

issue that was raised in recent years, and that led to the creation of sometimes entirely new modules in English departments in universities: notably featuring the integration of the works of people of colour, or, to be clearer, the diversification of the canon. To give a tangible experience, the module Race, Writing and Decolonization, at the University of Leeds, was created to integrate people of colour's works into a corpus, especially in the first year of English literature undergraduate studies. In the end, the aim of modern canons, compared to earlier canons, is not to be reductive, and to narrow the number of works studied; on the contrary, it is to continuously augment the canon, by continuously integrating new authors.

However, let us now focus on our modern canon, and especially whether works should be added to or deleted from it. Instead of wanting to delete, or forget works that would be deemed indecent nowadays, like Joseph Swetnam's anti-women pamphlet named *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*, it is interesting to study them, to understand the impact that they had on their society. To keep our example going, Swetnam sparked the pamphlet war on the role of women in society, while also giving women writers the opportunity to rise, take their pen and answer to him, as Rachel Speght did in *A Mouzell for Melastonmus*. As a more general claim, I would argue that many authors of earlier centuries would be deemed indecent for one reason or the other, let it be their misogyny, their strong religious beliefs, their racism, etc. The way into earlier corpora is not to totally ignore those authors, as they are part of the history of English literature, but instead, to use those views as a way into the text, to understand the context of writing, before stamping a text with an "offensive" label and moving on.

In the end, corpora are there to indicate and to guide, not to restrict. Therefore, readers of all backgrounds and levels are able to access literary works that they are interested in, while also gaining deeper knowledge on specific topics. It is, and probably will be for a long time, interesting to study the works of massive authors like Shakespeare or Austen, as they have successfully integrated the culture of a language. However, it is also interesting to focus on works of smaller, lesser-known authors, who wrote either in the same style but having political takes, or just other styles and/or other focuses. Consequently, while corpora are great tools to remember works, and can act as encyclopaedias of literature, it is important to keep in mind that their purpose was – and still is to an extent – to help people build an interesting library. In that regard, it is not because a piece of writing is not in a corpus that it is not worth remembering, it could simply be omitted for multiple factors, such as its original language, its date of publication (a work that has just been published cannot be part of a corpus, as there is not sufficient hindsight) or just its lesser impact upon audiences of its own time.

## *A Research Sneak Peek...*

WITH DEBORAH MADSEN

*Interview with Prof. Deborah Madsen, the principal investigator in the research project "Vegan Literary Studies: An American Textual History, 1776-1900." The project is funded by the Fonds National Suisse. It was launched in August 2022 and will continue until July 2026.*

1. Describe your project in five key-words.

Legacy, justice, rights, intersectionality, ... and food!

2. What motivates you to pursue this research project?

The primary motive of the project is the "sensibilisation" (to use the wonderfully expressive French word) of the public to the long history of "veg\*an" thought and practice (veg\*an is a shorthand expression signifying either vegan or vegetarian). The contemporary debate over fake meat – plant-based versus lab-grown meat, for instance – is not new. In the US, the impact of animal agriculture on the environment (like soil and water) was seen as problematic by some in the early nineteenth century, long before the emergence of the intensively destructive CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) that characterize contemporary agri-business in the US. We want to draw attention to this fact.

My personal motivation is a bit more complex. I must admit that when it comes to research ideas, I am a bit like a magpie, picking up interesting "shiny" things and hoarding them for future use. One such snippet that I came across years ago and filed away for later was the episode in Benjamin Franklin's autobiography where he explains why he became a vegetarian. This put into my thoughts the idea that diet and nationalism are deeply connected in discourses of US national formation. Another example is the media story about a fashion student who was planning to make a range of handbags and leather jackets from the cloned skin of the late designer Alexander McQueen. I find this fascinating because it intersects with another snippet that I have had stored for a long time, which concerns the binding of books with human skin. There is even a name for the practice: anthropodermic bibliopegy. Google it! The thing about snippets like this is that they do not mean very much in isolation. However, when placed in an appropriate context they can take on all sorts of significance. Rather obviously, the vegan refusal of all animal-based products (including books bound in animal skin and clothing made from animal leather), working in conjunction with extensive philosophical and literary theo-

rizing of animal exploitation, provides a very stimulating context within which to think about the cultural significance of skin. So yes, I collect interesting items of *information and sometimes they intersect in ways that suggest a research project*.

