Alexa Weik von Mossner *CUSO Workshop*

University of Klagenfurt / *The Ethics of Consumption*

University of Freiburg *University of Geneva*

**Abstract**

**Food for Thought: Decolonizing Bodies**

**and Diets in Narratives of Vegan Food Justice**

The talk will explore the growing hope within Black American communities that a different ethics of food consumption might change the morally untenable and ecologically disastrous status quo, which makes millions of African Americans and other people of color deeply unhealthy and involves the killing of about 70 billion land animals per year for human consumption. As Jessica Holmes has noted, “veganism continues to be largely overlooked as a rights-based social justice movement in the interests of both human and nonhuman animals, too often being regarded as a restrictive dietary and/or (at best) lifestyle preference.” Transmedia narratives by Black nutritionists such as Tracye McQuirter, documentary filmmakers such as Jasmine Leyva, and vegan chefs such as Bryant Terry not only aim to make vegan food attractive, but they are also invested in “decolonizing” Black bodies and food traditions (Adewale 2021; Harper 2009; Ko & Ko 2017). Rejecting the popular notion that veganism is inherently white and elitist, and using frameworks of intersectionality and decolonization, these narratives reimagine veganism as a way toward personal and community empowerment and a path toward food justice beyond the human.

Adewale, Omowale. 2021. *Brotha Vegan: Black Men Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society*. New York: Lantern.

Harper, A. Breeze, ed. 2009. *Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society*. New York: Lantern.

Holmes, Jessica. 2021. “Vegan Studies and Food Studies.” In *The Routledge Handbook of Vegan Studies*, edited by Laura White, 282-93. New York: Routledge.

Ko, Aph, and Syl Ko. 2017. *Aphro-ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism from Two Sisters.* New York: Lantern Books.

Levya, Jasmine, dir. 2019. *The Invisible Vegan*.

McQuirter, Tracye. 2010. *By Any Greens Necessary: A Revolutionary Guide for Black Women Who Want to Eat Great, Get Healthy, Lose Weight, and Look Phat*. ‎New York: Lawrence Hill Books.

Terry, Bryant. 2009. *Vegan Soul Kitchen: Fresh, Healthy, and Creative African-American Cuisine*. Da Capo Press.

\_\_\_\_. 2012. *The Inspired Vegan: Seasonal Ingredients, Creative Recipes, Mouthwatering Menus*. Da Capo Press.

\_\_\_\_. 2014. *Afro-Vegan: Farm-Fresh African, Caribbean, and Southern Flavors Remixed*. Ten Speed Press.

Terry Bryant, prod. 2023. “Sustenance and Liberation.” *Bryant Terry Website*. https://www.bryant-terry.com/art

**Alexa Weik von Mossner** is Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Klagen­furt and a visiting professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg. She is the author of *Cosmopolitan Minds: Literature, Emotion, and the Transnational Imagination* (U of Texas P 2014) and *Affective Ecologies: Empathy, Emotion, and Environmental Narrative* (Ohio State UP 2017), and has (co)edited several books, among them *Moving Environments: Affect, Emotion, Ecology, and Film* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2014) and *Empirical Ecocriti­cism: Environmental Narratives for Social Change* (U of Minnesota P, 2023). Her first novel, *Fragile* (Elzwhere), was published in 2023. Her new book, *Growing Hope: Narratives of Food Justice*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.