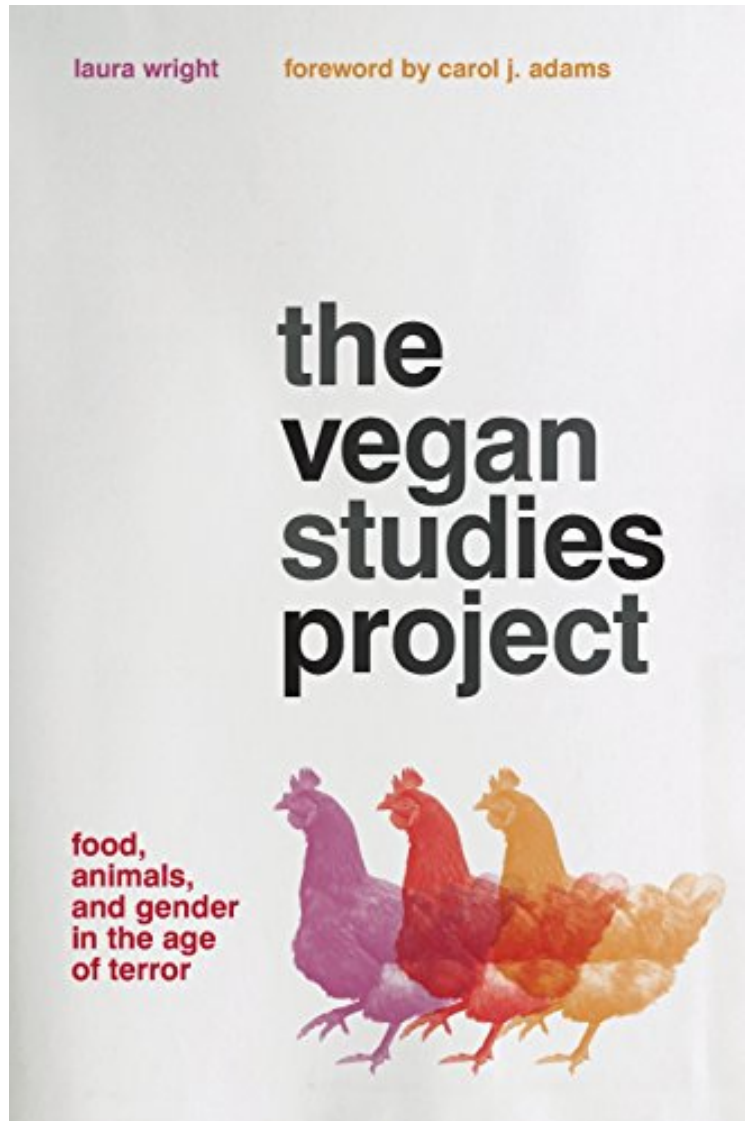


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# The Vegan Studies Project: Food, Animals, and Gender in the Age of Terror

Laura Wright

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**Laura Wright : The Vegan Studies Project: Food, Animals, and Gender in the Age of Terror** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Vegan Studies Project: Food, Animals, and Gender in the Age of Terror:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Henry NguyenGreat book!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Now I know what a Hegon is....By CustomerThe thing that makes this book so cool is the

way that Wright places 9/11 as a signpost for a shift in the way that American society represented and treated veganism. The book traces the history of veganism in the United States, and it plays around with the concept of a field of vegan studies as something distinct from traditional food studies or animal rights. The texts that are analyzed are diverse: television and film, news stories about such things as death by veganism, the link (or lack of link) between veganism and eating disorders, and the ways that celebrity veganism is a mixed bag of certain benefits to the vegan cause (if there can be such a thing, and I think Wright's text correctly argues that there isn't a single cause or identity that vegans adopt) and a hindrance to veganism. Wright has done something totally different from anything out there. Her book is well-written and damn smart. It's simultaneously a gender studies, animal studies, and food studies work of history, anthropology, and literary criticism. Cultural studies works are often too dense to be particularly appealing to a general audience. This one is tough at times but it's tough in ways that are rewarding but it's never inaccessible or uninteresting. It's a book that charts a new and unmarked territory in fascinating ways that are, quite frankly, groundbreaking and compelling.

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. An Academic Study By Darcia Helle I've been a vegetarian for 18 years, and was vegan for about two years. The thing that caught me completely off guard at the start, and still manages to confound (and irritate!) me, is the negative reaction from family, friends, and complete strangers. I am continually amazed at the vitriol, thinly disguised as "humorous" sarcasm, that I endure from some people. While I don't criticize people for eating meat, many seem perfectly comfortable criticizing me for my choice not to eat meat. Given that background, I was thrilled to come across this book. I was hoping for insight into why certain people become angry, while others feel the need to avoid me, particularly in regards to sharing meals. I was also interested in the lifestyle choices that often come with the choice to be vegetarian or vegan, and society's assumptions regarding those choices. This book does offer that information, to some degree, though getting there requires patience. First, the 'introduction' is excessively long, about 25 pages. This in itself isn't as much the problem as the content. It reads like a dissertation proposal, with language that is dry and academic. Then we move on to the book's content. I was looking forward to a kind of broad cultural exploration. But much of the book's focus is quite narrow. Multiple chapters cover specific TV shows and movies in regards to what is sometimes an obscure portrayal of vegan diet and lifestyle. The author dissects these shows, finding, within them, issues pertaining to vegans that many of us might not even have picked up on. I have not seen most of these shows and movies (True Blood, The Year of the Flood, etc.). Without that context, and with absolutely zero interest in these programs/movies, I found the discussion difficult to get through. The writing remains dry and removed, academic rather than narrative, making it harder to find footing without context. I read a lot of nonfiction, and I'm rarely bothered by academic-style writing. But, while this book has a few nuggets of information, the whole of it feels more suited to a college classroom as part of a specific discussion. That might well have been the intention, in which case the content will inspire some interesting debates. However, I don't see this book crossing over into the mainstream, which is disappointing. \*I was provided with an ebook copy by the publisher, via NetGalley, in exchange for my honest opinion.\*

This inescapably controversial study envisions, defines, and theorizes an area that Laura Wright calls vegan studies. We have an abundance of texts on vegans and veganism including works of advocacy, literary and popular fiction, film and television, and cookbooks, yet until now, there has been no study that examines the social and cultural discourses shaping our perceptions of veganism as an identity category and social practice. Ranging widely across contemporary American society and culture, Wright unpacks the loaded category of vegan identity. She examines the mainstream discourse surrounding and connecting animal rights to (or omitting animal rights from) veganism. Her specific focus is on the construction and depiction of the vegan body both male and female as a contested site manifest in contemporary works of literature, popular cultural representations, advertising, and new media. At the same time, Wright looks at critical animal studies, human-animal studies, posthumanism, and ecofeminism as theoretical frameworks that inform vegan studies (even as they differ from it). The vegan body, says Wright, threatens the status quo in terms of what we eat, wear, and purchase and also in how vegans choose not to participate in many aspects of the mechanisms undergirding mainstream culture. These threats are acutely felt in light of post-9/11 anxieties over American strength and virility. A discourse has emerged that seeks, among other things, to bully veganism out of existence as it is poised to alter the dominant cultural mindset or, conversely, to constitute the vegan body as an idealized paragon of health, beauty, and strength. What better serves veganism is exemplified by Wright's study: openness, debate, inquiry, and analysis.