In the case of the “Vegan Literary Studies” project, over the years my snippets from Franklin and others have developed into a nascent bibliography of American vegan writers. At the same time, my research effort was centered in Indigenous studies, where I kept encountering a common, but not monolithic, philosophy that governs relations between many Indigenous cultures and co-inhabiting beings in their environments. For instance, the Anishinaabe concept of Mino Bimaadiziwin or “living the good life” is based on reciprocity and acknowledgment of the right of all creatures and creation to exist. This philosophy, as the motivating structure of certain videogame narratives created by Indigenous game designers, was my subject in a series of essays and is a topic on which I continue to publish. I was also pursuing my long-standing interest in ecofeminism, but a very important motive for the transformation of these interests into a full, externally-funded, project was one of the doctoral theses I was supervising. This was the project of Bryn Skibo, who successfully defended her thesis in 2020 and now teaches at Vancouver Island University in Canada. Put simply, Bryn was working on literary deconstructions of the anthropocentrism underpinning the human-animal binary, with specific reference to Margaret Atwood's fiction. The Faculté des Lettres generously funded a one-year post-doc position for Bryn. To this was added a research assistantship for Caroline Martin which was funded by the *décharge* I enjoy as recompense for my work in the Rectorat's mentoring program. Thus, in 2020-2021, Bryn, Caroline, and myself could work together to survey the field of US veg\*an literature and, on the basis of our findings, I was able to submit a research project proposal that was accepted by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Fonds National Suisse). That then is the “origin story” of the project!

To return to the original question, I am motivated by the impulse to let people know that the current debates about animal exploitation are not at all new. The same issues were debated in the nineteenth, and eighteenth and, in some cases, the seventeenth century. Of course, these issues historically include the health implications of refusing to eat animal flesh, but they also embrace the intersection between the transformation of living beings into meat and a whole range of oppressive practices that follow from the assumption that one species (humanity) is superior to, and entitled to exploit and consume, all others: the enslavement of “less than human” humans, for example; the oppression of women not least through women's fashions that often make use of animal body parts; the overuse and exhaustion of land, the pollution of oceans, rivers, and other waterways; and so on. Debates around these justice issues are not new, even if very little progress has been made – as we can see, unfortunately, in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that was published in mid-March. I think the public

needs to know about the historic legacy of veg\*an reformers and the important role of literature in anticipating and offering productive responses to the environmental crisis.

*3. What phase of your project are you currently in, and which tasks are you carrying out to complete it? (And... what will be next?)*

The first phase of the project involved gathering all likely candidates for the title “veg\*an writer” and veg\*an text within the time span of the project, which starts in the middle of the eighteenth century, at the time when the USA was coming into existence as a nation, and 1900. In fact, one of my original motives or prompts was the episode in Benjamin Franklin's autobiography that I mentioned before. Finding the authors was a dynamic process, in that the list kept expanding while we tracked down digital editions of these writings: tracts, speeches, letters, periodical and newspaper articles, as well as poems, novels, plays, and so on. Having access to digital texts is important for the current phase of the work, which uses a list of keywords to search each text quickly (the Author Bibliography currently runs to more than 450 pages) for evidence of veg\*an relevance. The phase that will follow requires that each text identified as probably relevant is read in detail to extract information with which to create a metadata record for that text. Eventually, this information – such as the publication details and history, a summary of the text, links to other relevant texts by the same or another author – will appear on the project website in the form of a hyperlinked database.

At the same time, I am annotating selected texts (or textual excerpts) for publication on the project website along with a brief explanatory introduction and bibliography. Eventually these annotated texts will comprise a digital, web-based anthology of American veg\*an literature. So far, there is an excerpt from Louisa May Alcott's satirical sketch of life at Fruitlands, the vegan utopian community created by her father Bronson Alcott in the 1840s; there is an early veg\*an Thanksgiving menu by Emarel Freshel, who, along with her husband, was involved in the development of “fake meat” products; a rather dark festive short story by William Dean Howells, in which the Christmas turkeys “turn the tables” and eat the humans; and I am currently working on a poem written by a Shaker eldress, Martha Jane Anderson. The poem critiques the late nineteenth-century fashion for women to wear real, stuffed bird corpses (and other avian body parts) on their hats, by pointing out the irony that the exploitation of beautiful birds for ornamentation is not so different to the position of women whose primary function is to ornament the arm of their affluent husbands. The poem gestures to the contemporary dress reform movement, which was closely allied with other veg\*an social justice movements: the condemnation of whale-bone corsets, for instance, which restricted physical movement and promoted the image of weak “fainting ladies”; also during this period the anti-fur

movement was loudly building momentum. The connection between feminism, fashionable clothing, and the exploitation of both women and other-than-human animals is evoked powerfully in Anderson's poem. It is this kind of intersectionality among a range of social justice issues that the project seeks to expose.

