegetarian Connection." *Hypatia* 20 (1): 150–177.
- Lumby, Catharine. 2011. "Past the Post in Feminist Media Studies." *Feminist Media Studies* 11 (1): 95–100.
- Manoucheka, Celeste. 2015. "Ch.8: Black Women and U.S. Pop Culture in the Post-Identity Era: The Case of Beyoncé Knowles." In *Transatlantic Feminism: Women and Gender Studies in Africa and the Diaspora*, edited by Chery R. Rodriguez, Dzoi Tsikata, and Akosua Adomako Amopfo, 137–158. London/Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2004. "Post-Feminism and Popular Culture." *Feminist Media Studies* 4 (3): 255–264.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2008. "Pornographic Permutations." *The Communication Review* 11 (3): 225–236.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2013. "Feminism, the Family and New 'Mediated' Maternalism." *New Formations* 80–81: 119–138.
- Mitchell, Laura. 2015. Fit for a Queen Bee: Copy Beyoncé's Vegan Diet Plan from £6.31. *Daily Star*, June 11. Accessed June 12, 2016. <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/diet-fitness/447494/Beyonce-vegan-diet-Instagram-swimming-costume-pictures-diet-plan>
- Newcombe, A. Mark, B. Mary McCarthy, M. James Cronin, and N. Sinead McCarthy. 2012. "'Eat like a Man': a Social Constructionist Analysis of the Role of Food in Men's Lives." *Appetite* 59 (2): 391–398.
- Paltrow, Gwyneth, Julia Turshen, and Ditte Isager. 2013. *It's All Good: Delicious, Easy Recipes That Will Make You Look Good and Feel Great*. New York: Grand Central Life & Style.
- Parasecoli, Fabio. 2007. "Bootylicious: Food and the Female Body in Contemporary Black Pop Culture." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35 (1/2): 110–125.
- Patton, L. Brian. 2012. *The Sexy Vegan Cookbook: Extraordinary Food from an Ordinary Dude*. Novato: New World Library.
- Persad, Michele. 2015. "I Tried the 22-Day Beyoncé Vegan Diet... and I'm Starving." *Huffington Post*, August 4. Accessed 11 June, 2016. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/08/beyonce-vegan-diet-\\_n\\_7025122.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/08/beyonce-vegan-diet-_n_7025122.html)
- Potts, Annie, and Jovian Parry. 2010. "Vegan Sexuality: Challenging Heteronormative Masculinity through Meat-Free Sex." *Feminism & Psychology* 20 (1): 53–72.
- Probyn, Elspeth. 1993. "Choosing Choice: Images of Sexuality and 'Choiceoisie' in Popular Culture." In *Negotiating at the Margins: The Gendered Discourses of Power and Resistance*, edited by Sue Fisher and Kathy Davis, 278–294. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Reitz, Julie Kjendal. 2007. "Espresso: A Shot of Masculinity." *Food, Culture & Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 10 (1): 7–21.

- Retallack, Hanna, Jessica Ringrose, and Emilie Lawrence. 2016. "Ch.6: 'Fuck Your Body Image': Teen Girls' Twitter and Instagram Feminism in and around School." In *Learning Bodies: The Body in Youth and Childhood Studies*, edited by J. Coffey, S. Budgeon, and H. Cahill, 85–103. London: Springer.
- Ross, Mirha-Soleil. 2000. *G-Sprout* (Short Film). Canada: Karbusicky and Ross.
- Rottenberg, Catherine. 2013. "The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism." *Cultural Studies* 28 (3): 418–37.
- Rozin, Paul, M. Julia Hormes, S. Myles Faith, and Brian Wansink. 2012. "Is Meat Male? A Quantitative Multimethod Framework to Establish Metaphoric Relationships." *Journal of Consumer Research* 39 (3): 629–643.
- Sassatelli, Roberta. 2007. *Consumer Culture History, Theory and Politics*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Short, Lucy R. 2015. Still Haunted: Tending to the Ghosts of Marriage and Motherhood in White Feminist Critiques of Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and Michelle Obama. *Tapestries: Interwoven Voices of Local and Global Identities* 4(1): p. n.a.
- Simonsen, Rasmus R. 2012. "A Queer Vegan Manifesto." *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 10 (3): 51–81.
- Slater, Don. 1997. *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.
- Sobal, Jeffrey. 2005. "Men, Meat, and Marriage: Models of Masculinity." *Food and Foodways* 13 (1/2): 135–158.
- Socha, Kim, and Sarahjne Blum. 2013. *Confronting Animal Exploitation: Grassroots Essays on Liberation and Veganism*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company.
- Stepaniak, Joanne. 2000. *Being Vegan: Living with Conscience, Conviction, and Compassion*. Los Angeles, CA: Lowell House.
- Tasker, Yvonne, and Diane Negra. 2007. *Interrogating Post-Feminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. London: Duke University Press.
- Tate, Shirley Anne. 2015. *Black Women's Bodies and the Nation : Race, Gender and Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- The New School. 2014. "Are You Still a Slave?" *Livestream*. Accessed October 26, 2016. <https://livestream.com/TheNewSchool/Slave>
- Weidhase, Nathale. 2015. "'Beyoncé Feminism' and the Contestation of the Black Feminist Body." *Celebrity Studies* 6 (1): 128–131.
- Whelehan, Imelda. 2010. "Remaking Feminism: Or Why is Postfeminism So Boring?" *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 9 (3): 155–172.
- Winick, Kate. 2015. "I Tried the Beyoncé Diet: And It Changed My Foodie Life." *Elle*. Accessed October 26, 2016 <https://www.elle.com/beauty/health-fitness/how-to/a27210/i-tried-the-beyonce-diet/ElleMarch>