4. *What is one text – literary, theoretical, or otherwise – you would recommend to anyone interested in finding out more about your research domain?*

I would be delighted if readers took a look at the project website ([www.unige.ch/vls](http://www.unige.ch/vls)) where the beginnings of a digital anthology of annotated historic texts can be found. In a more theoretical vein, Carol J. Adams's vegetarian feminist analyses of the animalization of women and the feminization of animals, as rhetorical strategies that enable the consumption of both in a carnist patriarchal culture, are very powerful. Her discussion of advertising images, in books like *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), is particularly enlightening and also very disturbing; her website ([www.caroljadams.com](http://www.caroljadams.com)) is a great place to start.

### *A sneak peak of the findings of the Vegan Literary Studies Project...*

Scientific research in substitutes for meat and dairy products is not merely the result of the current market for vegan foods but can be traced back at least to the late nineteenth century. In 1889, John Harvey Kellogg, with his brother Will Keith Kellogg, founded the Sanitas Nut Food Company in order to experiment with nut-based meat substitutes. According to Laura J. Miller and Emilie Hardman, the Kelloggs' work on meat substitutes represents “the first truly . . . successful effort” to popularize fake meat as a dietary commodity (116).

Kellogg's commitment to the promotion of a vegan diet was primarily motivated by dietetic concerns. Kellogg trained as a doctor and, in 1876, became the director of a medical sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, where his wife, Ella Eaton Kellogg, conducted culinary experiments. Together, John and Ella Kellogg set out to create nourishing but also attractive and varied vegetarian menus for the sanitarium residents. Ella Kellogg created many vegetarian recipes using meat substitutes developed by Sanitas at the Bat-

tle Creek Sanitarium, such as Protose, Nuttolene, and Nuttose. In her 1896 cookbook, *Every-Day Dishes and Every-Day Work*, she claims that “[i]n odor and taste, protose so closely resembles flesh that it is really difficult for one eating it to convince himself that he is not partaking of animal food” (158).

### ... NUTTOSE ...



Nuts have been very appropriately termed **vegetable meat**. In popular parlance the kernels or edible portions of nuts are termed **meats**. Nuts resemble flesh meats in a number of particulars. They contain a **large proportion of proteid substances**. Some nuts contain as much as 50% more of albuminous substances than the best beefsteak. In other words, **in a pound of nuts**—peanuts for example—**there is practically a pound and a half of beefsteak**, in addition to the other invaluable nutritive elements which the nut contains. Besides this large proportion of a most digestible albuminoid substance, nuts contain on an average about 50% of a delicate and very digestible fat. Nuts contain little or no sugar, and with the exception of the chestnut, which contains nearly 70% of starch, they are almost entirely free from starch. The proportion of phosphates and other salts contained in nuts is large, amounting in some cases to more than 3%.

Nuts may then be fairly regarded as the **vegetable analogue of meat**. They are, in fact, a more perfect nutrient than meat, as they are capable of sustaining human life for an indefinite period, whereas an exclusive diet of meat soon results in serious disease, because of the poisonous substances which are always found in dead flesh. **An animal corpse, in fact, is, from a sanitary standpoint, possessed of all the obnoxious and repulsive characteristics of a human corpse, and from a physiological standpoint is just as antagonistic to human life.** Nuts are a pure food, and with fruits and grains constitute the natural diet of man, as they do of the gorilla, the chimpanzee, the orang-outang, and other anthropoid apes, which, the most man-like of all the animal creation, are still holding up before the human race the dietetic standard established by the Creator and adhered to by the first races of mankind.

**Nuttose** is a pure, unmixed preparation of choice, edible nuts, which is the result of long and patient investigation and experimentation, resulting in the development of a process whereby, through the aid of perfectly natural and non-chemical processes, it is possible to develop, in certain varieties of nuts which lend themselves most conveniently to the process, a consistency, an appearance, a flavor, and other gustatory and nutritive processes almost identical with those of choice meats.

Figure 1: This advertisement for Nuttose argues that nuts are healthier and more effective nutrients than meat. It draws on evolutionary theory, i.e. the proximity of humans to primates, to present nuts as a natural diet for humans. Source: *Sanitas Nut Preparations and Specialties*. Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Pub. Co., [1898?], p. 17. *Hathi Trust*, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071116415&view=1up&seq=17>.



Figure 2: Ella Kellogg not only created vegetarian recipes featuring fake meats but presented them in elaborate menus, adapted to various occasions and tastes. Source: Kellogg, Mrs. E. E. "Seasonable Bills of Fare." *Good Health*, vol. XXXIV, no. 9, September 1899, p. 537. *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/good-health-volume-34-issue-09-september-1st-1899/page/n33/mode/2up>.

**\*Scalloped Protose.**—Put a pound of Protose through a vegetable press, or mince fine with a chopper. Add to two parts of minced Protose one part of stewed and strained tomato. Mix thoroughly, and put into a shallow dish, having the mixture not over two inches deep; bake in a rather slow oven for three fourths of an hour. Serve hot with Tomato Sauce.

**Protose Roast.**—Place one pound of sliced Protose in the bottom of a small dripping-pan, with a few slices of onion and a little salt. Cover with water, and bake slowly for several hours. Three quarters of an hour before serving, pare and quarter, lengthwise, three or four potatoes, and place in the pan. Sufficient water should be added from time to time to make a gravy.

**Protose Roast, No. 2.**—Cut Protose lengthwise through the center. Place in a baking-pan, and baste with Tomato Sauce.

**\*Protose Roast, No. 3.**—Take out both ends of a can of Protose, being careful to cut the tin close to the edge. Remove the contents of the can whole. Split lengthwise through the middle, lay in a roasting-pan, flat side downward. Prepare a sauce by

Figure 3: Ella Kellogg's recipes treated meat substitutes as meat; they could thus be scalloped, roasted, broiled, stewed, or eaten in the form of a steak. Source: Kellogg, Mrs. E. E. *Healthful Cookery. A Collection of Choice Recipes for Preparing Foods, with Special Reference to Health*. Battle Creek, MI: Modern Medicine Publishing Company, 1904, p. 81. *Hathi Trust*, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044087424461&view=1up&seq=89>.

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# English Studies Elsewhere

## *The Revival of William Blake in the Beat Generation*

INTERVIEW WITH CAMILA OLIVEIRA QUERINO

*Camila holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and has spent a year at our department as a post-doctoral researcher in 2021-2022. Her area of expertise is located in the literature and literary reception of William Blake. Her current project focuses on Blake's influence on popular music going back to the 1960s.*

1. *You've been working on a monograph about the reception of Blake in contemporary music. Can you tell us a bit more about how Blake has survived up to this day?*

Blake was a visionary artist in a broader sense and his reception is very dissimilar from the so-called Big-Six [expression referring to the six most famous romantic poets: Blake, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge]. In his lifetime, he was basically seen as an engraver and illustrator of some repute, but his poetic endeavors were often dismissed as mediocre and incomprehensible by his contemporaries. Blake died destitute and uncelebrated except for a small group of devoted disciples. I believe there are milestones that help to understand his growing popularity over nearly two centuries. The first was the publication of his biography by William Blake Pictor Ignotus, in 1863, which rescued him from obscurity by shedding light on his eccentric persona and by presenting a compilation of his writings, as organized (and objectionably retouched) by the pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti with the help of his brother William Rossetti. After the publication of this biography, interest in Blake increased, gathering illustrious admirers such as Algernon Charles Swinburne, W. B. Yeats and Ralph Waldo Emerson, to name a few. The biography also spurred academic interest in Blake, turning him into one of the most studied romantic poets by the 1950s-1960s, alongside Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats. Another milestone of Blake's reception was his assimilation by the counterculture movement, which is crucial to understand the reception of his work in popular culture. And a plethora of different ways in which Blake is digested and appropriated by contemporary artists reflects the richness and intrinsically multimedia nature of his production and turned out as an extremely efficient mechanism of revitalization and circulation of his work.